

University History in the Czech Republic

Historia de la Universidad en la República Checa

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Abstract: This text provides a historiographical overview of research into university history in the Bohemian lands. The authors point to the limited standing that the specialized discipline of university history has within Czech historiography, and summarize the methodological difficulties which prevent this discipline from gaining more respect. This is mainly due to it being too closely connected with anniversaries and, consequently, the uncertain existence of research teams. From a methodological perspective, this organizational problem results in the over-representation of institutional biographies in the portfolio of studies, while a greater proportion of the publications interpret university history in isolation from the rest of the society and are a priori success stories. It has only been over the past two decades that there have been changes in the discipline which have rapidly brought it up to speed in methodological terms with other, more traditional historical disciplines. The text also focuses

Resumen: Este texto ofrece una visión historiográfica de la investigación sobre la historia de las universidades en Bohemia. Los autores apuntan a que la disciplina especializada de la historia de la universidad tiene una posición limitada dentro de la historiografía checa y resumen las dificultades metodológicas que impiden que esta disciplina gane más presencia. Esto se debe principalmente a que la historia de las universidades está demasiado vinculada con los aniversarios y, por consiguiente, con la incertidumbre de los equipos de investigación. Desde un punto de vista metodológico, este problema organizativo da como resultado la sobre-representación de las biografías institucionales mientras que una mayor proporción de las publicaciones interpreta la historia universitaria aislada del resto de la sociedad y son historias de éxito a priori. Sólo en las dos últimas décadas se han producido cambios en la disciplina que lo han acelerado rápidamente en términos metodológicos con otras disciplinas históricas más tradicionales. El texto

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on an overview of important, breakthrough works in the discipline and their place within socio-political changes, with special attention paid to the oldest Czech university in Prague, though there is also an examination of interesting trends in the research into the history of newer, provincial Czech universities.

Keywords: university history, Bohemian lands, historiographical overview.

también se centra en una visión general de los trabajos importantes, de avance en la disciplina y de su lugar.

Los cambios socio-políticos, con una atención especial a la universidad checa más vieja en Praga, aunque hay también un examen de tendencias interesantes en la investigación en la historia de las universidades checas más nuevas, provinciales.

Palabras clave: historia de la universidad, territorios de Bohemia, panorama historiográfico.

The historical discipline known as university history has not yet fully established itself in the academic world of the Czech Republic. Researchers involved in this area recognize that most studies relating to university history emerge on an ad-hoc basis depending on various anniversaries, and are based on the methodological approaches of institutional history rather than comparative works focusing on the history of the *universitas*, using sophisticated methodology which is clearly defined in relation to other areas of historical research. The main reason why university history does not have a clear identity as a research area is its uncertain methodological background and permeable boundaries in relation to other more established fields of research. Curiously enough, the entire institutional superstructure for the aforementioned commission thus predates the debate about the actual identity of the field of university history by many years.

The discipline of university history will not gain the respect of other fields of Czech history if it is solely based on works describing the institutional history of universities, which are partly hagiographical and partly critical, though in every case written as a *history of success*. It is difficult for them not to be, as these works are commissioned by university officials, financed by the university, are usually given a tight deadline and are written by historians who are not even particularly interested in the subject, though their involvement is more or less a political necessity. Subsequently, researchers resort to using a *master narrative* in an attempt to demonstrate their erudition while completing the task.

This has its obvious advantages and disadvantages. In addition to the fact that this approach meets the expectations of those who commissioned the study, it is also a tool with which to holistically understand a university in its vast diversity, its multidisciplinary, the differences in perceptions of tradition, as a tool to bridge the wide range of inter-university conflict lines, and finally as a way to defend the credibility and usefulness of historical re-

search before a public which is not oriented towards the humanities. When attempting to characterize contemporary universities it is not unusual to see in the academic discourse terms such as “controlled anarchy” or “empty shell”. This reflects the fact that *universitas*, in the old sense of the word, is no longer appropriate, and instead there are diverse disciplines, insufficient communication between disciplines and faculties, but at the same time there are members of the university community with a pragmatic affection towards university decrees with the seal of an ancient lord as a way to strengthen their own position in the academic community by identifying with a brand. The major drawback is that the predominance of one master narrative leads to less intensive inquiry and a narrowing of the source base. In principle, however, it is necessary to distinguish between a master narrative supported by a totalitarian ideology, which was criticized by F. Lyotard, and the master narrative associated with free research, searching for sources of cultural cohesion and identity, despite the fact that the demands of the customer restrict this freedom.

An alternative to the *master narrative* can be seen in works that are also written for university anniversaries, but which are so elaborately set out that they usually go far beyond the framework of similar commissions. This was why attention in the Czech Republic was focused on the latest histories of the universities in Jena and Greifswald, as well as on a new history of the University of Vienna. Their approach is one of total history, of multilayered reflections on the existence of the university with its cultural, economic and political links. Czech historical science also managed to achieve these goals in the early 1990s, although only with a history of the oldest university, Charles University, and even here this applied solely to the older aspects of its history. It was convincing in terms of Medieval history, but less so for the Early Modern Age. As part of the project from the early 1990s, work on the modern history of Charles University remained limited to an institutional history, while a comprehensive history of the modern age has yet to be written for any Czech university¹, in particular a history of a university’s academic activities and external relationships.

In recent years, a large number of works have also been written on the history of universities in the Czech Republic. Practically every university, including those with histories dating back only to the 1990s, has at its dis-

¹ Sylva Sklenářová, ed., *Možnosti a meze výzkumu dějin vysokého školství po roce 1945/The Possibilities and Limits of Research into the History of Universities after 1945* (Hradec Králové: Gaudeamus, 2010).

posal a work which explains its existence and social role as the fulfilment of a vision and of success. However, with a few exceptions, these are relatively shallow works, and in comparison with Germany and Austria (the university projects in Vienna, Jena, Greifswald, Tübingen etc.), the Czech Republic has not produced many long-term, well-subsidized research teams which could begin to consider understanding the history of a specific university using total history, not to mention comparative *universitas* histories. Investigating university history normally falls to researchers from the university archives, with additional support provided when there is an anniversary. Within the Czech history community, more often than in the German history school, the majority see the model as a team of historians from various disciplines and research interests, which is created by the university leadership with the objective of creating a prestigious work. The publication's academic value is often of secondary importance.

