

LIFE AND WORK OF ROBERTO DE VISIANI (1800–1878), PREFECT OF THE BOTANICAL GARDEN

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Project description

Roberto de Visiani (1800–1878) was among the greatest botanists to have worked in Padova. An expert of the flora and natural history of the western Balkans, he described over 600 new taxa of vascular plants and proposed almost 1000 new *names*. Despite his having left a mark during one of the most defining times for the Garden, the University, and the scientific community at large, his vast legacy of letters and unpublished works, conserved in the Garden's Ancient Library, was never restudied, and his vast published corpus was never analysed coherently and modernly. The scarcity and vagueness of historical and geographical information attached to his collections have made it challenging for botanists to study his scientific heritage, with less than 20 of his *names* typified before the beginning of this project. Our project aims at reconstructing both his botanical explorations and those of his collaborators, to identify his network of relationships and exchanges, and to analyse his published and unpublished works in order to reconstruct his scientific standing and to clarify the role he played in the relationship between University and territory, as well as to highlight his positions in the scientific debate of the time, especially as for the significance he attributed to taxonomy and botanical nomenclature, his procedures, his thought about new theories, and his point of view on the role of naturalists. Finally, we aim also at reconstructing his private life and personal beliefs.



Roberto de Visiani at the age of about 55.