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## HISTORY OF THE ITALIAN CONTRIBUTION TO ASTRONAUTICS

**Abstract**

In this paper, we are discussing the history of Italian contribution to astronautics. The first attempt by Italian scientists to carry on Astrophysical observations from Space can be traced back to the early 60s just after the launch of the first satellites. Dominated by Physicists for decades, slowly space astrophysics has become one of the major fields of modern Astronomy. From the first experiments flown on balloons and rockets to the construction of today's sophisticated satellites, a historical scenario will be presented in the framework of Italian Science and, more generally, of European and World growth of the field. In the period from 1920 to 2020. A.I.D.A.A. (Italian Association of Aeronautics and Astronautics) celebrates 100 years of life since the founding of its first historical nucleus, A.I.D.A., the Italian Association of Aerotechnics, in 1920, a long period, a century which has seen great changes, both political and social, and two World Wars. These changes have involved all sectors, civilian and military, including the aerospace sector. To facilitate the analysis, this period has been divided into three stages: the first from 1920 to 1951 with the foundation of A.I.D.A., the Italian Association of Aerotechnics, the second from 1951 to 1969 with the constitution of A.I.R., the Italian Rockets Association, affiliated with A.I.D.A. and the third from 1969 to 2020 with the current name A.I.D.A.A., the Italian Association of Aeronautics and Astronautics and the astronautical sector. The main activities carried forward by A.I.D.A.A. are illustrated, in particular, the National and International Congresses which best represent the Association since they express not only the quality and level of Italian scientific aerospace research but also indicate the lines along which research will develop shortly.