In methodological terms, the approaches of institutional history clearly prevail, though in the past ten or fifteen years some significant innovations have started to appear. One long-abandoned area (especially under the influence of Marxism) was the old-style history of the "professorial university", i.e. purely from the viewpoint of senior staff and university officials. In particular, the integration of students and research/teaching staff from the lower academic grades into the university narrative became a matter of course soon after 1945 and did not even require much political pressure since it followed on from a long tradition of left-wing or egalitarian inclinations in Czech society. However, in each case the university story has so far been narrated from an insider's point of view. These texts do not thematize the university's multilateral external links or the whole range of issues of whether universities and the educational system in general react to society's demands and what form this would indeed take. There has appeared a tendency to comprehensively investigate the university's links to political power, often broken down to smaller areas which are easier to research. Interest in the economic aspects of how a university operates is new to the academic discourse. However, as with many other countries, there is a severe shortage of studies which analyse the history of science using a transversal method, which goes beyond the limits of the individual, narrow disciplines²,

² One of the exceptions is Lubomír Nový et al., *Dějiny exaktních věd v českých zemích do konce 19. století/A History of the Exact Sciences in the Czech Lands until the End of the 19th Century* (Prague: Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, 1961); František Petrů – Bohumil Hájek, *O vývoji české chemie/The Development of Czech Chemistry* (Prague: Orbis, 1954); Blanka Zilynská - Petr Svobodný, eds., *Věda v Československu v letech 1945-1953. Sborník z konference/*

and there is no deeper analysis of the role of the university in basic, applied research.

A History of Charles University

To date, the university which has been the centre of the largest number of studies and the widest methodological historical interpretations has been Charles University in Prague (CU)³.

It also has a journal with the oldest tradition for researching university history called the *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Historia Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis*, which has been published since 1960. The oldest transalpine university, established by Emperor Charles IV in 1348, transcends normal Czech interest in university history in three respects. With its long history, CU is far ahead of all of the other universities in the Czech lands, with only Olomouc University being able to show some continuity with the existence of a Jesuit college founded in 1573. All of the other universities, including the second largest in Brno, were not established until the 20th century. A second feature is CU's connection to Prague with its dominant, monopoly status as a centre of science in the Czech Republic. The CU became an important part of the Czech emancipatory story after the formal "Czechification" of one of its two parts in 1882 (at that time the Charles-Ferdinand University), and until the establishment of Masaryk University in Brno in 1919 it was the only university where the teaching was in Czech. Its position from the 19th century to today has also been strengthened by the enormous concentration of other non-university scientific and research institutes in Prague (the Czech Republic Academy of Sciences, departmental research institutes, etc.). Thanks to its position as the "showcase" of Czech science, the CU has a certainty about its existence which is in contrast to the instability of other universities, while the proximity of Prague higher education to political power has also had both positive and negative outcomes. The third feature is the medieval character of the history of Prague's university. Its medieval importance far outstripped its Czech borders, and the secession

Science in Czechoslovakia from 1945-1953 : conference collection (Prague: Karolinum, 1999); Blanka Zylinská – Petr Svobodný, eds., *Česká věda a Pražské jaro (1963-1970) (Czech Science and the Prague Spring (1963-1970))* (Prague: Karolinum, 2001).

³ Miloslava Melanová – Michal Svátek, *Bibliografie k dějinám pražské univerzity do roku 1622/A Bibliography for the History of Prague University until 1622* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1979).

of some of its pupils and masters in 1409 allowed for the establishment and success of several other important universities in Germany and Poland. The university was part of a complicated Habsburg superpower network of European policy, and as a German-language university (until 1945 – from 1882 to 1945 German was only used in one of the two parts of the university) it was also part of an extensive German-language cultural space. This is why the history of the CU is of special interest to international researchers, most of whom are German, Austrian and Polish⁴.

There exist several large-scale syntheses on the history of the CU. As long ago as 1849 Václav Vladivoj Tomek published his *History of the Prague University*⁵. 1897 saw the publication of Zikmund Winter's *History of Prague Universities from the Secession of Foreign Nations to the Battle of White Mountain 1409-1622*, shortly afterwards there was a synthesis of the history of the German part of the university and then a reply by the Czech side⁶. Tomek belonged to the conservative wing of the Czech national-emancipation movement and his political affiliations were reflected in the history of CU, which was a defence of the Czech nature of the university against the claims of the Germans, whether they were local, Austrian or from the German empire. Naturally, Tomek's work was characterized by his pro-Habsburg loyalty and conservative-Catholic interpretation of some of the more controversial religious events and power struggles in the university. Winter was more of a novelist than a historian and his work represents a bridge between conservative-Catholic interpretations and those which were more militantly

⁴ The most important works include Kurt Oberdorfer, *Die deutsche Universität in Prag – Herkunft und Schicksal*. Die deutsche Schule 1967, 274-300; Ferdinand Seibt, *Karl IV. Ein Kaiser in Europa 1346 bis 1378* (Munich: Fischer, 1978); Walter Koerting, *Die deutsche Universität in Prag: Die letzten 100 Jahre ihrer Medizinischen Fakultät* (Munich: Bayerische Landesärztekammer, 1968); *Die Universität zu Prag* (Munich: Sudetenland-Verlag, 1986); Ferdinand Seibt, ed., *Die Teilung der Prager Universität 1882 und die intellektuelle Desintegration der böhmischen Länder* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1984).

⁵ Václav Vladivoj Tomek, *Děje university pražské/The Story of Prague University* (Prague: Bohemian Museum, 1849), also in German *Geschichte der Prager Universität* (Prag: Gottlieb Haase Söhne, 1849), reprint Osnabrück. Biblio Verlag 1968.

⁶ Zikmund Winter, *Děje vysokých škol pražských od secesí cizích národů po dobu bitvy bělohorské 1409-1622/The Story of Prague University from the Secession of Foreign Nations to the Battle of White Mountain 1409-1622* (Prague: Czech Academy of Emperor Francis Joseph for Science, Literature and Art, 1897); *Die Deutsche Karl-Ferdinand-Universität unter d. Regierung Seiner Majestät d. Kaiser Franz Jos. I.* (Prag: Karl-Ferdinand-Universität, 1899); Jaroslav Goll, *Rozdělení pražské univerzity Karlo-Ferdinandovy a počátek samostatné university české/The Division of Prague's Charles-Ferdinand University and the Beginnings of an Independent Czech University* (Prague: Klub historický, 1908).

nationalist. The gradual increase in the demand for a Czech nationalist interpretation of the history of CU can be seen with the emergence of the work *Carolinum National Property*, which was published as part of the so-called “insignia affair” which was the struggle between Czech and German nationalists over the legal continuity of the Czech or German part of the university with medieval higher learning⁷. During the interwar period, replies to the emotional Czech national claim to narrate the story of CU came from publications which interpreted the history of the university from a German nationalist position, in particular *Prag und das Reich*, a work by Wolmar Wolfram von Wolmar⁸.

