

## **COS-B: the pioneer project for imaging high-energy astronomy in Europe**

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A central team in Europe for the development of high-energy astronomy was the group in Milan that had formed around Bruno Rossi, Giuseppe (Beppo) Occhialini, and since 1966 Giovanni (Nanni) Bignami. They were in contact with groups with similar research interests in Great Britain, France, Germany, and the Netherlands and established a collaboration, named the CARAVANE collaboration, to build and operate the very successful COS-B gamma-ray telescope. COS-B, sensitive to gamma-rays above 70 MeV, was operational as the first ESA mission from 1975 to 1982. The CARAVANE collaboration achieved the first complete survey of the Milky Way, detection of about 25 point sources, among them 2 pulsars and the first extragalactic blazar. COS-B was an adventure in many ways because the operations and science achievements of such a large multi-national team required charismatic scientists able to focus our team on the discoveries made in the high-energy skies: Nanni Bignami was central in this effort.

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