

Article

Weather Lore (Pranostika) as Czech Folk Traditions

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Abstract: Every nation has its unique intangible culture that is passed down from generation to generation thanks to what is still alive. Czechia has a rich intangible cultural heritage, e.g., Mardi Gras, Verbuňk dance, blueprints, Christmas-themed beaded decorations, puppetry, etc., which are all on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists. However, it also has other traditions, ceremonies, legends, folk tales, and weather lore related to weather forecasting in relation to agriculture. The most popular weather lore is related to the feasts of saints, as the feast's dates have remained unchanged for a very long time in the calendar. The aim of this study is to bring Czech weather lore, which, even today, in the age of numerical models, has a certain meaning, closer to readers. Some weather lore has been forgotten over time, but most of it still remains in Czech folk traditions, which continue to be spread orally or in written form. We wondered whether young people knew weather lore as part of their cultural heritage. The results of a survey based on a sample of 220 respondents, including students at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen and future teachers at primary schools, led to the conclusion that weather lore is well-known among the young Czech generation as well.

Keywords: weather lore; feasts of saints; questionnaire



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1. Introduction

Pranostika is the Czech term for weather folk proverbs, and it is based on nature observations in relation to agriculture. Its meaning is different from classical proverbs and sayings that contain a moral message, i.e., a lesson. For simplicity, the term weather lore is used to refer to *Pranostika* in this article. Czech weather lore dates back to times when people did not pass down their knowledge about nature and farming in written form, but in spoken form, i.e., from generation to generation. In Czechia, the first documented mention of weather lore in relation to weather forecasting can be traced back to Matouš Beneš¹ in the year 1587 [1]. From a historical point of view, Simeon Partlicius' work is considered to be the most significant. Due to his work, even the weather lore from the end of the 16th century has been preserved. He wrote down the weather lore he collected and then published it in his *Calendarium oeconomicum perpetuum* (in Czech, *Kalendář hospodářský každoroční*, 1617). This annual economic calendar formed the basis for the Czech weather lore, and all later-released weather lore publications and calendars are based on this source. One interesting fact is that weather lore from this period of time has no rhyme. The calendar does not mention the Ice Saints [1]. However, an even older document from 1471 exists, which is called a "planetar" (a planetary planner). This contains weather lore and forms that are part of a manuscript stored in Stockholm [2]. Rhymed weather lore also appeared in Old Bohemian calendars called "cisiójany", whose purpose was to divide the year according to holidays and feast days and to bring certain warnings to farmers [3].

During the 16th century, Czech lands were mostly inhabited by Christian believers, and therefore, the most famous sayings are related to the feasts of the most famous saints. In current times, anybody can listen to a weather forecast based on various numerical models on TV or check it online. However, many people still observe the development

of weather based on weather lore, as it is firmly anchored in Czech folk traditions. Most people know the weather lore related to popular Catholic saints' holidays, despite half of the Czech population now being atheist [4]. Some feasts even have more than one type of weather lore dedicated to them, such as how St. Paul's Day has thirteen kinds of weather lore. Only the most common weather traditions were selected by the authors for the purpose of this study [1].

