

in the latter half of the same century had been formed at Verona, was described by Olivi (1584) who regarded the fossil organisms as mere sports of Nature. Cesalpino (1566) who had distinguished himself as a botanist, turned in his later years to mineral studies, and wrote a volume *De Metallicis*, which may still be usefully consulted for information on the stones and ores of Italy. He recalled attention to the true doctrine regarding fossil shells, which he looked upon as organisms that had been left by the retiring sea, and had been turned into stone by the petrifying influence of the surrounding rock. Majoli suggested that fossil shells on the land had been ejected from the sea-floor by submarine volcanic explosions.

In the crowd of Italian writers who took part in this long controversy, by far the most illustrious was Nicolas Steno (1631-1687). Born in Copenhagen, he studied medicine and took his degree there, afterwards passing to Leyden and then to Paris, where he remained two years, attaining great distinction by his discoveries in human anatomy. He next travelled through Austria and Hungary, and eventually settled in Florence where, at the age of thirty-six, he was appointed physician to the Grand Duke Ferdinand II. Not long thereafter, reflecting on the arguments which had been put before him by Bossuet in Paris, he abjured the Lutheran protestantism in which he had grown up, and became a member of the church of Rome. His European reputation led to repeated invitations being sent to him from King Christian V. of Denmark to accept the Chair of Anatomy in Copenhagen. To