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Lichtenberg and the electrophorus

🔊 Listen

Lichtenberg, who lived in the 18th century, was an outstanding naturalist, art critic, satirist, aphorist, and one of the creators of the German experimental physics. In his article A handful of remarks about the aerostatic machines from 1784, published in the Göttingisches Magazin der Wissenschaften und Litteratur (The Göttingen Magazine of Sciences and Literature), he wrote about the achievements of the age he lived in: 'Our 18th century has nothing to be ashamed of when it will pass its inventory of the acquired knowledge and designed inventions to the 19th century someday.' If the 19th century would ask the 18th: what do you bring with you and what new have you seen?, it could answer: 'I've stated the form of Earth. I've lifted up huge loads by the use of fire, like Montgolfier brothers. I've learned how to face the lightning – using the Franklin's lightning rod. In 1780 by the hands of Lichtenberg, I've conducted the series of experiment with the lightening rod on the hills around Göttingen and installed this device in his suburban house. Furthermore, I can pour the lightning/flash to the Leyden jars like a champagne. I've discovered the fish that kill another under the water by the unseen thunder – these are electric eels.' The main Lichtenberg achievements in the area of sciences can be added also to this collection. Our story touches the matters of the discoveries concerning the field of the electricity from the 18th century. ...

Lichtenberg and the...
Full Story

Datum: 07/14/2015
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Biographies und historical backgrounds

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Historical background: Electrophorus 🔊	07/14/2015	298 KB (PDF)

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Educational Resources

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- ▶ [Lichtenbergs Double-Electrophorus and Lichtenberg's Dust Figures \(Video\)](#)

Historical Resources

A Primary Sources

Cavallo, Tiberius: An Account of Some New Experiments in Electricity, with the Description and Use of Two New Electrical Instruments. By Mr. Tiberius Cavallo, F. R. S. Communicated by the President, in: *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 70 (01.01.1780), S. 15–29, online available: doi:10.1098/rstl.1780.0002. (Besprechung des 1779er Artikels von Lichtenberg über Staubfiguren: De nova methodo naturam ac motum fluidi electrici investigandi commentatio posterior)

B Secondary Sources

Buechler, Ralph W: Lightning and the Enlightenment: An essay on lightning by G.C. Lichtenberg, in: *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters* 76 (1988), S. 43–46.

Clark, William: From Enlightenment to Romanticism: Lichtenberg and Göttingen Physics, in: (2002).

Heilbron, J. L.: Electricity in the 17th and 18th centuries: a study of early modern physics, Mineola, N.Y 1999.

Pedersen, Peder Oluf: On the Lichtenberg figures, in: *Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab I, Nr. 11 (1919)*, online available: <http://www.sdu.dk/media/bibpdf/Bind%201-9%5CBind%5Cmf-1-11.pdf>.

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Story and all resources	2 MB (ZIP)

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