Schiaparelli and his legacy

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FOREWORD

Giovanni Virginio Schiaparelli (1835-1910) has been one of the most important astronomers of the eighteen hundreds: his scientific interests and contributions go well beyond Mars, for which he is famous, and include even studies on history of Astronomy and ancient languages. Born in Savigliano (CN) where he developed his first interests in astronomy, he graduated in Torino, had a brief but extremely valuable learning experience in Berlin and at the Pulkovo Observatory and soon after became the Director of the Brera Observatory just at the time of Italy's unification. Most of his work is based on observations made at and with instruments at Brera, where he was active for over 40 years.

The relevance and influence that Schiaparelli had in astronomy, in science, in the political scene in Italy and even in everyday life are at the base of the celebrations that the Brera Observatory, together with several Italian institutions and partners, has promoted and organized in his honour, on the occasion of the centenary of his death.

This conference in particular is intended and is brought about by scientists who have studied his lifetime achievements and have continued his work in modern astronomy. The conference focuses on three different but related aspects: the past, the present and the future. Schiaparelli will be remembered in his own work and his own words. There will be contributions from scientists interested in his life and in the testimonies of his achievements through letters, documents and diaries. A section will be devoted to modern planetary science, and the new discoveries that have been done since Schiaparelli's contributions to this branch of astronomy. The discussion will span from small bodies in the Solar System to Mercury and Mars of course, based on the most recent datasets available from space observatories. The last section will be devoted to the future technological challenges that await us, in order to continue the exploration in space and improve on the techology required to do so.

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