2. Weather Lore and Its Meaning Today

2.1. Weather Lore (*Pranostiky*)

Czech weather lore may be considered as thematic messages and recommendations from our ancestors to future generations. The modern form of the weather forecast, as we know it today, did not exist. This means that, at that time, people had no other option than to estimate the course of the weather based on their experience with usual weather patterns in that part of the year, month, or exact date [1]. Such knowledge was gained as some meteorological phenomena were frequently repeated. Weather lore (called *pranostiky* in Czech) is actually a weather forecast or prognosis. To be literal, the word prognosis comes from the Latin term *prognosis*, meaning forecast. The meaning differs from classical sayings, idiomatic expressions with a moral point ("*Like workman, like tool*"), and proverbs, i.e., a traditional, well-known phrase or expression with a literal or figurative meaning (e.g., "*Money makes money*"). German countries have a proverb and saying called die Bauernregel, which can be loosely translated as "farmers' rules" [3]. This means that this saying—in other words, the farmer's rule—was also spread in other countries in connection with the cultivation of agricultural crops. Oftentimes, weather lore is different in various countries, yet its meaning remains the same. The German saying "*Weihnacht im Schnee, Ostern im Klee*" ("Christmas in snow, Easter in clover") corresponds to the Czech one—"Vánoce na blátě, Velikonoce na sněhu" ("Christmas in mud, Easter in snow"), which has the same meaning. There is a famous and popular piece of German weather lore—"Am Neujahrstage Sonnenschein lässt das Jahr uns fruchtbar sein" ("The sunshine on New Year's Day makes the new year abundant") [5–7], although the Czechs do not know this saying. On the contrary, *Pankraz, Servaz, Bonifazi, drei frostige Lumpazi* is an example of a phrase of weather lore used in both countries, although only the Czechs call them *ledoví muži* (ice men), and the saying is related to the last spring frosts and cold days [8,9]. If a reader is interested in comparing German and English weather lore, they could look into an old book written by Dehman in 1846, which is a very interesting piece of work that was published again in 2022 [10].

Grzybek, for example, deals with the analysis of weather lore in other countries in his articles [11]. In these articles, the reader can find the original names of weather lore in different languages: meteorognostica in Italian, przepowiednie pogodowe in Polish, vädermärke in Swedish, dictons météorologiques in French, 観天望気 (kantenbuki) in Japanese, and vejrvarsel in Danish. A book written by Kingsbury, S. A.; Kingsbury, M. E.; and Mieder, W. titled *Weather Wisdom* can also be considered interesting [12]. It is based on the context of folk wisdom and weather forecasting. The author, Müller, articulates weather forecasting in connection with nature [13], and he lists 444 of the most interesting pieces of weather lore for the entire year. A publication by Wright, M. E. S. [14] contains a mixture of versed pieces of weather lore for individual months. Many of them can also be found in Czech: "*Únor bílý, pole sílí*" ("If February gives much snow, a fine summer it doth foreshow") [5,6,14].

Weather lore can also be divided into various points of view. The most common type of weather lore describes the usual weather changes during the year or predicts the upcoming weather season based on the weather of one day [15]. There is known weather lore that forecasts a great harvest from critical-weather days, lore that foresees the harvest based on a longer period of weather observation, lore that shows a symmetry of flowing meteorological elements over the year, and lore that compares the specifics of one season to the weather of another one [1,6,16].

Some weather lore has been popular for centuries, and other sayings have been less common and forgotten over time, but there have been, and still are, sayings that can definitely make one smile upon reflection. Another interesting point is that most of the weather lore does rhyme in the Czech language—such as “*Únor bílý, pole sílí.*” (the Czech equivalent for the English “If in February there be no rain, it is neither good for hay nor grain”). The total amount of weather lore is hard to estimate, as it is listed among different sources or still spread among people in spoken form. There is a list of about 5000 proverbs; we have found over 100 weather lore sayings related to January, and on top of that, 72 more are related to a particular day in the month [1,16].

2.2. Weather Lore (*Pranostika*) on Feast Days

For a long time, there has been a common sign for weather lore. It is not linked to a particular day in the calendar, but to the feast of a saint [1,17].

In Czechia, a large part of weather lore is connected to the saint’s feast days. However, because these sayings come from the previous century or even before, the days of these feasts are different in today’s calendar, which means the name’s day is on another day or the (first) name has completely disappeared from the modern calendar and has been substituted for a more popular first name today. That is why the following part of the work is focused on finding such sayings related to the holidays of saints that are still on the same day in today’s calendar [8]. For the sake of interest, here are some interesting facts about some Christian saints. The information is provided in a simple way, as it can still be heard among people today, no matter whether they are Christians or atheists [4].

2.2.1. January

There are known proverbs and weather lore related to the Three Wise Men and St. Paul.

