

FRIEDRICH BURMEISTER

Head of the Geomagnetic
Observatory in Fürstenfeldbruck



1890 – 1969

Friedrich Burmeister was born on September 7, 1890 in Stettin, which at that time belonged to Prussian Pomerania. After graduating from school in 1910, he moved to Berlin and then Munich to study mathematics, physics and astronomy. In 1919 he received his doctorate under Hugo von Seeliger with a mathematical thesis on the three-body problem of celestial mechanics (*Dreikörperproblem der Himmelsmechanik*).

In the same year, Friedrich Burmeister took over the supervision of the Geomagnetic Observatory, which at that time belonged to the Observatory of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in Munich. The observatory was in poor condition at that time, most of the measuring instruments were unusable and records had hardly been evaluated in recent years. However, due to his broad expertise, e.g. in geomagnetic measurement techniques and in the mathematical processing of data, Burmeister succeeded over the years in turning the observatory into a renowned scientific institution again. In addition, Friedrich Burmeister also participated in the Geomagnetic Survey of Southern Germany, and in the 1930s he also took part in the Geophysical Survey of the German Empire (*Geophysikalische Reichsaufnahme*). Over the years, he was also in constant exchange with his other colleagues such as Adolf Schmidt, Richard Bock and Gerhard Faselau in Potsdam.

The eventful history of the Geomagnetic Observatory also includes various relocations. Burmeister enforced the relocation of the observatory, first to a measuring hut in Maisach in 1927, then to the cellar of the Maisach brewery in 1931, and finally to Fürstenfeldbruck west of Munich in 1939. The relocation had become necessary because the expansion and industrialization of the Munich area had negative effects on the measurements of the observatory. After the 2nd World War, which the observatory survived undamaged, three short-period Hiller seismometer stations were moved from the Institute for General and Applied Geophysics in Munich to Fürstenfeldbruck in 1959. These were replaced by Sprengnether seismometers in 1966, and in 1969 the system was converted to photo-optical registration. In the early 1990s, the earthquake observatory was then also affiliated to the German Seismological Regional Network GRSN.

For his tireless efforts, Burmeister was awarded the Silver Medal "Bene merenti" of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in 1950. Friedrich Burmeister died on March 23, 1969, at the age of 78.

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