

FOREWORD

On account of the number of complex problems arising during the extremely successful seminar on frequency analysis, organized by the Lessico Intellettuale Europeo, 7th-8th January, 1981 (the acts of which now constitute Volume XXVII of our publications), it was suggested that a meeting be organized in collaboration with the Centro Automazione Analisi Linguistica at the Faculty of Philosophy «Aloisianum» of Gallarate on global linguistic statistical methods to locate style identities.

The meeting, or rather brain-storming session, held at Gallarate, 5th-7th June, 1981, was based on a paper prepared by R. Busa S. J. on the results of his exemplary analysis of both medieval Latin texts and complete works of Thomas Aquinas compiled for the Index thomisticus; it is this paper which begins this volume (Introduction). The paper was then thrown open to discussion, with philologists, historians, mathematicians, and researchers in statistics and computational linguistics all taking part. The discussion was recorded and reviewed by the participants and now constitutes the second part of this volume (The Dialogues).

This is the first approach to a number of disparate themes — of considerable importance for research in linguistics, semantics, philology, and textual criticism — which discuss methods and rules of quantitative analysis rendered even more sophisticated today by the computer.

Summing up, R. Busa S. J., who was the main speaker for the entire brain-storming session, wrote: «A global statistical analysis of the quantitative aspects of style is still unexplored and vergin territory. Over the last ten years, no one, as far

as we know, has yet listed the various types of stylistic situations examined from an authentic and chronological point of view. It would seem, however, that they have been studied for syntax and especially for instrumental entries rather than for the frequency of single words. Style 'finger prints', which never vary from one author to another, have not yet been found. This means that there is still ample room for original research in the field of computer analysis of texts ».

In recognition of the afore-mentioned problematic outcome of a discussion in which the different results of years of research were being compared, we decided on the publication of the present volume as a contribution to what is destined to become of increasing importance over the next few years.

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