1. Na tři krále, mrzne stále (loose translation from Czech: On the Three Wise Men’s Day, the frost is still not away) [1,16].
2. Den jasný Pavla svatého znamená hojnost dobrého (loose translation from Czech: Clear day on St. Paul’s Day means plenty of good) [1,16].

However, St. Paul’s Day in the modern Czech calendar is no longer in January. There is a more detailed description of the St. Sebastian (in Czech, Svatý Šebestián) holiday saying.

Svatý Šebestián (20 January, listed as Sebastián in the calendar) was a Roman soldier and Christian martyr. According to legend, Šebestián was a Praetorian guard captain at the imperial court who openly claimed his belief in Christianity and helped poor Christians. For his acts, he was condemned by the emperor Diocletian to death by arrow wounds. However, he survived, returned to the imperial court, and tried to turn the emperor to the Christian religion. Yet, the emperor had him beaten to death and thrown into a sewer where he was found by Christians and buried in catacombs behind the walls. After his canonization, people started venerating him as the patron saint of soldiers, archers, potters, brush makers, and metal goods merchants [17].

Sometimes, there is a connection between St. Sebastian and St. Fabian. St. Fabian was a Roman bishop in the third century AD and was tortured to death during the first systematic persecution of Christians [18].

Weather lore for the day of Saint Sebastian:

3. Na svatého Šebestiána se musí někdo utopit, nebo zmrznout (loose translation: On St. Sebastian’s Day, one must drown or freeze to death).
4. Nezmrzne-li cikán do Fabiána a Šebestiána, potom už nezmrzne (loose translation: If a gypsy does not freeze before the day of Fabian and Sebastian, he will not freeze anymore).
5. Na svatého Fabiána a Šebestiána stromům opět míza dána (loose translation: On St. Fabian and Sebastian’s Day, the trees will get their sap again) [1,16].

2.2.2. February

There are known proverbs and weather lore about February, especially on the second. On the second, there is a Candlemas Day in the Czech calendar called *Hromnice*. Candlemas Day, or Hromnice, is a Christian feast of welcoming spring, similar to a Celtic pre-Christian holiday called Imbolc. Candlemas represents protection from fire, storms, and lightning, as the Czech name suggests. The most known example of this belief is the custom of blessing candles, called *hromničky*, which was carried out on the day. *Hromničky* were placed by people on their windows to protect their households from lightning, which may cause fire or kill people or animals. For many people, this day signifies the end of the Christmas season, when nativity scenes and Christmas trees are removed [16]. Candlemas is the day with the most proverbs; in the Czech culture, there are about forty of them. The most known is this weather lore:

6. Svítí-li slunce na Hromnice, hojnost žita i pšenice (loose translation: If the Candlemas is sunny, there will be plenty of rye and wheat).
7. Na Hromnice—chumelice, netrvá pak zima více (loose translation: The Candlemas day with heavy snow means no more winter).
8. Když o Hromnicích sněží, jaro není daleko (loose translation: If it snows on Candlemas day, then the spring is not far away) [1,16].

There are more than 15 weather lore sayings related to Saint Matthew [1].

Svatý Matěj (24 February), sometimes called Matyáš, from Hebrew *Matatjá* and Greek *Matthias*, was an apostle chosen by the book of Acts to substitute Judas to maintain the number of twelve. The name should not be confused with the apostle and evangelist Matouš, although the names have the same origin [18,19].

Weather lore:

9. Na svatého Matěje lidské srdce okřeje, slunce pozře závěje, nad polem si skřivan zapěje (loose translation: On St. Matthew's Day the human hearts are glad, the sun destroys snowdrifts, and the lark sings).
10. Prší-li na svatého Matěje, bude se brzy sítí (loose translation: If there is rain on St. Matthew's Day, we will sow the seeds soon).
11. Svatý Matěj láme vždy led; není-li ho, zmrzne hned (loose translation: St. Matthew always breaks the ice; if there is no ice, he will freeze immediately) [1,16].

There is a lot of weather lore related to the month of February. The most well-known weather lore is: [1]

12. Únor bílý, pole sílí (this means that the melting snow in February waters the flowers, which appear in spring) [1,7,16].

