

OTTO-VON-GUERICKE-GESELLSCHAFT e.V.



Otto von Guericke (1602 - 1686)

Magdeburg is the over 1200-year-old capital of the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt. In the 17th century, the century of the "dawn of modern times", the patrician Otto von Guericke lived and worked in Magdeburg. His person is inextricably linked with this city right up to the present day.

Otto von Guericke devoted his entire life and work to the service of his home town of Magdeburg.

He was a member of the council of the old city of Magdeburg for over 50 years (1626-1678). In the course of this activity he acted as builder, patron, engineer, chamberlain, scholar and apothecary. Particularly noteworthy is his 30-year tenure (1646-1676) as one of Magdeburg's four mayors. As such, he was active for over 20 years (1642-1663) in diplomatic missions for his father city, focal points of European history. In his negotiations with the delegations of the various nations, the emperors and imperial prince he successfully campaigned for the economic and legal privileges as well as the reconstruction of his father city, which had been completely destroyed in the Thirty Years' War.

Even if he did not succeed in obtaining imperial freedom for the Old City of Magdeburg, he did secure its essential privileges.

Otto von Guericke devoted his free time and especially his old age (1654-1670) to scientific research. He was a natural philosopher and astronomer. He went down in the history of engineering as the founder of vacuum technology. He was the first to build a vacuum air pump and was thus able to create a vacuum in a dense container of any size.

Guericke is also known as the father of electrostatics because he built the first electrifying machine, described electrostatic repulsion and attraction, and discovered electrical conduction. In Germany, he is considered the founder of experimental physics. He put his experiments at the service of his home town (Magdeburg experiments).

He was a role model for his family. With great personal commitment, he compensated for the complete loss of all possessions and goods during the destruction of the city in 1631. He secured his privileges with the title of nobility (1666).

The New Magdeburg Experiments, especially the "Great Magdeburg Hemisphere Experiment" can be found in specialist literature and school textbooks worldwide.