

# THE ORIGINS OF MUNICIPAL STATISTICS IN BOHEMIAN LANDS

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## Abstract

This article is a partial contribution to the prospective compilation of the history of statistics in Bohemian lands. The general interest in statistics and the results of statistical surveys in the nineteenth century was reflected in the establishment of statistical offices in economic institutions (Patriotic–Economic Society, Industrial Unity, Chambers of Commerce and Trade), but also in the provincial and municipal authorities.

The Statistical Committee and Statistical Chair in Prague, founded in 1870, have the greatest importance for the development of statistics in Bohemian lands. Our contribution summarizes the activities of these authorities, the development of the used methods and extensive publishing activities (in Czech and German language) for about 50 years until the establishment of Czechoslovakia. In the next decades, statistical offices were established in other cities (Pilsen, Brno, Olomouc, Liberec, etc.), which in addition to their own annual reports and news published their contributions in the Viennese annual report “Österreichisches Städtebuch” (15 volumes in years 1888–1918).

**Key words:** history of statistics, municipal statistics, Karel Kořistka, Josef Erben

**JEL Code:** B16, B23, N33

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## Introduction

Unlike other scientific disciplines, the history of statistics in our country is still inadequately elaborated. The authors of this paper try to gradually contribute to improving this state by partial papers on the development of statistics in the XIX<sup>th</sup> and XX<sup>th</sup> century; see e.g. Závodský (1992), Závodský and Šimpach (2014, 2015, 2016, 2017), Kodera, Závodský and Šimpach (2015) etc.

The aim of the paper is to bring short overview of the municipal statistics in Czech lands during approximately first five decades (1870–1918) and to incorporate it to the context of the development of official statistics at our territory. We will focus mainly on the statistical service in Prague.

## **1 Official statistics in Austrian–Hungarian empire at the end of XIX<sup>th</sup> century**

Official statistics in Habsburg monarchy was to a large extent decentralized. Main branches of statistics (with exception of agricultural ones) were concentrated to central offices in Vienna (for the Hungarian part of monarchy in Budapest). It was mainly I. r. Central Statistical Committee (K. k. statistische Zentralkommission), but also significant part of economic statistics was organized by the statistical service of the Ministry of trade and some other ministries.

Landtags in particular countries of the monarchy were gradually founding land statistical offices in which (limited) competences was mainly agricultural statistics and statistics of land issues (schools, charity, land finance etc.). Vienna's offices and land self-governments were jealously guarding their competencies.

Also, the business and trade chambers were involved in statistics (at the territory of Bohemian lands they were in Prague, Plzeň, Liberec, Cheb, České Budějovice, Brno, Olomouc and Opava), then Industrial Unity and gradually the statistical offices in major Bohemian, Moravian and Silesian cities. Governor's Office in Prague, Agricultural Council, compiled and published various statistical surveys. This was also done e. g. by many financial institutions in their annual reports.

## **2 Municipal statistics in Prague**

The establishment of a workplace that would be concerned with statistics in Prague was considered since 60<sup>th</sup> years of XIX<sup>th</sup> century. It was assumed that it would be either established individual statistical office in Prague or entrust by the governance of municipal statistics the Land statistical office, which foundation in Prague was negotiated at that time.

A letter of the government of the Central Statistical Committee in Vienna to the mayor of Prague (from 10<sup>th</sup> June 1868) was an impulse to solving the problem. It contained the proposal to establish specialized statistical office according to the example of Vienna.<sup>1</sup> Following negotiation of the municipal council in Prague and its special committee lead to the establishment of the Statistical committee (Municipal statistical committee of the royal capital city of Prague), that met at the constituent meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1870.<sup>2</sup> The chairman of the commission was elected professor Karel Kořistka.

