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The word “scopolamine” is derived from *Scopolia carniolica*, a solanaceous plant so named by Carl von Linné in honour of its supposed discover, J. A. Scopoli, his contemporary, a physician, botanist and universal naturalist. However, a description of the effects and a picture of the same plant have also been found in A. P. Matthioli’s work. Mattioli (1500–1577) found a plant similar to *Atropa belladonna* and *Solanum somnificum Dioscordis*. He called it *Solanum somnificum alterum*. Bauhin changed the name to *Solanum somniferum bacciferum*. In the book *Flora Carniolica I* (1760) J. A. Scopoli described this plant and named it *Atropa 2*. Linné found the new plant more similar to *hyoscyamus* and called it *Hyoscyamus Scopolia L.* Scopoli invented a new generic name and called it *Litophyla carniolica* in the manuscript of the second edition of his book *Flora Carniolica II*. He sent a drawing and description of the plant to Mr Jacquin in Vienna, who included it in his *Observationes botanicae* under the name *Scopolia carniolica*. Jacq. omitting the letter “i”. In 1814 A. Shultes proposed the name *Scopolina*; in 1821 J. H. F. Link proposed the name *Scopolia*. His proposal for the name of the plant *Scopolia Jacq., corr. Link, nom. cons.*, was accepted in Utrecht at the international congress on plant nomenclature.

Joannes Antonius (Giovanni Antonio) Scopoli (1723–1788) was born into a noble family in Cavalese in the Italian province of Trentino, at that time part of the Austrian South Tyrol. He studied medicine and graduated in 1743. In the Austrian Empire, it was only possible to get licensed for the state job of general practitioner in Vienna. In 1753 he did brilliantly with a six-hour presentation and discussion during the theoretical part of the exam. But a job which came up in Linz was given to someone else due to court intrigue, while Scopoli was offered the newly created post of mercury mine physician in Idrija, in the province of Carniola. Scopoli’s first employment in 1754 as a physician began with a bad accident, and he lost all his luggage and medical equipment. This was only an introduction to fifteen years of personal misfortune and hard work in Idrija. He devoted himself to the natural sciences, especially botany and mineralogy. His most famous works date from the time in Idrija: *Flora Carniolica* (1760), the first monograph about the plants in Carniola, *Flora Carniolica, ed. II* (1772), *De hydrargyro Idriensi Tentamina Physico-Chimico-Medica* (1761) with a description of the diseases caused by this type of mining work, in particular extracting native mercury and smelting mercury ore, and *Entomologie Carniolica* (1763). In 1769 he moved to the Slovak town of Banská Štiavnica, then to Schemnitz in Hungary, where he took up his position at the department of chemistry and mineralogy at the mining academy. He concentrated primarily on mineralogy and pure science, as he had wanted to do for a long time. After seven years in Hungary he returned to Italy. He spent the last twelve years of his life as a professor of botany at the university in Pavia. In 1760 he started his correspondence with Carl von Linné. A total of 30 letters, 17 written by Scopoli and 13 by Linné, were translated from Latin into Slovenian and English and annotated with many explanations of the names and the times by Darinka Soban. (Johannes A. Scopoli – Carl Linneus; correspondence: 1760–1775, Slovenian Natural History Society, Ljubljana, 2004)

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