

Lhuyd found an enthusiastic supporter in the Lucerne physician and councillor, Karl Nikolaus Lang, whose *Historia lapidum figuratorum Helvetiæ* (Venice, 1708) contains 163 plates, with a number of good figures of fossils. Lang is one of the last authors who believed in the direct origin of the fossils in the rocks.

A semi-tragic, semi-comic event brought this literature to a close. Johannes Bartholomew Beringer, a professor in the University of Würzburg, published in 1726 a palæontological work entitled *Lithographia Würceburgensis*. In it a number of true fossils were illustrated, belonging to the Muschelkalk or Middle Trias of North Bavaria, and beside these were more or less remarkable forms, even sun, moon, stars, and Hebraic letters, said to be fossils, and described and illustrated as such by the professor. As a matter of fact, his students, who no longer believed in the Greek myth of self-generation in the rocks, had placed artificially-concocted forms in the earth, and during excursions had inveigled the credulous professor to those particular spots and discovered them! But when at last Beringer's own name was found apparently in fossil form in the rocks, the mystery was revealed to the unfortunate professor. He tried to buy up and destroy his published work; but in 1767 a new edition of the work was published, and the book is preserved as a scientific curiosity. Many of the false fossils (Lügensteine) may be seen in the mineral collections at Bamberg, and there are also specimens in the university collections of Würzburg, Munich, and other places.

Contemporaneously with these mistaken efforts in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and early part of the eighteenth century, a truer appreciation of fossils was gaining ground.

In the year 1580, the famous French worker in enamel, Bernard Palissy, published a book in which he discussed the origin of petrified wood, the occurrence of fossil fishes in Mansfield slate, and fossil molluscs in various rocks. Palissy rightly pointed out that many of the fossil conchylia were identical with living species, and said they must have developed in localities which had previously been under fresh or sea-water. Palissy's ideas were violently attacked by his compatriots, and he was denounced as a heretic in his philosophical and scientific writings, just as he was a Huguenot and a heretic in his religion.