With the end of the German university as the historical heir to the tradition of Charles University in 1945, and the resettlement of the German population of the Czech lands, the synthesis of the previous story of Czech-German competition rapidly faded. The return of historians’ interest in the history of the German part of CU is a matter of the last decade⁹. During the postwar period was the history of the Prague university interpreted as the success of the Czech nation, with ever-increasing emphasis on the importance of the left-wing, progressive traditions in the story of the nation as well as the university¹⁰. This was work aimed to be a synthesis in character, but smaller in scale and usually linked to the older history of the university which was less political in nature. There was a gap in the synthetic treatment

⁷ Karel Domin – Josef Hutter – Václav Vojtíšek, eds., *Karolinum statek národní/Carolinum National Property* (Prague: Charles University, 1934).

⁸ *Unsere Alma mater. Die sudetendeutschen Hochschulen* (Böhmisch Leipa: Kaiser, 1938); Heinz Zatschek, *Studien zur Geschichte der Prager Universität bis 1409*. Die Zeitschrift für sudetendeutsche Geschichte, no. 3, 1939, 81-128; Wolmar Wolfram von Wolmar, *Prag und das Reich. 600 Jahre Kampf deutscher Studenten* (Dresden: Müller Verlag, 1943).

⁹ Alena Míšková, *Die Deutsche (Karls-) Universität vom Münchener Abkommen bis zum Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges : Universitätsleitung und Wandel des Professorenkollegiums* (Prague: Carolinum, 2007); Ota Konrád, *Dějepisectví, germanistika a slavistika na Německé univerzitě v Praze 1918-1945. Historiography, Germanic and Slavonic Studies at the German University in Prague* (Prague: Karolinum 2011).

¹⁰ František Kop, *Založení Karlovy univerzity v Praze/The Establishment of Charles University in Prague* (Prague: Atlas, 1945); František Antonín Novák et al., *Dvacet pět let přírodovědecké fakulty Univerzity Karlovy/Twenty-Five Years of Charles University’s Faculty of Science* (Prague: Faculty of Science, Charles University 1945); Václav Vojtíšek, *Karlova universita vždy jen naše/Charles University Always Just Our* (Brno: A. Píša, 1946); Otakar Odložilík, *Karlova univerzita 1348-1948/Charles University 1348-1948* (Prague: Orbis, 1948), also in French and Russian; Václav Chaloupecký, *Karlova univerzita v Praze. Její založení, vývoj a ráz v XIV. století/Charles University in Prague. Its Establishment, Development and Character in the 14th Century* (Prague: Orbis, 1948).

of the topic following the postwar wave of studies due to the generational change in Czech history researchers. The older generation, who were mainly from the positivist school with national-liberal outlooks, was replaced by a younger generation who were more Marxist in orientation, sometimes to the extent that they were ideologically blinded at the start of their careers. Naturally, the younger historians required time to establish themselves in their discipline. In the period of harsh Stalinism of the first half of the 1950s the historical output concerning university history suffered from uncertainty due to the reconstruction of Czech higher education system following Soviet models. Numerous ambiguities related to ideological changes in humanities, related interpretation uncertainty, generation change at historical workplaces and an overall lack of stability of scholarly environment contributed to the fact that no major work of a formative character for CU or higher education was published¹¹.

A sign of the new trends in the field of research into the history of universities was the establishment of the Institute of the History of CU in 1958, whose activities culminated with the publication of a synthesis in 1964 by a group of authors under the guidance of František Kavka. This was an interpretation of the history of CU in a synthetic form based on the nationalist and leftist story of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, although the text was already showing signs of the loosening in ideology which would be associated with the Prague Spring. As an expert on the rule of Emperor Charles IV, Kavka was able to grasp the older history of the university in an unusually complex manner, involving many social, cultural and economic contexts¹². However, the defeat of the reformist movement within the Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1968-1969 led to significant changes in CU's staff, the Institute was closed and the research team broken up.

The period of rigid Normalization in the 1970s was an inauspicious one for the study of history at CU, but by subtly evading political pressure, a group of historians centred around František Kavka, Josef Petráň and František Šmahel managed some small-scale heuristic research, which was to bear fruit with the easing of political pressure in the 1980s. The published syntheses from this time again focused on the older periods and attempted

¹¹ Josef Petráň, *Filozofové dělají revoluci. Filozofická fakulta University Karlovy během komunistického experimentu (1948-1968-1989) / Philosophers Make the Revolution. Charles University's Faculty of Arts during the Communist Experiment (1948-1968-1989)* (Prague: Carolinum 2015): 190ff.

¹² František Kavka et al., *Stručné dějiny University Karlovy/A Brief History of Charles University* (Prague: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1964).

to avoid interpretations of the period following the Communist coup in 1948. In the case of Kavka and Šmahel, their academic specializations were focused on the Luxemburg and Hussite eras, whilst Petráň looked at early modern history. Therefore, the fact that the increasingly politicized modern university history was overlooked is also within this context. In the 1970s, the 19th-century-history expert, Jan Havránek, joined this informal group in its research collaboration. The group benefited from the gradual relaxation in political pressure in the mid-1980s, and the archive work from this period culminated in the publication of the monumental synthesis *A History of Charles University* from 1995 to 1998, with an abbreviated English version in 2001¹³.

This synthesis is still the most comprehensive work by Czech historians in the field of the history of universities, and its first three volumes in particular can be compared with the most advanced works abroad. The most comprehensive research focused on the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age, periods which had undergone the most advanced examination at the time of publication. However, the majority of its shortcomings are to be found in the volume examining the history of the 20th century. This was due to the research having previously been ideologically constrained, something which had still not been entirely addressed by the time of the book's publication for the anniversary of CU in 1998. Therefore, the book has features which are closely linked to the concepts of institutional history with its enumerative view of the history of the faculties and disciplines.

The syntheses of the histories of CU's individual faculties were also constrained by political pressure, but just as important were the authors' inadequacies in relation to the scientific disciplines¹⁴. Therefore, it was refreshing when in the early 1990s several important works were published on the history of the CU's medical faculties, which signalled a gradual transference to a younger generation of researchers, as well as concerning historians' cooperation with scientific and medical disciplines¹⁵. 2007-2008

¹³ František Kavka – Josef Petráň, *A History of Charles University I-II*. (Prague: Carolinum, 2001).

¹⁴ František Čech et al., *Přírodovědecká fakulta Univerzity Karlovy 1920-1980: Dějiny, současnost, perspektivy/Charles University's Faculty of Science 1920-1980: History, the Present, Perspectives* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1981); Josef Petráň, *Nástin dějin filozofické fakulty Univerzity Karlovy v Praze (do roku 1948)/An Outline of the History of Charles University's Faculty of Arts in Prague (until 1948)* (Prague: Charles University, 1983); also: Carolinum (Prague: Charles University, 1983, also in English and German; Jan Havránek – Josef Petráň – Anna Skýbová, *Universitas Carolina 1348-1984* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1986).

