

So strong was the personal influence of Werner, that the Neptunian doctrines which he inculcated continued to hold their place for several decades—until, in fact, three of the greatest of his scholars, D'Aubisson de Voisins, Leopold von Buch, and Alexander von Humboldt, stepped into the ranks of the opponents of Neptunism.

Leopold von Buch was the most illustrious of the geologists taught by Werner. The later writings of Leopold von Buch, published between 1820 and 1860, are those on which his fame chiefly rests; but from the year 1796 he was actively engaged in travel and research, and his earlier writings contributed in a great degree to establish the science of geology.

Leopold von Buch was born on the 26th April 1774, at the Castle of Stolpe in Pomerania, the son of a nobleman with considerable property. While still a boy he displayed a passionate love of scientific inquiry, and his fondness for chemical and physical mineralogical studies led him to select the Mining Academy of Freiberg for his collegiate course. While there, Alexander von Humboldt and Freiesleben were among his fellow-students, and with them he formed close ties of friendship. He made his home for nearly three years (1790-93) with Professor Werner, for whom he entertained the deepest sentiments of reverence and friendship; and these were in no way altered when, in after years, some of his opinions began to diverge from the teaching of Werner.

Von Buch made several excursions during his student days into the Erz mountains and Bohemia, and published a paper on the neighbourhood of Karlsbad. From 1793 to 1796 he studied in Halle and Göttingen, and became acquainted with Harz, Thuringia, and the Fichtel mountains. In 1796 he accepted office in the Mining Department of Silesia, but resigned in 1797, in order to devote his entire time and energy to travel and research. His stay in Silesia resulted in the publication of an important treatise on the mineralogy of the neighbourhood of Landeck, and an attempt at a geognostic description of Silesia. He spent the winter of 1797 in Salzburg, together with his friend Alexander von Humboldt, and in the following spring set out on his first journey through the Alps to Italy. He visited the Euganean Isles and the district of Vicenza, and stayed for some time at Rome, making frequent excursions into the Albanian mountains. He then spent five months at Naples, and devoted a large part of his time