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NEUROLOGICAL STAMP

Georg Agricola (1490-1555)

Georg Agricola, a younger contemporary of Paracelsus whose real name was Georg Bauer, and who was born in Saxony, Germany, is often regarded as the father of modern mineralogy. He studied philology and then went to Italy where he graduated in medicine in 1525. On returning to Germany he was appointed physician in Joachimsthal, the centre of a rich mining area. Later in 1530 he was appointed historiographer of Prince Maurice of Saxony and in 1533 city physician to Chemnitz, another well known mining town. Here he occupied himself with medical, mathematical, theological, and historical studies, but particularly with mineralogy. His greatest work *De re metallica* was published in 1556 the year after his death. The book has a unique distinction of having been translated and edited in 1912 by Herbert Hoover, President of the United States and his wife, Lou Henry Hoover.

Agricola acknowledged a very old belief that an emerald worn on an amulet or ring averted epilepsy. He stated that the emerald fights with epilepsy as with a deadly enemy. If the stone was stronger than the disease, it remained whole; if, however, it was conquered by the disease it broke into several parts.

Philatelically he was honoured in 1955 on the 400th anniversary of his death by East Germany as a mineralogist and scholar (Stanley Gibbons No E240, Scott No 271).

L F HAAS