

Curriculum Vitae Johann Michael Fehr

Name: Johann Michael Fehr
Life Dates: 9 May 1610 - 15 November 1688



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Johann Michael Fehr was a German physician and botanist. He served as official physician appointed by the city of Schweinfurt and is one of the founding members of the Academia Naturae Curiosorum, which later became the Leopoldina. In 1665, Fehr succeeded Johann Lorenz Bausch to become the II. President of the Leopoldina.

Academic and Professional Career

Johann Michael Fehr studied medicine at the universities of Leipzig, Wittenberg, Jena and Altdorf. He went on to practice medicine under Dr. Johann Ruprecht Sulzberger, personal doctor to the Elector of Saxony, in Dresden.

In 1640, he completed his studies at the Italian universities of Venice and Padua and gained a doctorate from the University of Padua on 16 February 1641.

He then moved back to Schweinfurt where he practiced medicine and conducted botanical studies in his free time. Together with his colleagues Johann Lorenz Bausch, Georg Balthasar Metzger and Georg Balthasar Wohlfahrt, who were also based in Schweinfurt, he founded the Academia Naturae Curiosorum on 1 January 1652, which was later renamed Leopoldina.

In 1666, Fehr succeeded the late Johann Lorenz Bausch in his position as official physician for the city of Schweinfurt. In 1672, he took up work with the *Reichsvogt* (imperial protector) of Schweinfurt before crowning his career by become personal physician to the Emperor in 1686.

President of the Leopoldina

In 1665, Johann Michael Fehr succeeded Johann Laurentius Bausch as II. President of the Leopoldina. He chose the byname (cognomen) Argonauta I. With Fehr continuing to work in Schweinfurt (just like his predecessor), the academy remained based there.

The political and societal upheaval of the time had a great impact on Johann Michael Fehr's presidency, but despite the difficult conditions, the academy sought official recognition soon after being established. Owing to its growing importance, Emperor Leopold I granted the academy official recognition in 1672 by approving its statutes, with the deed being issued in 1677. This was an important stepping stone for the further development of the academy.

The circumstances during those years are also reflected in Johann Michael Fehr's correspondence. His letters also highlight his strong determination, which helped the academy to thrive under his presidency, seeing a significant increase in members.

On 3 June 1686, Fehr suffered a unilateral stroke and had to retreat from public and academic life.

About Johann Michael Fehr

Johann Michael Fehr was born on 9 May 1610 to Michael Fehr zu Dettelbach, a health care official, and his wife Margarete, née Martin, in Kitzingen, Germany. Upon the death of his father on 20 September 1618, his mother enrolled him in a school in Kitzingen, where he was to remain for seven years. Due to the events surrounding the Counter-Reformation, the family was later forced to move to Schweinfurt, where Fehr was instructed in Latin from 1629 to 1632.

Johann Michael Fehr married twice, first Maria Barbara in 1642, daughter of the Schweinfurt *Ratsherr* (councillor) Simon Meister. They had three daughters and four sons, including Johann Lorenz Fehr, who later also became a physician. Upon the death of his first wife in 1658, Johann Michael Fehr married Anna Maria, daughter of the councillor Johannes Otto. The couple had seven children, four daughters and three sons, one of whom was Johann Caspar Fehr, who also went on to become a physician.

Due to his stroke, Fehr stepped down as President of the Leopoldina in 1686. He died two years later on 15 November 1688 in Schweinfurt.