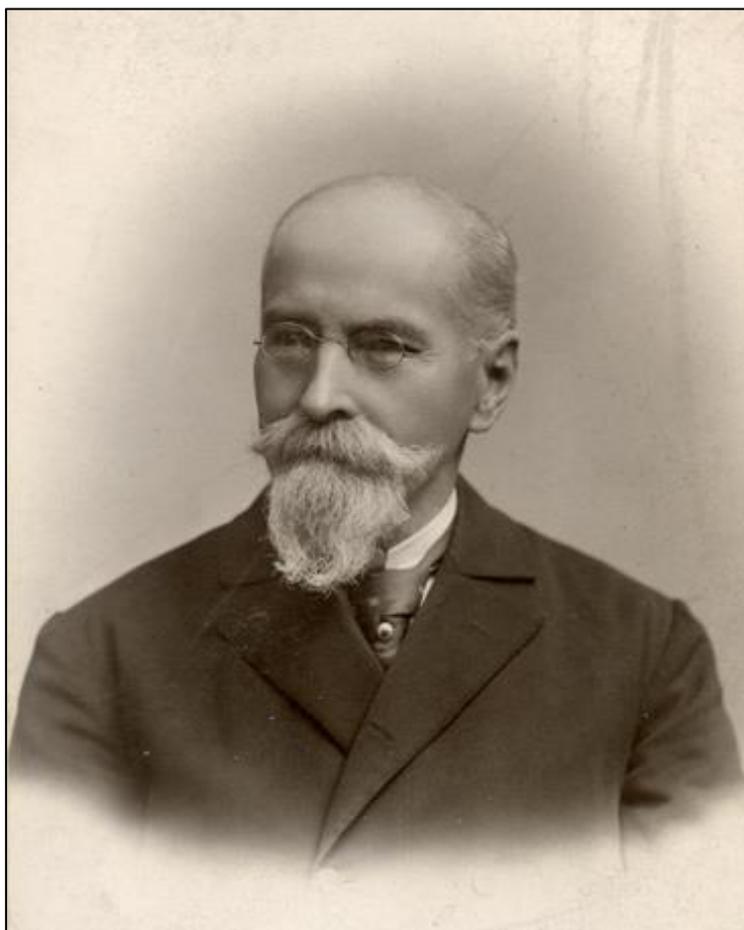
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<sup>1</sup> A statistical office was established here already in year 1862. See Peterka (1937), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> The process of various negotiations in years 1868–1870 is described in detail in Erben (1895), p. 3–7.

Karel Kořistka (1825–1906) was a professor of mathematics and geodesy at the Polytechnic in Prague (a predecessor of current CTU<sup>3</sup>) and reformer of technical universities in the monarchy, etc. He also dealt with management of agricultural statistics in Bohemia (1864–1897) and then of land statistics in Bohemia (1897–1905). He introduced modern mathematical and graphical methods to official statistics.

**Fig. 1: Karel Kořistka<sup>4</sup>**



Source: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Besides statistical committee was as an executive body organ established, small at the beginning, Statistical bureau, which chairman was elected Josef Erben. Statistical bureau was gradually developing its activity since the second half of year 1870.