¹⁵ Ludmila Hlaváčková – Petr Svobodný, *Dějiny pražských lékařských fakult 1348-1990/A History of the Prague Medical Faculties 1348-1990* (Prague: Carolinum, 1993).

saw the last publications to date of syntheses of the history of CU's faculties, based on the collaboration of historians, legal experts and theologians¹⁶. The development in the research has meant that the above-mentioned syntheses are no longer so up to date and innovation in university history research has come more from monographs reflecting on political interference in universities in general.

In recent years there has been significant progress in research into the history of CU, particularly those monographs analyzing some aspects of its more neglected older history. The end of communist ideological pressure has also greatly benefited the development of research into the theological aspects of CU's activities¹⁷. Researchers linked to CU have also published several lengthy biographical dictionaries¹⁸ and dozens of works summarizing

¹⁶ Vojtěch Novotný, *Katolická teologická fakulta 1939-1990 : prolegomena k dějinám české katolické teologie druhé poloviny 20. století/The Catholic Theological Faculty 1939-1990 : A Prolegomenon to the History of Czech Catholic Theology in the Second Half of the 20th Century* (Prague: Carolinum, 2007); Jan Kuklík et al., *Charles University's Faculty of Law in Prague* (Prague, Havlíček Brain Team, 2008).

¹⁷ Blanka Zilynská, *Husitské synody v Čechách 1418-1440. Příspěvek k úloze univerzitních mistrů v husitské církvi a revoluci/The Hussite Councils in Bohemia 1418-1440. A Contribution to the Role of the University Masters in the Hussite Church and Revolution* (Prague: Charles University, 1985); Jiří Kejř, *Dějiny pražské právnické univerzity/A History of Prague's Law University* (Prague: Carolinum, 1995); Jiří Stočes, *Pražské univerzitní národy do roku 1409/Prague's University Nations to 1409* (Prague: Carolinum, 2010); Petr Hlaváček et al., *Kacířská univerzita: osobnosti pražské utrakvistické univerzity 1417-1622/A Heretical University: Personalities from Prague's Utraquist University 1417-1622* (Prague: Toga, 2013). Jiří Stočes, *Pražské univerzitní národy do roku 1409 / Prague's University Nations to 1409* (Prague: Carolinum 2010); František Šmahel, František, *Die Prager Universität im Mittelalter : gesammelte Aufsätze/The Charles University in the Middle Ages: selected studies* (Leiden : Brill 2007); František Šmahel, *Alma mater Pragensis : studie k počátkům Univerzity Karlovy (The Study the Origins of CU Prague)* (Prague: Carolinum 2016); František Šmahel, František, *Die Prager Universität im Mittelalter : gesammelte Aufsätze/The Charles University in the Middle Ages : selected studies* (Leiden : Brill 2007); Ivana Čornejová – Alena Richterová et alii, *The Jesuits and the Clementinum* (Prague : National Library of the Czech Republic : Czech Province of the Society of Jesus 2006).

¹⁸ From the best works Miroslav Truc – Olga Müllerová, *Seznam osob Univerzity Karlovy / The list of persons of Charles University* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1967); Josef Tříška, *Životopisný slovník předhusitské pražské univerzity 1348-1409/A Biographical Dictionary of the Pre-Hussite Prague University 1348-1409* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1981); Ivana Čornejová – Anna Fechtnerová, *Životopisný slovník pražské univerzity: Filozofická a teologická fakulta 1654-1773 / Biographical Dictionary of Prague University: Faculty of Arts and Theology* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1986); Karel Beránek, *Bakaláři a mistři filozofické fakulty Univerzity Karlovy v letech 1586-1620/Baccalaurei et magistri in facultate philosophica Universitatis Carolinae Pragensis ab anno 1586 usque ad annum 1620* (Prague: MON 1989); *Biografický slovník pražské lékařské fakulty 1348-1939/A Biographical Dictionary of Prague's Medical Faculty 1348-1939* (Prague: Charles University, 1988-1993). Karel Beránek, *Mistři,*

the histories of individual disciplines. A more comprehensive and slightly critical understanding of the history of disciplines in a social, economic and cultural context is the rule for more capable historians¹⁹, even though the ideological pressure of the communist regime was most marked here. In the case of other disciplines, there has been an increase in the number of texts with a more or less hagiographic subtext. Here the author usually views the relevant workplace in CU as being a determining factor in what is happening in the discipline. How external actors influence the activities of the discipline is not usually expanded upon, and the main driver in the discipline is the achievements of great men associated with CU. Despite historical misunderstandings and various difficulties, these are stories which only mildly criticize their own work or the work of predecessors and colleagues. A slightly different interpretation is characteristic of those disciplines which were favoured by the communist regime, where, in comparison with others, a stronger ideological legitimization of their role comes to the fore. Criticism of political science here was usually taboo, both in the period before 1989 and afterwards²⁰.

Interpretations of the history of the law faculty and its individual legal and economic disciplines are less common and are different in an important way. Here the history of the university becomes much more part of the history of the discipline, which unlike the humanitarian disciplines is interpreted

bakaláři a studenti pražské filozofické fakulty 1640-1654/Magistri, baccalauri nec non studentes facultatis philosophicae Pragensis 1640-1654 / Masters, Bachelors and Students of the Faculty of Arts in Prague (Prague: National Library of the Czech Republic, 1998).

¹⁹ Karel Kazbunda, *Stolice dějin na pražské universitě/The Department of History at Prague University*. Volumes I-IV. (Prague: Charles University and Carolinum, 1964-2000); Jan Bouzek et al., *Dějiny archeologie/A History of Archaeology* (Prague: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1984); *200 let pomocných věd historických na Filozofické fakultě Univerzity Karlovy v Praze/200 Years of Auxilliary Historical Sciences at Charles University's Faculty of Arts in Prague* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova 1988); František Kutnar, *Přehledné dějiny českého a slovenského dějepisectví/A Clear History of Czech and Slovak Historiography* (Prague: Lidové Noviny Publishers, 1997²); Vítězslav Sommer, *Angažované dějepisectví: stranická historiografie mezi stalinismem a reformním komunismem (1950-1970)/Engaged Historiography: Party Historiography between Stalinism and Reform Communism (1950-1970)* (Prague: Lidové Noviny Publishers, 2011).

