Hennig Brand Encyclopedia Article

Hennig Brand

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Contents

Hennig Brand Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Hennig Brand.....3

Hennig Brand

fl. 1670

German alchemist who discovered phosphorus (c. 1669). Believing he could produce gold, Brand heated concentrated urine with sand and collected the products under water. He named the white waxy substance "phosphorus" (light bearer) because it glowed in the dark. Brand also discovered that it burst into flame when exposed to air. Robert Boyle independently discovered phosphorus in 1680, and a priority dispute ensued since Brand had not published his results.