



Contribution ID: 38

Type: **Invited**

The history of Florence Institute of Physics from the 1920s to the end of the 1960s

Tuesday 17 September 2024 09:30 (30 minutes)

The history of the Institute of Physics at the University of Florence is traced from the beginning of the 20th century, with the arrival of Antonio Garbasso, to the 1960s.

Thanks to Garbasso's expertise, not only did the Institute gain new premises on Arcetri hill, but it also formed a brilliant group of young physicists made up of Enrico Fermi, Franco Rasetti, Enrico Persico, Bruno Rossi, Gilberto Bernardini, Daria Bocciarelli, Lorenzo Eno Capodilista, Giuseppe Occhialini and Giulio Racah, who were engaged in the emerging fields of Quantum Mechanics and Cosmic Rays. This Arcetri School disintegrated in the late 1930s for the transfer of its protagonists to chairs in other universities, for the environment created by the fascist regime and, to some extent, for the racial laws.

After the war, the legacy was taken up by some students of this school who formed research groups in the field of nuclear physics and elementary particle physics. As far as theoretical physics was concerned, after the Fermi and Persico periods these studies enjoyed a new expansion with the arrival in 1962 of Raoul Gatto, who created the first real Italian school of Theoretical Physics at Arcetri.

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Session Classification: 100 Years since the Birth of the University of Florence

Track Classification: SISFA 2024