²⁰ Josef Kurz, *Slovanská filologie na Karlově univerzitě/Slavonic Philology at Charles University* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1968); Antonín Robek, *Dějiny české etnografie/A History of Czech Ethnography* (Prague: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1976); Teodor Bešta et al., *Padesát let polonistiky na Univerzitě Karlově v Praze/Fifty Years of Polish Studies at Charles University in Prague* (Prague: Charles University, 1977); Richard Sedláč, ed., *100 let pedagogiky na Filozofické fakultě UK 1882-1982/100 Years of Teaching at the Charles University's Faculty of Arts 1882-1982* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova 1982).

predominantly through the influence of practical developments (legislative processes, judicial decisions, the development of professional associations), while the influence of university teaching on the judicial community is given limited interpretation. Medical and scientific disciplines have shown little interest in their own history, as historical interpretations of their discipline and workplace are not part of their basic legitimizing strategies. The subject is usually only of interest in the preparation of textbooks for the basic orientation of new students²¹. From the perspective of the medical disciplines, one typical genre of university history is the publication of the memoirs of great figures associated with, or the type of work the institution is involved in with hagiographic passages celebrating the anniversary of the establishment of a clinic or hospital²².

A History of Universities Outside of Prague

The establishment of the second Czech university in Brno in 1919 and the restoration of the university in Olomouc in 1946 provided new impetus to interpreting the story of the universitas in Czech historiography. This began

²¹ Karel Beránek – Stanislav Segert, *Orientalistik an der Prager Universität I. (1348-1848)* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1967); Radim Kettner, *Geologické vědy na vysokých školách pražských/Geological Sciences at Prague's Universities* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1967); Jan Jan-ko, *Vznik experimentální biologie v Čechách (1882-1918)/The Origin of Experimental Biology in Bohemia (1882-1918)* (Prague: Academia, 1982); Václav Rusek – Mária Kučerová, *Úvod do studia farmacie a dějiny farmacie/An Introduction to the Study of Pharmacy and the History of Pharmacy* (Prague – Martin: Avicenum – Osveta, 1983); Karel Tuček, *Přehled historie Mineralogického a petrografického ústavu přírodovědecké fakulty Univerzity Karlovy/An Overview of the History of the Mineralogy and Petrology Departments of Charles University* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1987); Marie Balíková et al., *Sto deset let české lékařské chemie a biochemie/One Hundred Years of Czech Medical Chemistry and Biochemistry* (Prague: Galén 1994); Martina Bečvářová, *Česká matematická komunita v letech 1848 až 1918/The Czech Mathematical Community from 1848 to 1918* (Prague: Matfyzpress, 2008); Valentin Urfus, *Právní dějiny na pražské právnické fakultě : (jejich výuka od osvícenství do druhé světové války)/A History of Law at Prague's Faculty of Law: (from the Enlightenment to the Second World War)* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 2000).

²² Pavel Klener, ed., *Sto dvacet let I. české chirurgické kliniky I. lékařské fakulty Univerzity Karlovy/One Hundred and Twenty Years of the First Czech Surgical Clinic of the First Medical Faculty of Charles University* (Prague: Carolinum, 2002); Václav Jirásek et al., *Dějiny I. interní kliniky/A History of the First Department of Internal Medicine* (Prague: Carolinum, 1996); Vladimír Vondráček, *Lékař vzpomíná/A Doctor Remembers (1920-1938)* (Prague: Avicenum, 1978); Jiří Syllaba, *Vzpomínky a úvahy lékaře/Memories and Reflections of a Doctor* (Prague: Avicenum, 1992) etc.

to reveal that Prague's university monopoly status had been detrimental to the development of Czech science, while figures such as Tomáš Masaryk (1850–1937), the first Czechoslovak president and also a teacher of philosophy at CU, repeatedly came out against Prague intellectuals' alleged residence in their ivory towers. The establishment of the university in Brno ushered in the previously unknown element of competition into the Czech scientific environment, and from the 1930s the university clearly disrupted the Prague's hegemony in a variety of disciplines. Those influences outside of Prague had also been strengthened by the restoration of Olomouc University, which had been closed since 1860, though the continuous existence of the Theological Faculty had assured continuity with the early-modern Jesuit College. Together with the development of university education in Slovakia, Czechoslovak science formed a silent alliance of schools outside of Prague against the hegemony of the centre, which had been weakened by Charles University having to share its privileges with its Slovak counterpart in Bratislava, and by the rivalry from Brno and Olomouc.

In the 1990s, Czech public universities were established in quick succession in another six towns: České Budějovice (1991), Ostrava (1991), Opava (1991), Ústí nad Labem (1991), Pilsen (1991) and Hradec Králové (1994). 2001 saw the establishment of the newest public university to date in Zlín. Other colleges were also transformed into universities and there is now a total of 16 in the Czech Republic. In addition, there are several private colleges and two state universities to educate members of the security forces. This development led to some realignment within the Czech university setting and also to a sharper delineation of historical output from the field of university history. The large, older universities, i.e. Prague, Brno and Olomouc, based their legitimacy on a historical interpretation of their own history which sees them as the bearers of Czech science, while overlooking the contributions from the other so-called regional universities. The privileged position of Prague's CU is further legitimized by its tradition, size and complex form of scientific disciplines, including those which are unique in the Czech Republic. Nevertheless, when narrating the story of Czech university science and education, the two large Moravian institutions can be considered to be representative of the Czech Republic's very characteristic historical eastern regions of Moravia and Silesia, particularly for the humanities. Thanks to the support from regional political representatives and sections of the public, the university in Brno has acted as the mouthpiece for Moravian interests over a long period. In the cases of Brno and Olomouc, their links to Slovakia form an important strand in their narratives. Unlike in Prague, with its ties

mainly to the West and the role of the “Hussite” tradition, Brno’s university story emphasizes the role played by Vienna and Austria, while Olomouc highlights its relationship with Moravian Catholicism, Silesia and Poland.

In terms of the methodology of the historical synthesis, a group centred around František Jordán published *A History of the University in Brno*. From 1965, this group even had its own autonomous workplace called the *Section for the History of the University in Brno and the Study of the Works of J. E. Purkyně*, which unlike Prague survived the political repression after 1968 and eventually split up of its own accord after completing its main task of publishing a synthesis in 1969²³. In a certain sense, the successor to the *Section’s* vision was *Universitas*, a review of the history of Brno university teaching, which first came out in 1968. Jordán’s synthesis was a high-quality piece of research examining the nationalist struggle for a Czech university in Moravia in the 19th century and the construction of a university as a national jewel in the provinces during the interwar period. On the other hand, the postwar treatment of its history was limited by the intense ideological pressure from the regime as well as by the trauma of the Nazi occupation, which greatly affected this generation of authors, as well as František Jordán personally. Another of the work’s limitations is its insufficiently critical and poor treatment of academic work and its application, though this was a problem of the period in general. Other syntheses on the history of Moravian universities were published in 2009 to coincide with anniversaries. These publications were institutional concepts of history, which was narrower in Olomouc’s case and broader in Brno’s; and a typical feature is that they are once again success stories. The Brno authors tried to introduce themes which had been unusual in Czech university history; for example the history of the finance and management of Brno higher education. They also expanded on themes which had previously only been superficially examined, such as the socio-historical and cultural habitus of senior staff and the complex network of relationships between the university and external actors. There was a special examination of the culture of cooperation between the university and its graduates, the differences in the cultures within the individual faculties and disciplines, and the lines of conflict running in general through the university. One limitation of these studies was the authors’ inability to observe the academic performance of the university as a whole, as well as its individual disciplines (also relating to the commercial sphere), as they lac-