2.2.3. March

The most renowned weather lore about March is that describing the cold in this month: Březen, za kamna vlezem, duben, ještě tam budem (loose translation: March—let's climb onto the bed-stove, April—we'll stay there) [1,15,16].

This proverb expresses a kind of warning that the month of March does not offer much warmth yet and one should stay inside, where it is warm [9].

A lot of weather lore is related to St. Joseph.

Svatý Josef (19 March), Saint Joseph in English, was the husband of the Virgin Mary, who gave birth to Jesus Christ, son of God. Joseph was a son of Jacob from Juda's tribe. His memory is celebrated by the whole Roman Catholic world on 19 March, and he is celebrated as a saint by the Greek Catholic, Coptic Orthodox, and Orthodox churches as well [18].

Bohemian history says that St. Joseph was a carpenter. The used word τέκτων is from Greek (tekton, the word from which technique is derived) and has a more general meaning—it refers to a man who works with wood, stones, and iron. It was St. Joseph who received the Virgin Mary after she became pregnant by the Holy Spirit [17,18,20,21].

Weather lore:

13. Pěkný den na svatého Josefa zvěstuje dobrý rok (loose translation: A nice day on St. Joseph announces a good year).
14. Na svatého Josefa když jest krásný čas, bude úrodný rok; prší-li neb padá sníh, bude mokro a neúroda (loose translation: If the weather on St. Joseph's Day is nice, the year will give a good harvest; if it rains or snows, the ground will be wet and the harvest poor).
15. Je-li na svatého Josefa hezky, urodí se málo obilí (loose translation: If the weather on St. Joseph's Day is good, there will be a bad harvest) [16,20].

2.2.4. April

Much of the April weather lore is related to Easter, and it all has one thing in common—rain at Easter, dry in summer, which is bad for a good harvest:

16. Na Boží hod velikonoční prší, sucho úrodu poruší (loose translation: If it rains on Easter Sunday, the drought will damage crops) [1,16].

There are about a hundred known sayings about Svatý Jiří (St. George).

Svatý Jiří (24 April), Saint George in English, (in Old Bohemian *Juří*) was, according to the Christian hagiography, a Roman soldier from Anatoli, today's Turkey, and he was worshipped as a martyr. Eastern churches call him a *megalomartyr*, *archmartyr*. He is one of the fourteen disciples. He is immortalized in "the legend of Saint George and the Dragon", where he is described as a dragon-slayer [8]. Saint George is celebrated in most countries on the 23rd of April. In Czech lands, Slovakia, and Poland, the celebration of Saint George is postponed by a day and is celebrated on 24 April, as the 23rd of April is the date of the martyrdom of Adalbert of Prague (in Czech Svatý Vojtěch) [17,22].

Adalbert of Prague (in Czech Svatý Vojtěch) is the patron of scouts [17].

Much weather lore focuses on the awaited spring [20].

17. Na svatého Jiří vylézají hadi a štíři (loose translation: On St. George's Day, snakes and scorpions come out).
18. Na svatého Jiří rodí se jaro (loose translation: On St. George's Day, spring is born).
19. Před Jiřím sucho, po něm mokro (loose translation: Before St. George's Day, is it dry, then the soil gets wet) [1,16].

2.2.5. May

Known sayings and weather lore about the month of May are related to spring storms and temperatures.

20. Studený máj—v stodole ráj (loose translation: Cold May—paradise in a barn).

Concerning the rain, people are still familiar with weather sayings and proverbs concerning Saint Sophia (Svatá Žofie) [1,16].

Svatá Žofie (15 May), Saint Sophia in English, (in Greek, Sophia means "Wisdom") died a martyr's death during the last persecution wave in Rome, during the time of the emperor Diocletian in 305. Legends say that she died together with her daughters Fides, Spes, and Caritas—meaning Faith, Hope, and Charity. They were tortured one by one (starting with the oldest one) in front of their mother. However, she kept encouraging them not to give up their belief and faith, and her daughters would rather tolerate anything than give up. Finally, all three daughters were beheaded after a long trial, and their mother was allowed to bury them. She was probably killed as well afterwards [22,23].

