

— its physiography, climate, soil and biota. IV. *The North Dakota Ant Fauna* — history, material studied, records of collections, list of species, nests, use of keys and keys to subfamilies, genera and species. V. *Biogeography of the Ants of North Dakota* — paleontological consideration, relation to Nearctic Fauna, geological and ecological distribution, endemic species, general summary. *Appendices* — brood and winged sexual forms in nest, glossary, pronunciation and derivation of technical names of genera and species, literature cited and finally an *Index* to the contents of the entire handbook. One will find the figures to the keys, the glossary and the map of the distribution of each species in the state most helpful in identifying ants. I regret, however, that the authors have employed colors so extensively in describing the various species of ants, since this is a variable character in most species and one cannot also eliminate the human error in deciding upon the "exactness" of a color. Regardless of this one main criticism, this handbook is highly recommended to everyone whether he be primarily or incidentally interested in ants.—MARION R. SMITH, Agr. Res. Serv., Ent. Res. Div., U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.

THE LYING STONES OF DR. JOHANN BARTHOLOMEW ADAM BERINGER BEING HIS LITHOGRAPHIAE WIRCEBURGENSIS. By Melvin E. Jahn and Daniel J. Woolf. Univ. California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif. 221 p., 24 (unnumbered) plates. 1963.

A classicist and a graduate student of paleontology have teamed up to give us both the first English translation of one of the great rarities of scientific literature and the documentation behind one of the most famous hoaxes in the history of science.

The typical textbook version of the Johann Beringer story runs somewhat as follows: Beringer, physician, professor at the University of Würzburg, and amateur oryctocist, became so entranced by his study of figured stones that he easily fell victim to the machinations of his students who manufactured and planted in Beringer's favorite collecting spots all sorts of curious *lapides figurati*. In 1726 he published his *Lithographiae Wirceburgensis* containing many illustrations of these spurious objects. Overplaying their hand, the students engraved the professor's name on some of their later manufactures. In a desperate attempt to save his reputation Beringer bought up all available copies of his book (hence its rarity), in the process depleting his fortune and hastening his demise. As a crowning touch, it is usually recounted that the Beringer family had the book reprinted as a curio in order to recoup some of their losses.

As the accompanying documents reveal, the classical Beringer story is itself spurious. These documents show that Beringer was not so successfully duped as the textbook versions would have us believe; that the true perpetrators were not students but jealous fellow professors; and that Beringer, far from being ruined, brought legal proceedings against his detractors which forced one of them to leave town in disgrace while Beringer lived out a useful and not impecunious life.

Aside from details regarding the hoax itself, geologists will find the volume of value as an exhibition of the state of paleontology during the early 18th century. While not a monumental work, in the same sense as that of Agricola, the *Lithographiae* is not without significance. As pointed out by the translators, Beringer's book appeared during an extremely dynamic period in the history of paleontology when previous theories as to the origin of fossils were being sharply questioned. "For many readers," write Jahn and Woolf in their introduction, "the importance of the *Lithographiae Wirceburgensis* will lie in its examination of paleontological theory. Others may see it as a link with the intellectual atmosphere of an era in flux — an era which largely saw the end of the virtuosi and which would see the dawning of the new science."

The twenty-four plates in the book include reproductions of twenty-two