²³ František Jordán et al., *Dějiny Univerzity v Brně/A History of the University in Brno* (Brno: University of Jan Evangelista Purkyně, 1969).

ked the necessary expertise from a large, transdisciplinary team. As with the research also being carried out into political influences on the management of CU's Faculty of Arts, here it was also impossible to closely analyse the relationship that the university had with the political powers because of the lack of source material, particularly from during the communist regime. The authors attempted to apply a similar approach with a synthesis of the history of Brno's Faculty of Arts (2010). Here, unlike the university-wide synthesis, they could only improve on the interpretation of academic research which was linked to the authors' own discipline in the humanities, though even here there were still gaps in political history²⁴.

The first research into the history of Olomouc University was in 1947, though neither it nor the second synthesis in 1973 had any greater ambition than to provide a rather brief and factual conception of institutional history²⁵. In 2009, a group around Jiří Fiala also failed to offer any great methodological innovations, instead producing a simple, factually conceived view of the history of the university, interpreted once again as an institutional success story²⁶. This methodology was also used in 2013 and 2016 in studies assessing the history of two of Olomouc University's faculties²⁷, and it can, therefore, be said that of the three "cornerstone" Czech universities, Olomouc has had the least successful analysis of its history to date. Instead of the format of a history of Olomouc University, there have been more interesting studies concentrating on religious history, where Czech and international scholars have interpreted the history of Olomouc higher education as being the bastion of Jesuit influence on Moravia and the Habsburg empire²⁸. However, the

²⁴ Lukáš Fasora – Jiří Hanuš, *Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity. Pohledy na dějiny a současnost/Masaryk University Faculty of Arts. Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Brno: Munipress, 2010).

²⁵ Václav Nešpor, *Dějiny univerzity olomoucké/A History of Olomouc University*. (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 1947; Jiří Navrátil, *Kapitoly z dějin olomoucké univerzity 1573-1973/ Chapters on the History of Olomouc University 1573-1973* (Olomouc: Central National Committee of the Provincial Capital City, 1973).

²⁶ Jiří Fiala et al., *Univerzita v Olomouci (1573-2013)/The University in Olomouc (1573-2013)* (Olomouc: Palacký University 2009 and 2013).

²⁷ *60 let Přírodovědecké fakulty Univerzity Palackého/60 Years of Palacký University's Faculty of Science*. (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2013); *70 let Pedagogické fakulty Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci 1946-2016/70 Years of the Teacher Training College at Palacký University in Olomouc 1946-2016* (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2016).

²⁸ Bohumil Navrátil, *Jesuité olomoučtí za protireformace/Jesuits of Olomouc during the Counter Reformation* (Brno: Provincial Committee of the Moravian Margrave, 1916); Jana Mačáková, *Jezuitský konvikt: sídlo uměleckého centra Univerzity Palackého v Olomouci : dějiny - stavební a umělecké dějiny - obnova a využití/The Jesuit Boarding School: The Artistic Centre of*

anniversary of Olomouc University provided local researchers with the impetus to examine political interference in the university structures, which was employed in the projects mentioned below and which signalled a significant shift in the history of Czech universities.

2016 saw the publication of several anniversary-related studies on the institutional history of the more modern universities and their faculties. Some of these were more promotional works designed to appeal to potential students, which is symptomatic of universities and faculties which arose from teacher training colleges²⁹. There were interesting studies from modern universities, which were often the heir to old specialist colleges. Some successful college histories included the Technical University – Báňská College in Ostrava (established in 1849 in Příbram as the Báňská Academy, relocated in 1945 to Ostrava, a university since 1995) and Pardubice University, established in 1994 from the College of Chemistry founded in 1950³⁰. The long history of Czech mining schools was effectively presented as part of a network of similar schools within the Central European context. This mature piece of research, backed by a large dose of professional prestige, is in many ways a demonstration of the potential for close cooperation between historians and mining experts and an example of a work which aims for a comprehensive grasp of history³¹.

Although Milena Lenderová's short history of Pardubice University does not provide any methodological innovations, it is noteworthy today due

Palacký University in Olomouc : A History – Architectural and Artistic History – Renewal and Use (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2002); Andělín Grobelný, *Polští a ruští studenti na olomoucké univerzitě/Polish and Russian Students at Olomouc University* (Opava: Silesian Study Institute, 1954); Anna Fechtnerová, *Rektoři kolejí Tovaryšstva Ježíšova/The Rectors of the Jesuit Order College* (Prague: National Library, 1993) etc.

²⁹ *10 let Západočeské univerzity v Plzni/10 years of the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen* (Pilsen: University of West Bohemia, 2002); *Univerzita Pardubice. 25 let Fakulty ekonomicko-správní/University of Pardubice. 25 Years of the Faculty of Economics and Administration* (Pardubice: University of Pardubice, 2016); Soňa Jandová et al., *Technická univerzita v Liberci : 60 let univerzitního vzdělávání v Liberci, 1953-2013/The Technical University in Liberec : 60 Years of University Education in Liberec, 1953-2013* (Liberec: Technical University, 2013).

³⁰ Jiří Majer, *Z dějin vysoké školy báňské v Příbrami. Symposium Hornická Příbram ve vědě a technice (From the History of Báňská College in Příbram. Symposium: The Mining Town of Příbram in Science and Technology)* (Příbram: The Mining Town of Příbram, 1984); Jiří Urbanec et al., *Vysoké školství ve Slezsku a na Ostravsku : sborník z konference konané v Opavě 24. dubna 2001/Higher Education in Silesia and Ostravsko : conference proceedings from 24 April 2001 in Opava* (Opava : University of Silesia, 2001).

³¹ Ctirad Schejbal et al., *Historie a současnost báňského školství v českých zemích/Historical and Contemporary Báňská Education in the Bohemian Lands* (Ostrava: Blesk, 1996).

to the attention it pays to the history of the students of this East Bohemian university. On the one hand, it looks at political activity connected largely with the process of reform in the mid-1960s and the revolution in 1989, and on the other hand, it looks at the ordinary life of students including an analysis of how they form their identity, the idiosyncrasies of student culture and their places of memory³². A small team of historians from České Budějovice looked at the history of their own university from an unusual perspective. The authors interpreted the existence of the University of South Bohemia as the culmination of the process of developing a regional system of lower-level schools, with a special emphasis on the history of religious institutions, but with an obvious hiatus in this historical interpretation in relation to the network of universities established and their traditions³³.