Weather lore:

21. Déšť svaté Žofie švestky ubije (loose translation: Saint Sophia's rain kills plums).
22. Žofie vína upije (loose translation: Sophia takes a sip of wine).
23. Svatá Žofie políčka často zalije (loose translation: Saint Sophia often waters the fields) [1,16].

2.2.6. June

June sayings and weather lore are mostly about the upcoming harvest when farmers did not welcome rain.

24. Červen studený—sedlák krčí rameny (loose translation: Cold June—farmers shrug their shoulders) [1,3,16]. This means that when the weather in June is cold and rainy, farmers cannot gather their harvest.

Perhaps every Czech knows the saying about St. Medard.

Medardově kápě, 40 dní kape (loose translation: If it rains on Saint Medard's Day, it will rain the following forty days) [1,5,13,16].

This weather lore has been time-tested over many years [1].

Svatý Medard (8 June), Saint Medard in English, was born in 457, AD in Salency. He was the son of Nectaridus and Protagia. Since childhood, he demonstrated his compassion and merciful love, and he liked helping the poor. He was educated, and he became a priest in 505. When the bishop of Vermand died in 530, he was chosen to succeed him in Vermandois at the age of about 70. In 540, he passed away in Noyon [1,19].

The Christian religion considers him to be the guardian of harvest and the patron of farmers, shepherds, herdsmen, meteorologists, brewers, and wine growers, and the protector against toothache. People prayed to him for dry weather during haymaking and for a good harvest from fields and vineyards, and they also prayed for protection against fever and insanity [24–27].

Weather lore:

25. Když prší na Medarda namokne každá brázda (loose translation: When it rains on Medard's Day every furrow gets wet).
26. Když na Medarda prší, nebudou toho roku houby růst (loose translation: If it rains on Medard's Day, mushrooms will not grow that year).
27. Když na Medarda prší, voda břehy vrší (loose translation: If it rains on Medard's Day, water piles up on the river banks) [1,3,13,16].

2.2.7. July

July weather lore is usually based on the hope that the weather will allow plants to grow and ensure a great harvest.

28. Co červenec neuvaří—srpen nedopeče (loose translation: What July does not cook—August will not roast brown), which means that if the harvest is not grown in July, there will be no time for that in August [1,9,15,28].

A lot of July weather lore is about the day of the visitation of the Virgin Mary (2. 7).

29. Když na navštívení Panny Marie prší, čtyřicet dní se voda vrší (loose translation: If it rains on the day of Mary's visitation, the water keeps piling up for forty days).

All proverbs about that day warn against rain on that day, as it may cause rain and flooding in the following 40 days [26,27,29]. However, rain is not welcomed either on the following day—the day of St. Procopius of Sázava (in Czech Svatý Prokop) [30,31].

Svatý Prokop (4 July), Saint Procopius in English, living at the end of the 10th century, he was originally a secular priest, and later, a hermit and cofounder and the first abbot of the Sázava Monastery. He was canonized in 1204. According to some historians, St. Procopius was the first Bohemian saint properly canonized by the pope in compliance with the church regulations asserted by the papacy [19,22].

Weather lore:

30. Když prší na svatého Prokopa, promokne každá kopa (loose translation: When it rains on St. Procopius' Day, every pile will get soaked).
31. Svatý Prokop, zeli okop! (loose translation: Saint Procopius, hoe the cabbage!)

Prší-li na Medarda a Prokopa, shnije mandel i kopa (loose translation: If it rains on Medard's Day and Procopius' Day, every sheaf and heap will rot) [1,16].

Probably the most famous weather lore is related to Saint Anna:

Svatá Anna, chladna zrána (loose translation: Saint Anna, cold mornings) [1,7,16], which means that mornings in Bohemia already begin to grow colder in July [5,28,29,32].

2.2.8. August

Although it is still summer in August, cooler days are already predicted to come by some weather lore [5,9,32].

