

sc | nat 

Chemistry

Platform of the Swiss Academy of Sciences

The Laboratory in Reichenau Castle Designated as «Chemical Landmark» on 12 September 2014

David Spichiger*

*Correspondence: Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT), Platform Chemistry, Schwarztorstrasse 9, CH-3007 Bern, E-mail: chemistry@scnat.ch

The laboratory in Reichenau Castle, Tamins in canton Graubunden, a testimony of research from the mid-19th century, has been designated as a «Chemical Landmark».



The laboratory in Reichenau Castle (Copyright: Barbara Winter-Werner)

In 1852 **Adolf von Planta** (1820–1895) had a laboratory built in one wing of Reichenau Castle. On this site von Planta performed research in natural sciences such as water and soil analysis, physiological processes, and botany. Between 1852 and 1853, he was assisted by **August Kekulé** (1829–1896), who had just completed his doctoral studies under the supervision of Justus von Liebig. They worked together on alkaloid analysis, for example, nicotine. Later in his career, Kekulé made important discoveries in organic and structural chemistry, which include the tetravalency of the carbon atom, and was the first to propose a cyclic structure for benzene. The laboratory has been maintained in its original setting and is therefore a testimony to research from the mid-19th century.



August Kekulé and Adolf von Planta (Copyright: Gian-Battista von Tscharnner)

The award ceremony was held on 12 September 2014 in Reichenau, during which a commemorative plate was revealed and affixed at the entrance of the castle.

The ceremony was opened by Prof. Dr. **Katharina Fromm**, President of the «Platform Chemistry» at SCNAT, who welcomed the audience and presented the «Chemical Landmark» program. **Gian-Battista von Tscharnner**, owner of the Reichenau castle, then presented a retrospective of the site. The importance of contributions made by Kekulé was stressed in the laudatio of Prof. Dr. **Richard R. Schrock**, professor at MIT and Nobel laureate in chemistry 2005.

Additional information about the «Platform Chemistry» and its activities may be found at www.chemistry.scnat.ch



Follow the «Platform Chemistry» on Twitter @SCNATChemistry