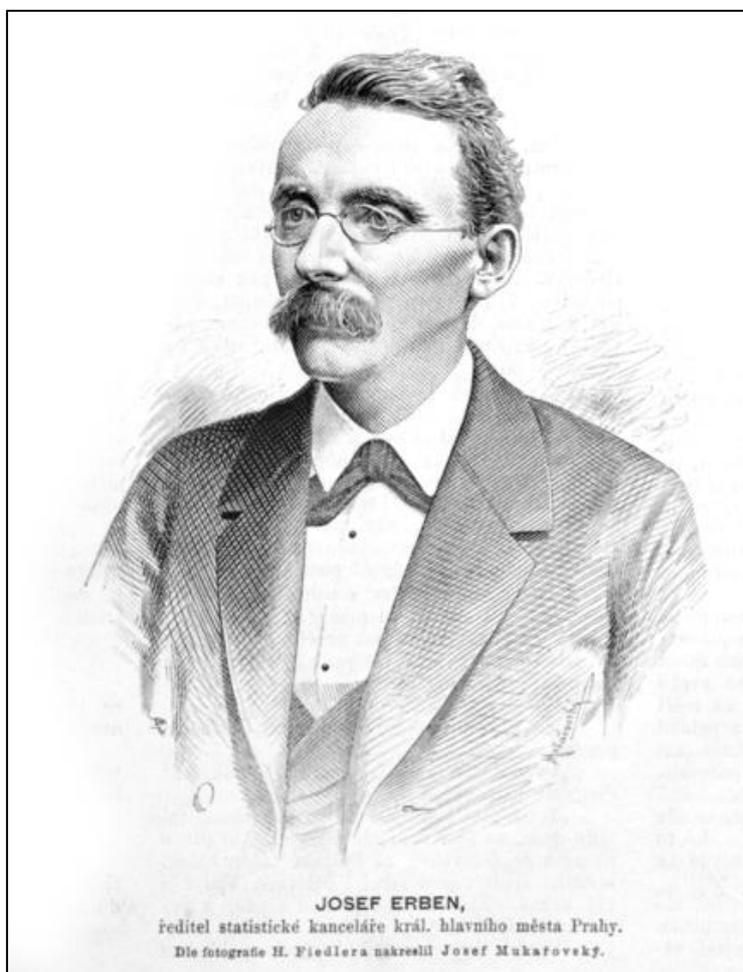
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<sup>3</sup> Czech Technical University.

<sup>4</sup> Photo by J. N. Langhans, Bibliothèque nationale de France [online] (URL: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8450251f/f1.item>)

Josef Erben (1830–1910) graduated at Philosophical faculty of university in Prague. He was a high school professor and since 1862 as an assisted professor of statistics of industry at Polytechnics in Prague. His first lecture was also printed (*K teorii statistiky průmyslu*, 1863).<sup>5</sup>

**Fig. 2: Josef Erben<sup>6</sup>**



Source: Zichová (2009)