32. Srpen k zimě hledí a rád vodu cedí (loose translation: August looks at cold and likes to pour water) [1,33].

Svatý Vavřinec (10 August), Saint Lawrence in English (from Latin Laurentius), was a Roman ecclesiastic, one of the seven deacons (entrusted people) of the Saint Sixtus II who were martyred during the persecutions of Christians by the Roman emperor Valerian. He was asked to hand in the church's treasures after the pope's death. However, he had dispensed it to poor people, and therefore, he was martyred in a particularly cruel way—burnt alive [18].

Weather lore:

33. Vavřinec ukazuje, jaký podzim nastupuje (loose translation: Lawrence shows how the autumn will be) [1].
34. Na svatého Vavřince hop zemáky do hrnce (loose translation: On Saint Lawrence's Day—hop potatoes in a pot).
35. Pěkné počasí na Sv. Vavřince věští pěkný podzim (loose translation: Good weather on St. Lawrence's Day shows a nice autumn) [1,16,33].

2.2.9. September

September defines the upcoming autumn. Known weather lore:

Září, na léto jde stáří (loose translation: September, summer is getting old).

Svatý Václav (28 September), Saint Wenceslaus in English, was a Czech duke and saint. He is the patron saint of the Czech nation. He was worshiped as a saint for his great religious service and care of the poor, sick, and imprisoned people. According to the legend, he was murdered in Stará Boleslav by his brother's servants [25,26,30].

Weather lore:

36. Na svatého Václava mráz nastává (loose translation: The frost comes on Saint Wenceslaus' Day).
37. Svatý Václav zavírá zem (loose translation: Saint Wenceslaus closes the ground).
38. Přejde Václav—kamna připrav (loose translation: Wenceslaus is coming—get ready the bed-stove) [16,20].

All of this weather lore predicts cold weather [9].

2.2.10. October

Weather lore about the month of October refers to the weather cooling down [9].

39. Studený říjen—zelený leden (loose translation: Cold October—green January).

Svatý Havel (16 October), Saint Gall in English, was a monk who lived in the area of Lake Bodensee in the 7th century, where a church with a large architectural complex was built. There are many legends describing his life; the most famous one says that Saint Gall was a monk, one of twelve followers and companions of St. Columban Jr. on his mission to the European continent [23].

Weather lore:

40. Svatý Havel—devět počasí za den (loose translation: Saint Gall—nine types of weather per day).
41. Déšť na Havla, déšť na Vánoce (loose translation: Rain on Gall's Day, rain at Christmas).
42. Suchý Havel oznamuje suché léto (loose translation: Dry Gall announces dry summer) [1,16,20].

2.2.11. November

Autumn rules this month, and winter is almost here, which is what the weather lore is focused on.

43. Jíní o všech svatých věští tuhé mrazy o Vánocích (loose translation: Hoarfrost on All Saints anticipates severe frost at Christmas) [1,16,33].

Some weather lore is related to Saint Andrew (in Czech Svatý Ondřej), who is the patron saint of brides as well as of fishermen.

Svatý Ondřej (30 November), Saint Andrew in English, in Greek Ανδρέας (Andreas, masculine), who appears in the Orthodox tradition as the Πρωτόκλητος (Prótoklétos, first called); he was an apostle and a brother of St. Peter. He was a Jew, which is why his real name might have been different. He was a disciple of John the Baptist and was crucified in Patras for his activities as an apostle of Christianity. St. Andrew is depicted by artists as an old man with long white hair and a beard, holding a book in his right hand, leaning on an X-shaped cross, which is supposed to be the one for his martyrdom [21,30].

Weather lore:

44. Ondřejův sníh zůstane ležet sto dní (loose translation: Andrew's snow will remain hundred days on the ground).
45. Když na svatého Ondřeje sněží, sníh dlouho poleží (loose translation: If it snows on Saint Andrew's Day, the snow will remain on the ground for a long time).
46. Na svatého Ondřeje se někdy člověk ohřeje (loose translation: A man gets sometimes warm on Saint Andrew's Day) [1,16,20].

