Torbern Olaf Bergman Encyclopedia Article

Torbern Olaf Bergman

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1735-1784

Swedish scientist best known for his work on elective affinity for which he compiled extensive tables listing relative chemical affinities of acids and bases. He provided the first comprehensive analysis of mineral waters (1778) and greatly improved qualitative analysis of minerals by introducing wet methods (1780). Bergman also discovered Venus's atmosphere during the planet's 1761 transit, investigated the pyroelectricity of tourmaline (1766), estimated the aurora borealis's height at 460 miles (740 km), and contributed to the development of crystallography.