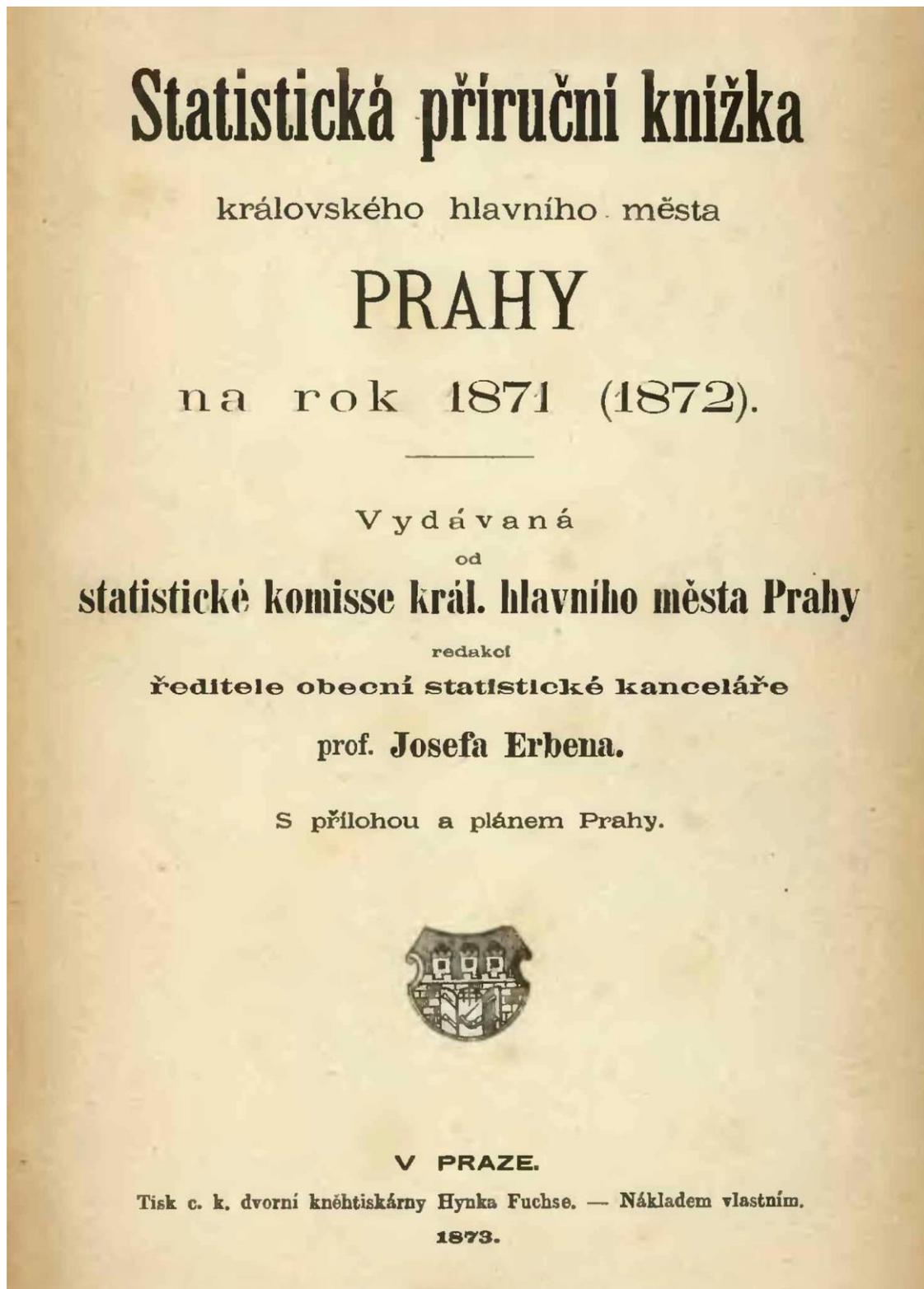
Statistical bureau started its rich publication activity already at the end of the year 1871 by publishing extensive book (more than 300 pages) *Statistika královského hlavního města Prahy*. The biggest part of the publication is devoted to the results of Population census held on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1869, that is considered to be the first modern census at our territory. Publication prints also information about the beginnings of the foundation of municipal statistical service in Prague, statistical overview of topographic relations and climate, state of livestock in the city

<sup>5</sup> Life and publications of J. Erben are described in detail in Zichová (2009).

<sup>6</sup> *Světozor*, vol. XXV (1891), iss. 11, p. 121.

and around (collected according to the tradition also in the framework of census) and statistics of demographic events.

Fig. 3: Title page of Czech volume of first statistical yearbook of Prague from year 1873



Source: authors

Since 1873 was more or less regularly published statistical yearbook of Prague, at the beginning under the title *Statistická příruční knížka král. hl. města Prahy* (*Statistical handbook of royal capital city of Prague*). First volume contains data for years 1871–1872. In many cases, the yearbook published data with more than one-year delay. Sometimes data for 2 to 3 years back were published together.

Fig. 4: Sample of the table from Czech publication of first statistical yearbook of Prague<sup>7</sup>

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**Skutečné obyvatelstvo v Praze v lednu r. 1870**

Tab. XI. a) m u ž s k é:

