

In the world of modern science, fifty years represent an enormous progress. The Italian Crystallographic Association (AIC) is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary shortly after hundred years from the discovery of X-ray diffraction by crystals by Laue and the Bragg's. In Italy the use of X-ray diffraction for structural studies initiated in the mid-twenties of last century, and the initial courageous developments were obviously quite limited, also because of World War II. The International Union of Crystallography (IUCr) was founded in 1947 and Italy joined in 1951, through the National Research Council (CNR). This promoted a more rapid development

Also thanks to the strong support of CNR, a solid network of laboratories could be realized, where diffraction techniques were developed and used to understand the structural properties of matter at an atomic and molecular level or, as it is now fashionable to say, at a nanometric level.

***Crystallographers initiated nano-sciences ante litteram!***

The availability, in several labs, of crystallographic equipments and know-how and the advent of the first computers were the catalysts of an expansion of structural researches. Diffraction intensities were still measured visually or with photometers. In the mid 60's the first "automatic" tree-circle diffractometers appeared.

This expansion generated the need of a scientific coordination of the crystallographic activity in Italy. In 1947 the International Union of Crystallography was founded and Italy adhered in 1951 through the CNR. Professor Onorato was elected to the IUCr Executive committee in 1951 and for his merits he was entrusted the organization of the VI Congress and General Assembly in 1963 in Roma. A very important successful event that promoted Italian crystallography in the world.

In 1966 the idea of creating a specific association was proposed by V. Scatturin at a CNR meeting on structural chemistry in Roma and a committee for the statute was formed.

In 1967 the foundation assembly of the Italian Crystallographic Association, held in Roma and attended by 108 crystallographers, approved the statute and opened the voting procedure to elect the Executive Council. Mazzi was elected president, Cavalca Vice-President, Vaciago treasurer, and Nardelli, Scatturin (secretary), Cocco, Rigault, Corradini and Allegra councilors.

The first Congress and general Assembly of AIC were held from 11 to 13 January 1968 in a freezing Perugia. During the Assembly the discussion raised several important topics, which were destined to characterize the activities of the Association, such as the recognition by the President of the Italian Republic, achieved only in 1998 thanks to the constant involvement of Mario Mammi. Further information on the history of Italian Crystallography and on the birth of the AIC can be found in some articles in the website <http://www.cristallografia.org>.