

La botanique dans un contexte local: les jardins de Florence à l'époque des grands-ducs (1569–1859)

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Summary

This article describes the social and institutional conditions of the practice of botany in early modern Florence. This practice started with the study of medical plants in hospital and university contexts, with the passion of the Medicis for gardens, and the interest of the Vallombrosian monks for cryptogams. During the XVIIIth century, science of plants focused on classification (morphology), pharmacology (*materia medica*) and vegetable physiology, but included also the inventory of Tuscan flora and agronomy. These diverging aims created tensions within the nascent community of botanists, crystallizing around the management of gardens and the choice of classification systems. After 1770, a more scientific approach of botany was made possible by the rise of experimental practices and the development of chemistry. Yet, a true professionalization of research did not occur before the political unification of Italy, when the management of institutions and the recruitment of botanists were assumed by a central Ministry of education, instead of being dependent on princely favors and patrician connections.

Keywords: botany, Florence, 18th century, gardens, agronomy

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