Non-institutional Studies

One result of the overly close ties between Czech historical research into universities and institutional anniversaries is that there have been relatively few studies which have systematically transcended the narrow history of one school of thought. If we can look at this in a slightly abstract way, then this can be divided into three groups. The first group consists of studies from the history of administration and universities spanning the whole spectrum of disciplines. Historians and legal experts have published several valuable studies, mainly from the Medieval period and Early Modern Age, the political context of which was linked to the conflict between Czech and German interpretations of the history of Charles University. The source base had to be connected with Charles University in Prague, but the ambition of this work was broader and the authors followed comparative links, mainly with Austrian and German universities³⁴. The second group consists mainly of studies that

³² Lenderová, Milena, *Dějiny vysokého učení v Pardubicích: univerzita v proměnách času : 1950-2010/A History of Higher Education in Pardubice : The University in Times of Change : 1950-2010* (Pardubice: University of Pardubice, 2010).

³³ Miroslav Novotný et al., *Dějiny vyššího školství a vzdělanosti na jihu Čech od středověkých počátků do současnosti/A History of Higher Education in South Bohemia from the Beginnings of the Middle Ages to the Present* (České Budějovice: University of South Bohemia, 2006).

³⁴ Gerson Wolf, *Das Unterrichtswesen in Österreich*. (Vienna: Hölder, 1880); Otto Placht – František Havelka, *Předpisy pro vysoké školy Republiky československé/Regulations for Universities of the Czechoslovak Republic*. (Prague: Placht&Havelka, 1932); Michal Navrátil, *Almanach československých právníků/An Almanach of Czechoslovak Lawyers*. (Prague: Navrátil, 1930); Zdeněk Tobolka, *Národní a univerzitní knihovna v Praze, její vznik a vývoj I./The National and*

were written during the communist regime which aimed at an analysis of the Communist Party's political success in reforming university education. More soundly based work of this kind usually followed two lines of comparison – synchronic and diachronic. This meant either a comparison of the historical advantages of the university education systems in socialist and capitalist countries, or less frequently, comparing interwar Czechoslovak universities with the situation resulting from the communist reforms. One important subject of interest here to historians was the progressive tradition of students³⁵. The third group is associated with the past decade and has brought the greatest methodological innovations. These involve efforts to investigate the influence of the communist regime on Czech society, although not in the simplistic terms of the guilty and the victims as was typical in the 1990s. More sophisticated methods were employed to examine the more segmented relationship between individuals, institutions and political powers, and managed to uncover more complicated power games, loyalties and strategies connected with universities during the time of the communist government.

University Library in Prague, Its Establishment and Development I. (Prague: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1959); Jiří Kejř, *Stát, církev a společnost v disputacích na pražské universitě v době Husově a husitské / State, Church and Society in Disputations at Prague University in Johannes Hus Period* (Prague, ČSAV, 1964); Jiří Kejř, *Kvodlibetní disputace na pražské univerzitě/The Quodlibet Disputation at Prague University.* (Prague: Universita Karlova, 1971; Petra Skřejpková – Ladislav Soukup, eds., *Antologie české právní vědy/An Anthology of Czech Jurisprudence* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova 1993; *Dějiny právního stavu a právnických profesí/A History of Legal Status and Legal Professions* (Prague: Vodnář, 1997).

³⁵ František Antonín Slavík, *Dějiny českého studentstva/A History of the Czech Student Body.* (Prague: Akademický čtenářský spolek, 1874); Richard Wolf, *České studentstvo v době prvního třicetiletí české university (1882-1912)/The Czech Student Body in the first 30 Years of the Czech University (1882-1912)* (Prague: Svaz československého studentstva, 1912); Zdeněk Nejedlý a Univerzita Karlova (Zdeněk Nejedlý and Charles University), (Prague: Orbis, 1953); Miloslav Moulis, *Mládež proti okupantům/The Youth Against the Occupiers* (Prague: Svoboda, 1966); Gustav Hudec, ed., *Studentstvo v boji proti válce, fašismu a za mír I.-II./The Student Body in the Struggle against Fascism and for Peace I.-II.* (Prague: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1970, 1978); Hana Kráčmarová, *Vysokoškoláci v revolučních letech 1945-1948/University Students in the Years of Revolution 1945-1948* (Prague: Mladá fronta, 1976); Ivan Tesár, *KŠČ a studentstvo v předmnichovské republice/The Czech Communist Party and the Student Body in the Pre-Munich Republic* (Prague: Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1980); Miroslav Cipro, *Idea vysoké školy/The University Idea.* (Prague: Univerzita Karlova, 1981); Věra Mišurcová et alii, eds., *Dějiny socialistické školy a pedagogiky ČSSR, BLR, MLR, NDR, SSSR : mezin. výběrová bibliogr. 1945-1983 (A History of Socialist Schools and Teachers in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, East Germany, USSR : inter. select bib. 1945-1983.)* (Prague: Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy, 1985). Jana Ratajová (ed.), *Pražský student : univerzitní studenti v dějinách Prahy / Prague Student– University Students in the History of Prague* (Prague: Scriptorium 2008).

Czech academics' growing focus on the relationship between universities and political power can be linked to academic articles and a monograph by the Olomouc historian, Pavel Urbášek, from 2008, which was published as a result of increased interest in the history of Olomouc University at the time of its anniversary³⁶. Up until then, there had been a very open interpretation of the relationship between the communist authorities, their regional representatives and the universities, in particular those outside of Prague, and this attracted considerable interest amongst academics, particularly younger researchers and students. On the other hand, the older generation of historians kept a noticeable distance from such self-introspection into their own discipline. In his interpretation of the relationship between political powers and the university, Urbášek focused mainly on Jaromír Hrbek, the Minister of Education (1969-1971), in connection with the curriculum of the higher education authorities. Therefore, in his analysis of the links between the regime and the university authorities, Urbášek studied those holding high office. Although his work did not bring entirely surprising revelations, it did remove some quietly respected taboos and pointed the way for further research. His next study analyzed an older period (1953-1969), with greater emphasis on comparing the universities in Olomouc and Brno (2012), but did not achieve the same success as his first book.