| Rok narození | Rok<br>v ě k u | na Starém městě | na Novém městě | na Malé straně | na Hradčanech | v Josefově | v Praze<br>v á b e c |                  |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|------------|----------------------|------------------|
|              |                |                 |                |                |               |            | v<br>hro-<br>madě    | na ‰             |
| 1869—1865    | 1—5            | 2001            | 3051           | 882            | 245           | 506        | 6685                 | 8 <sub>9</sub>   |
| 1864—1860    | 6—10           | 1672            | 2514           | 743            | 223           | 436        | 5583                 | 7 <sub>4</sub>   |
| 1859—1855    | 11—15          | 2712            | 3367           | 1177           | 320           | 614        | 8190                 | 10 <sub>9</sub>  |
| 1854—1850    | 16—20          | 3509            | 4501           | 1263           | 329           | 652        | 10254                | 13 <sub>7</sub>  |
| 1849—1845    | 21—25          | 2642            | 3864           | 826            | 253           | 413        | 7998                 | 10 <sub>7</sub>  |
| 1844—1840    | 26—30          | 2085            | 3344           | 823            | 241           | 425        | 6918                 | 9 <sub>2</sub>   |
| 1839—1835    | 31—35          | 1471            | 2920           | 676            | 193           | 362        | 5622                 | 7 <sub>5</sub>   |
| 1834—1830    | 36—40          | 1276            | 2321           | 590            | 166           | 247        | 4600                 | 6 <sub>5</sub>   |
| 1829—1825    | 41—45          | 1066            | 2114           | 542            | 176           | 250        | 4148                 | 5 <sub>1</sub>   |
| 1824—1820    | 46—50          | 1045            | 1922           | 517            | 170           | 225        | 3879                 | 5 <sub>2</sub>   |
| 1819—1815    | 51—55          | 945             | 1639           | 492            | 139           | 260        | 3475                 | 4 <sub>6</sub>   |
| 1814—1810    | 56—60          | 815             | 1282           | 420            | 94            | 187        | 2798                 | 3 <sub>7</sub>   |
| 1809—1805    | 61—65          | 530             | 857            | 301            | 80            | 127        | 1895                 | 2 <sub>5</sub>   |
| 1804—1800    | 66—70          | 406             | 680            | 273            | 75            | 118        | 1552                 | 2 <sub>1</sub>   |
| 1799—1795    | 71—75          | 183             | 340            | 187            | 43            | 54         | 807                  | 1 <sub>1</sub>   |
| 1794—1790    | 76—80          | 94              | 186            | 82             | 17            | 36         | 415                  | 0 <sub>6</sub>   |
| 1789—1785    | 81—85          | 29              | 62             | 28             | 6             | 13         | 138                  | 0 <sub>2</sub>   |
| 1784—1780    | 86—90          | 9               | 36             | 4              | 1             | 3          | 53                   | 0 <sub>1</sub>   |
| 1779—1775    | 91—95          | 3               | 4              | 1              | —             | —          | 8                    | 0 <sub>0</sub>   |
| 1774—1770    | 96—100         | 2               | 3              | 1              | —             | —          | 6                    | 0 <sub>0</sub>   |
| 1769         | 101            | —               | —              | —              | —             | —          | —                    | —                |
| Celkem       |                | 22.495          | 35.007         | 9826           | 2771          | 4928       | 75029                | 100 <sub>0</sub> |

Source: authors

<sup>7</sup> *Statistická příruční knížka královského hlavního města Prahy na rok 1871 (1872)*. Praha 1873, p. 16.

From the beginning all publications were issued parallelly in Czech and German version. Proposals for the abolition of German editions were rejected with the reference to the international importance of the published works. Only in the era of extreme national disputes in Bohemia before the First World War in year 1907 it was decided to publish only Czech versions of publications.<sup>8</sup>

In the second half of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century the whole Prague agglomeration started to develop rapidly. However, only four new districts were officially connected to historic Prague (in years 1883–1901). Prague was officially ended (up to year 1921) e.g. at upper end of the Wenceslas square etc.

Since year 1881 was the scope of activities of Statistical commission and its Statistical bureau extended also to surrounding (so far independent) municipalities (e.g. Žižkov, Královské Vinohrady, Smíchov atd.) and, since year 1912, also to other municipalities, which were supposed to join the Large Prague soon. Gradually the titles of statistical yearbooks were changing and also their content was larger.<sup>9</sup> Karel Kořistka stayed important member of Prague Statistical committee up to year 1891 (in years 1870–1876 and 1879–1881 he was its chairman). Josef Erben worked as a director of gradually extending Statistical bureau (and as an editor of its numerous publications) up to year 1909.

