John Goodricke Encyclopedia Article

John Goodricke

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Contents

John Goodricke Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

John Goodricke.....3

John Goodricke

1764-1786

English astronomer who explained the nature of variable stars. Goodricke noticed the variability of ß-Persei's (more commonly known as Algol). Though not the first to observe these variations in magnitude, he was the first to establish their periodicity and accurately attributed their cause to a large orbiting body that regularly eclipsed ß-Persei. Goodricke was awarded the Royal Society's Copley Medal (1783). As the result of a severe illness in infancy, Goodricke was deaf and mute.