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Bernardo Dessau. Physicist, scientist, teacher

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This talk intends to retrace the human and scientific affair of Bernardo Dessau, a scientist of German origin and of Jewish tradition, who lived in Italy between the late 1800s and mid-1900s. From the degree in physics with Kundt in Strasbourg in 1886 to the research work on the generation and detection of electromagnetic waves and on wireless telegraphy, as assistant of prof. Augusto Righi, at the University of Bologna, for fifteen years. Here he acted as a very efficient link between German physics and Righi's research in Bologna and obtained his habilitation in 1897. Then he got the position of professor of experimental physics and moved to University of Perugia in 1904. It is important to underline his fame as a scientist and popularizer, his contribution to the development of Italian physics and the CNR, his ability to accompany as a great teacher, not only university students, but also the general public, the amazing discoveries and innovations on the front of atomic physics, quantum mechanics and telecommunications. Alongside scientific successes, however, he had to suffer vicissitudes and discrimination due to his German origin and his being Jewish, experiencing the impact of the tragic events that shook the "short century", on both himself and his family members. The above aspects will be explored during the seminar, trying to do some justice to a largely forgotten and underestimated scientist, who died alone and ill in 1949, and wanted the following inscription on his grave: "Bernardo Dessau. Physicist, scientist, teacher".

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