2.2.12. December

Most weather lore for the last month of the year refers to the prediction that if fields are covered with snow, there will be a good harvest the year after [16,32].

47. Když v prosinci mrzne a sněží, úrodný rok na to běží (loose translation: If it freezes and snows in December, a fertile year will be released).

In Bohemian countries, the day of Saint Barbara is also celebrated. On this day, single girls cut and pick twigs off trees and hope they will come into blossom before Christmas, which would mean they will get married the following year [22,34,35].

Svatá Barbora (4 December) from Nicomedia, also known as Saint Barbara, was a virgin and martyr from ancient Nicomedia. She belonged to the Fourteen Holy Helpers or disciples, who were called in especially hard times, such as during the plague epidemics. She was beheaded under the rule of the emperor Maximianus. In Czech lands, she is the patron of miners [23].

Weather lore:

48. Svaté Barboře leživá sníh na dvoře (loose translation: Saint Barbara is used to having snow in her yard).
49. Jaké je počasí na sv. Barboru, takové bývá až do Vánoc (loose translation: The weather on St. Barbara's Day will stay the same until Christmas).
50. Na svatou Barboru saně do dvoru (loose translation: On St. Barbara's Day, put sleighs to the yard) [1,16,20].

There is a lot of weather lore dedicated to other saints. However, only some of them were selected due to the length of the article.

3. Results: Weather Lore Knowledge of Students and Future Primary School Teachers

Although modern weather forecasts are based on numeric models, the knowledge of some proverbs and sayings in Czechia still remains. We were interested if today's young people—future teachers—know the weather lore. We used a questionnaire as a research tool.

3.1. Survey Using a Questionnaire

The aim of the questionnaire was to determine which of the weather lore sayings are known by future teachers. Students in primary school teacher training were chosen as the respondents. Using a Google questionnaire (2021, Google Form), the research addressed a total of 350 students from all five years of the program of primary school teacher training at the Faculty of Education, the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen. The questionnaire was filled in by 220 students in total, and 97% of the respondents were women (as the future primary-school teachers were mostly women). Therefore, there was no gender distinction in the sample of respondents. The sample was intentionally selected from future teachers because they are the ones who will spread folk traditions. The questionnaire consisted of 12 open questions, and each was related to the individual months and their proverbs. The study presents the most popular Czech weather lore, as they were mentioned by the students.

3.2. Questionnaire Results

We used a simple descriptive method in the form of a table to present the found data. For a better understanding, the table lists the most common weather lore for each month and the quantity, i.e., how many students mentioned the weather lore.

4. Discussion

Young people, including future teachers, as in this case, are familiar with weather lore. They know some of it more and some of it less. Table 1 shows that weather lore sayings from February were the best-known ones.

Table 1. The questionnaire results.

Month	Most Common Czech Weather Lore Sayings	Quantity
January	Jak na Nový rok, tak po celý rok. (The way you live New Year's Day, all the new year will be so.)	198
February	Únor bílý, pole sílí. (White February, the field is getting stronger.)	210
March	Březen za kamna vlezem. (March—let's climb onto the bed-stove.)	190
April	Duben ještě tam budem. (April—we will still be there.)	189
May	Pankrác, Servác, Bonifác jsou ledoví muži. (Pankrác, Servác, Bonifác are ice men.)	162
June	Medardova kápě 40 dní kape. (If it rains on Saint Medard's Day, it will rain the following forty days.)	208
July	Svatá Markyta hodila srp do žita. (Saint Markyta threw a sickle into the rye.)	42
August	Vavřinec ukazuje, jaký podzim nastupuje. (Lawrence shows how the autumn will be.)	13
September	Na svatého Václava mráz nastává. (The frost comes on Saint Wenceslaus' Day.)	66
October	Jaký den Havel ukazuje, taková zima nastupuje. (What day Havel shows, such winter appears.)	15
November	Sv. Martin přijede na bílém koni. (St. Martin will arrive on a white horse.)	205
December	Zelené Vánoce—bílé Velikonoce. (Green Christmas, white Easter.)	84

