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Mobility of chemistry professors of the Prague Charles Ferdinand University at the turn of the 19th century: Where and why?

THE PAPER INVESTIGATES THE CAREERS of 19 chemistry professors at the medical and philosophical faculties of the German and Czech universities in Prague in the years 1890–1910. The data indicate that Prague represented for many newcomers opportunity of habilitation or full professorship. For more than a half of persons in view, Prague was their first university appointment and also a place where they studied. The other location, where mostly the Germans got their expertise before coming to Prague, was Vienna, while the Czechs preferred the German, French and British universities. Only 10 professors left their alma mater, some of them just temporarily; the new workplace was usually another university in the Czech Lands or some Austrian or German university. The data have not confirmed the often-diffused opinion that Prague was only a changing station for German professors before leaving for Vienna or some German university.

The reasons of studies abroad were increase of expertise and getting prestigious degree; the Czechs' preference of the German universities had probably no political connotation. The Czech professors changed universities only rarely. This "stability" has a social and political context. The transfer of the Prague German chemistry professors for universities in Austria and Germany was usually motivated by an opportunity of getting a higher position or a department. Only a deeper analysis of the sources may disclose whether they considered Prague inferior place for their careers and what circumstances made them to leave.

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