

“solidified accumulations from water,” analogous with marble and limestone. Yet in the case of fossil leaves, wood, bones, and fish, Agricola allowed an organic origin, and thought the various objects had become petrified by the action of a certain *Succus lapidescens* everywhere present in water.

Conrad Gesner, the famous Zürich scholar, also formed no very definite opinion about fossils. To him we owe the first illustrated work on fossils, *De rerum fossilium, lapidum et gemmarum figuris*, which appeared at Zürich in 1565, the year of Gesner’s death. He discusses the fossils along with other products of the soil (minerals, ores, prehistoric stone implements, stalactites, etc.), and compares some with the sun, moon, and stars, others with plants and animals, without entering further into their origin.

The zealous collector, Johann Kentmann, in Torgau, and the Würtemberg physician, Johannes Bauhin, made no further inquiry into the nature of fossils, but Bauhin described, and gave figures of a large number of ammonites, belemnites, mussels and brachiopods from the *Posidonomya* shales and Middle Lias strata in the neighbourhood of Boll.

In Italy, Andrea Mattioli, the botanist, described the fossil fishes of Monte Bolca for the first time in 1548, and followed Agricola in supposing that porous shells, bones, and other remains had been converted into stone by a *Succus lapideus*. Nearly ten years later, the anatomist Fallopio, in Padua, even went so far as to call the fossil teeth of elephants from Puglia earthy concretions, and fossil shells from Volterrano the results of fermentation and exhalations from the earth, while he explained the pots of Monte Testaccio in Rome as natural impressions in the earth! Olivi of Cremona, in 1584, writes of the fossil conchylia of the famous Calceolarian collection in Verona as mere sports of nature. Michele Mercati prepared good illustrations of fossil bivalves, ammonites, and nummulites in the museum of Pope Sixtus V., and these were published between 1717 and 1719 in the *Metallotheca Vaticana*, by Lancisi, the physician of Pope Clement XI. Mercati names the fossils according to Pliny, and after long discussion comes to the conclusion that they took origin under the influence of the stars.

It is astonishing to find how tenaciously, until the middle of the eighteenth century, so many authors clung to such absurd ideas, even although the fossils were being made known by