One of the reasons for this was the simultaneous publication of a study on the influence of the communist authorities on Prague's Faculty of Arts. This was more methodologically advanced, had a wider range of sources, and was a much more courageous work carried out by researchers who at the time were mostly students³⁷. This study benefited greatly from the fact that the documents from the Communist State Security pertaining to Prague's CU had been preserved, whereas they had usually been shredded in the case of other universities. The young researchers used a methodology based on the theory of loyalties to uncover the various strategies employed by institutions, disciplines, as well as individual teachers, to defend themselves

³⁶ Pavel Urbášek, *Vysokoškolský vzdělávací systém v letech tzv. normalizace/The University Education System During Normalization*. (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2008); Pavel Urbášek - Jiří Pulec, *Vysokoškolský vzdělávací systém v letech 1945-1969/The University Education System from 1945-1969* (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2012).

³⁷ Jakub Jareš – Matěj Spurný – Katka Volná et al., *Náměstí Krasnoarmějců 2: učitelé a studenti Filozofické fakulty UK v období normalizace/Red Army Square 2: Teachers and Students of the CU Faculty of Arts During Normalization*. (Prague: Togga, 2012). Principally the work of Katka Volná et al., *Prověřená fakulta: KSČ na Filozofické fakultě UK v letech 1969-1989/Vetting the Faculty: The Czechoslovak Communist Party at the CU Faculty of Arts from 1969-1989*. (Prague: Ústav pro soudobé dějiny Akademie věd České republiky, 2009).

against the regime and its representatives. The authors spoke very openly about the various forms of cooperation between academia and the regime, but they sensitively differentiated between the actors' motives for collaborating with the regime, which included ideological blindness, misuse of power, careerism, self-sacrifice, as well as the extremely controversial cooperation with the Czechoslovak or even Soviet secret police. One extremely valuable finding is the thorough analysis of informal networks between academics as a way of defending their own interests under political pressure. The publication met with a mixed reception, particularly in Prague, where some thought it reopened painful old wounds and grievances, whilst others saw it as an important step towards reconciliation in the academic world.

In a certain sense, one reaction to the rebellious moves of adolescent academia was the last major act in the field – Josef Petráň's work, *Philosophers Make the Revolution*³⁸. The author is a historian from the oldest generation of researchers, who despite specializing in the Early Modern Age, took it upon himself to examine the part played by academics from Prague's Faculty of Arts in the "revolts" in academia in 1948, 1968 and 1989. As a contemporary eyewitness, Petráň very humanely analyzed the role of the intelligentsia in the devastation of both humanist thought and culture in general under the communist regime. In contrast to the vitriol and harsh judgments of the younger researchers, his book has more of an apologetic feel. The work is packed full of facts and densely populated with 1,500 people. The author consciously renounced methodological springboards and was very reticent in his interpretations. The opus is written from the perspective of the victors who managed – as did Petráň – to select an appropriate strategy of cooperation with the regime and remain within the discipline, i.e. to survive the slings and arrows of all of these "revolutions". As a contemporary witness, the author is at times very tolerant of many questionable acts by individuals and groups associated with the faculty.

Perhaps the most important publication for the development of university history in Czechia will be Petráň's profound and personal examination of the importance of Marxism in academia and the links between Czechoslovak Marxism and West Europe. All of this is linked to a psychological analysis of an academic from the humanities struggling with ideology and

³⁸ Josef Petráň, *Filozofové dělají revoluci. Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Karlovy během komunistického experimentu (1948–1968–1989)/Philosophers Make the Revolution. Charles University's Faculty of Arts during the Communist Experiment (1948–1968–1989)* (Prague: Carolinum, 2015).

at the same time with his own conscience. Other researchers will also be inspired by the author's strenuous attempt to create the "Golden Sixties" resulting from reduced ideological pressure on universities, i.e. to use his ideas to support what is now a mythical construction that is found in numerous Czech studies on the history of universities. This extremely important myth about Czech universities will have to undergo the difficult process of deconstruction in an attempt to evaluate its usefulness for individual groups of academic experts. In many respects the myth "bewitches" the reality of the period in order to justify the narrative of the so-called reform Communists, who try to legitimize their own controversial employment in universities before 1989 and even after³⁹. The emphasis Petrův inadvertently places on the elaborate ideological and power (and sometimes just mischief-making) "games" within the party which are associated with the so-called period of reform at the university is likely to become an important stimulus for younger researchers in the future.

Conclusion

From our perspective, Czech universities are characterized by the following features of their culture reflected in historiography:

- a) In Czech historical science the institutional university master narrative is very strongly bound to the national narrative and its various regional and provincial variations. It is the basic identity code for university communities, principally for the humanities and the legal disciplines, created by scholars with strong territorial links to their academic identities. It is less apparent in the social sciences and the concept is only marginally adopted by medical and scientific disciplines. The concept has more traction in universities outside of the capital, where the defence of regional interests against scientific imperialism from the centre forms an important part of the story. In a Czech context, the strength of the national narrative in the story of universities is much stronger than in countries where a multiple network of native-language universities was commonplace at the start of the 19th century.

³⁹ Blanka Zilynská – Petr Svobodný, eds., *Česká věda a Pražské jaro (1963-1970) : sborník z konference (Czech Science and the Prague Spring (1963-1970) : conference proceedings)* (Prague: Karolinum, 2001).

- b) An interesting Czech contribution to the debate on the role of the university is the addition of so-called republican, progressive, democratic and secular values to the narrative of universities established after 1918. The importance of the French republican model for the identity of the newly established university communities cannot be over-estimated with regard to the interwar calls for new schools, and the subsequent deconstruction of the conservative-religious mentality of a community connected at that time with the demise of the Habsburg Empire. From the perspective of the lay public, the schools which emerged after 1919 were seen as progress's battering ram, and during the communist regime, sections of the university community were to continue in this tradition.
- c) The extremely turbulent political developments in the countries of Central Eastern Europe brought an important feature to the university master narrative – the defence of their own existence, the right to freedom of education and research, as well as the appropriate standing within the global university network. The institutions' struggle for stability or basic survival is also an important part of the master narrative. Here the measurement for the stability of a university's existence is fundamentally different than for those from West Europe or the large German universities.
- d) The "story" of the Central European university reflects ideas about its form and function as imagined by external actors in education and research. In comparison with the USA and West Europe, one Czech and Central European characteristic is the negligible role played by private university sponsors, and also the very limited links to leading applied research commissioned by western or multinational commercial entities. Therefore, the Central European university is much more a state university and submits to the decisions of the political class. Although this current absence of a dense network of commercial partners somewhat simplifies historians' university research work, at the same time the predominance of the public sector creates difficulties in researching the history of universities as educational institutes. If state interests and finance hold sway here, how can university culture be understood by the public? In the Czech Republic, the public is not sufficiently aware of the complexity of their role as taxpayer and they do not see the state as a service to citizens, which is why only a small section of the public reflect at all on the complicated issues concerning the meaning and purpose of a university.

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