The questionnaire revealed that students are most familiar with the weather lore about February—*Únor bílý, pole sílí* (February is white, the field is getting stronger). Is there any scientific explanation for this weather lore? Climatologists consider the month of February to be the end of winter. After all, the Czech term *únor*, which is the Czech name of the month of February, is related to the term *nořit*, the Czech verb meaning “to immerse” or “to sink”. In February, the ice starts to crack and ice floes start to sink. It is still true that *Únor bílý pole sílí*, meaning that the more snow remains from February to March, the more water will be absorbed in the ground and the better the plants will grow in spring. On top of that, the thicker snow cover shall protect winter crops (crops sown in autumn) from freezing. These have been ancient, well-known, and undisputed truths over the years [1,9].

The weather lore related to Medard is also popular: *Medardově kápě, 40 dní kape* (If it rains on Saint Medard's Day, it will rain the following forty days). On the other hand, the least known is the weather lore about August and October [1,16,33,36,37].

As mentioned above, Saint Medard was a Christian priest and is still considered the patron of farmers, shepherds, herdsmen, meteorologists, brewers, and wine growers. This

may be the reason this weather lore is so popular and still used these days. However, why is it *Medadova kápě, 40 dní kape*—“Medard’s drops, dripping for 40 days” [1,29]?

From a climatical point of view, the month of June is manifested by the arrival of the summer European monsoon. Its arrival can be expected with a 65% probability around June 8th, Medard’s Day. Cold oceanic air moves above the warmed European continent, resulting in persistent and abundant rainfall. The mention of 40 days indicates that the weather may be rainy until July. However, long-term monitoring by meteorological stations has shown that the rain lasted, at most, for 35 days in the past 19 years [1,9].

Nowadays, there are obviously much more accurate methods to forecast the weather with a high reliability for at least a few days in advance. However, our ancestors found that Medard’s season and the rain correlation during the following weeks are extremely important [1,33,37]. They were getting ready to harvest crops and hay, and the rainy weather made both extremely complicated. No wonder they did their best to predict the future—all harvests often depended on the right timing. However, even today, people follow the weather lore on Saint Medard [6,38,39].

5. Conclusions

Folk traditions and customs form the specific history of each nation and its intangible cultural heritage. In Czechia, they are complemented by “*pranostiky*”, i.e., weather lore based on natural phenomena [33,35]. Farmers today follow numerical weather forecasting models when managing their fields, but they still supplement them with weather lore. For easy orientation in the year, they use the holidays of the saints. With long-term weather monitoring, we can determine that there really are anomalies in certain seasons. These are called singularities by meteorologists, and the most famous have been recorded just around Medard’s Day (*Medard’s drops, drip for 40 days*—it always rains, although sometimes less than 40 days). These are the most common days related to weather lore [28,33,36].

However, is it necessary for future generations to know about weather lore? The authors of this article believe so, since weather lore belongs to the folk customs and traditions of the Czech nation. Every tradition is a form of human experience that is passed down from generation to generation and which existed before a person is born [34]. Every Czech knows at least some of the national traditions because traditions and, by extension, folk customs, specify the nation and form a national identity. After all, every nation has something of its own, something that has been characteristic of it for centuries [35,36]. Weather lore is a precious memory of our ancestors, of their feelings and thoughts, and of their deep love for nature. Young people know that weather lore is not something random and made up. It is clear to them that, even today, they can draw on the wisdom of our ancestors [8]. The weather lore tradition is part of the folk meteorological structures that accompany modern humans in their lives [1,8,40]. It is still popular among farmers and gardeners who rely on it more than on a long-term weather forecast, e.g., planting seedlings after the “ice men” time. They provide some kind of supplementary information to meteorological weather forecasts [7,9,37,41].

However, these are primarily valuable cultural–historical documents, small formations of folk literature and, above all, the spiritual heritage of our ancestors [5,11,12,39,42,43].

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