



1871 – 1948

# IMMANUEL FRIEDLAENDER

Founder of the former Volcano  
Institute in Naples & Explorer

Gottfried Immanuel Friedlaender was born in Berlin on February 9, 1871. After graduating from school, he first studied in Berlin and Kiel. In 1892 he moved to the Swiss Federal Polytechnic Institute in Zurich, where he devoted himself to become a teacher with a focus on natural sciences. A trip to the volcanic regions of Southeast Asia and Hawaii awakened his interest in volcanoes at that time. After leaving the university in 1893, he worked as an explorer and private scholar in the field of volcano research.

In order to further advance research in the field of volcanism, Immanuel Friedlaender proposed the foundation of an international volcano institute in Naples during the International Geological Congress in Stockholm in 1910, which was positively received by the research community. Friedlaender, who had already moved to Naples around 1901, opened a private research institute in his home in 1914, which became known under various names: *Vulkan-Institut Immanuel Friedlaender*, *Vulkan-Institut in Neapel* oder *Istituto Vulcanologico, Napoli*. Since the work of the State Observatory was suspended after the death of Giuseppe Mercalli in 1914, the city of Naples in particular welcomed Friedlaender's efforts to continue the documentation of Vesuvius' volcanic activity. The private institute also maintained a seismological station, a gas analysis laboratory, a library, and a collection of photographs and rocks. In 1914, the first issue of Friedlaender's Journal *Zeitschrift für Vulkanologie* was also published.

At the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, Friedlaender moved to Switzerland, but he returned to Naples at the end of the war and continued his research. Thus, he conducted numerous research trips, e.g. to Mexico to Popocatépetl, to Colombia to Galeras, and to Hawaii. As a result of his outstanding accomplishments in volcano research, the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Bonn awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1921.

Due to the worsening political situation in Italy, the institute had to be closed in 1934 and the publication of Friedlaender's journal was also stopped in 1936. Moreover, due to political pressure from the Nazi regime, Friedlaender's honorary doctorate was revoked due to his Jewish family in 1935. This was corrected and reversed in 1947. The library and the collection of photographs, graphics and rocks were donated to the ETH Zurich in 1935, which still takes care of their preservation. In addition, in 1937 a private foundation was established, made up of parts of Friedlaender's estate, which supports scientific work in the field of volcanology until today. Immanuel Friedlaender died in Zurich on January 3, 1948, at the age of 76.

*DGG PRO – Public Relations & Outreach, Hannover*

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