Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg Encyclopedia Article

Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg

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Christian Gottfried Ehrenberg

1795-1876

German biologist who discovered microorganisms in fossils. Ehrenberg discovered microscopic fossil organisms in different geologic formations, in the process founding the field of micropaleontology. He demonstrated that fungi come from spores and showed that mushrooms and molds reproduce sexually. Ehrenberg was the first to study coral in detail and he showed that phosphorescence in the sea is caused by planktonic microorganisms. While correctly opposing the theory of spontaneous generation, he mistakenly believed that all organisms possess complete organ systems.