Already since year 1881 was to the above stated statistical yearbook joined also as its second volume – a report about activity and management of all represented municipalities. Since the volume for years 1885–1886 this part was published individually, sometimes even for longer period than one year, last volume with data for year 1911 up to year 1919.<sup>10</sup>

The Statistical bureau elaborated and published (with the exception of Population census in year 1880) the results of all censuses for Prague and surrounding (1890, 1900, 1910 and “inter-census” in year 1896). Since year 1892 Statistical bureau took care to publish also quarterly and weekly reports about demographic events in Prague and surrounding.

### **3 Municipal statistics in other cities**

Also, municipal administrations of other important centres in Bohemian lands were gradually concerned with municipal statistics according to the Prague’s example at the end of XIX<sup>th</sup> century. The impulse was often the preparation for the Population census in year 1890. Census was as always organized by Central statistical committee in Vienna. It also published (since the

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<sup>8</sup> See Podzimek (1974), p. 63.

<sup>9</sup> Detailed bibliography is included e.g. in jubilant publication *120 let...* (1991).

<sup>10</sup> See *70 let...* (1989), p. 50.

volume 1887 published in year 1888) usually once in two years statistical source work *Österreichisches Städtebuch*, published statistical contributions about important cities of Austrian part of the monarchy.

Municipal administration in Brno (German till the end of the existence of Austrian–Hungarian empire) founded municipal statistical department in year 1896 (before establishing Land statistical office in Brno). Statistical contributions were till the first world war regularly published in yearbook *Gemeindevverwaltung und Gemeindestatistik der Landeshauptstadt Brünn*. Results in census for Brno in year 1900 and 1910 were published (years 1901 and 1911) in special publications – similarly as above mention yearbook only in German.

Individual Statistical bureau was established in year 1890 also in Plzeň. Thanks to its chief, Jaroslav Schiebl (1851–1933), it belonged to the most active in Bohemian lands. In Olomouc it was published (in German) a publication with title Statistical yearbook, although with several years period. Specialized statistical workplace was established here in year 1900. Municipal statistical service worked also in Liberec since year 1880. In some smaller cities was established at least miniature statistical workplace, elsewhere the statistics concerned people interested in the field from the municipal officers' functionaries and official (often official medical doctors).

Beside Prague, the contributions were regularly published in *Österreichisches Städtebuch* also by Brno, Jihlava, Karlovy Vary, Liberec, Olomouc, Opava and Ústí nad Labem, less regularly by other 20 cities from Bohemian lands.<sup>11</sup>

## Conclusion

This article presents an overview of the history of municipal statistics in Bohemian lands. In particular, the work of the municipal statistical service in Prague had a solid level throughout the whole period under review. Besides its own publications, Statistical bureau in Prague also published its contributions in each issues of the journal *Österreichisches Städtebuch* (published in Vienna in years 1888–1918).

Publications issued in Prague were in large extend changed with partner statistical organs in the monarchy and also abroad. Statistical bureau also owned very extended vocational library.<sup>12</sup> Both main representative of municipal statistics in Prague became the members of important scientific societies in Austrian–Hungarian empire and in foreign lands and were

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<sup>11</sup> Podzimek (1974), p. 77–79.

<sup>12</sup> Part of the fond of this library was gained in 60<sup>th</sup> of XX. century in the framework of reorganization by the library of the statistics department of University of Economics Prague.

elected also to be a members of International statistical institute (ISI) – Karel Kořistka in year 1889 and Josef Erben in year 1886. In the framework of 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of ISI in September 1913 in Vienna, large delegation of participants headed by the ISI President, L. Bodio, visited Prague for two days, where they paid a visit to the land and municipal Statistical bureau.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Kořalka (1981), p. 33–34.

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