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STUDIES  
IN HONOUR OF  
ROBERTO BUSA S.J.



GIARDINI EDITORI  
E STAMPATORI  
IN PISA



## FOREWORD

«Linguistica Computazionale» is very pleased to publish a special issue dedicated to Roberto Busa, who is universally recognized as one of the initiators of computer applications in the Humanities, and a leading pioneer figure in its development.

Not only was Roberto Busa the first to imagine and to realize, in the late 40's, the use of electronic data processing in literary and linguistic text analysis, but his scientific and organizational activity was also instrumental in determining, in Europe and in the United States, the launching of the first research projects and the rise of the first specialized Centres.

In the late 50's and in the early 60's, the CAAL, Centre for the Automation of Linguistic Analysis at Gallarate, founded and directed by R. Busa, was an essential reference-point for those about to start research activities not only in text-processing in the Humanities, but also in information retrieval and computer-assisted translation.

In fact some of the first achievements of the CAAL can be considered as a common background for Computational Linguistics: the methodology and terminology of automatic lexicological and lexicographical analysis, semiautomatic lemmatization, machine dictionaries, textual typology, methods for the treatment of different alphabets, automatic phonological transcription, etc. Problems were examined, solutions were envisaged, technological evolutions were prefigured, which are still of great interest in the actual panorama of computational linguistics.

To gain an idea of the significance of the work of those years, it would be sufficient to read the Proceedings of the two first Conferences of the field, organized by the CAAL at Tübingen in 1960, and by the Centre d'Etude du Vocabulaire Française at the University of Besançon in 1961.

The Authors who have contributed to this volume represent national and international scientific Organizations and Associations, whose various and well established activities testify the fruitful development of the first seeds sown by R. Busa 40 years ago.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my personal gratitude to R. Busa, for having welcomed and encouraged me as a young student, introduced to him at Gallarate in 1958 by the unforgettable Carlo Tagliavini, and for having helped me take my first steps in this complex and fascinating field.

*I also wish to offer my warmest appreciation to the CAEL who has contributed to the realization of this volume. Particular thanks are due to Amedeo Cappelli, Laura Cignoni and Carol Peters of the Italian National Research Council, Pisa, who have carried out a precious and assiduous editorial work.*

ANTONIO ZAMPOLLI