

# The Accademia della Crusca: New Perspectives in Lexicography

Giovanni Nencioni

*Accademia della Crusca, 50141 Firenze, Italy*

**Abstract:** The Accademia della Crusca is involved in historical, philological and lexicographical research into the Italian language. First, we provide some background information on the Accademia. Second, we discuss the problems of selectivity and inertia of nineteenth century lexicography, and define modern day requirements. We then consider the contribution of the computer to modern lexicography, and some computer-based dictionary projects, including those undertaken specifically at the Accademia.

**Key Words:** lexicography, dictionaries, Accademia della Crusca, lexicons, Italian language.

The statutory objective of the Accademia della Crusca, founded in Florence (Italy) in 1583, was, and still is, historical, philological and lexicographical research into the Italian language. The Accademia has three Research Centres: the Centre for Italian Philology, the Centre for Italian Lexicography and the Centre for Italian Grammar. It publishes three journals: *Studi di filologia italiana*, *Studi di lessicografia italiana* and *Studi di grammatica italiana*. It also publishes philological editions of Italian texts, volumes of concordances and special lexicons.

Part of the Accademia's current lexicographical

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*Giovanni Nencioni is the President of the Accademia della Crusca (Florence, Italy), quondam professor of Italian linguistics in the Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa. His main research interests are the history of the literary Italian language and lexicography. He has two major publications: Tra grammatica e retorica, Torino: Einaudi Paperbacks, 1983; and Saggi di lingua antica e moderna, Torino: Rosenberg e Sellier, 1989.*

activity is devoted to sectorial and technical lexicons. However, to increase an understanding of this specific activity we will begin by giving some background information on the history of the Accademia and its more recent lines of lexicographical research.

## I.

The Renaissance dictionaries were humanistic in nature. The language, whether Latin or the vernacular, was considered a literary tool, an aesthetic object, and the dictionary collected the flower, the choicest part of it, and set itself up as a source and a guide for the writer. Thus even the linguistic dictionaries were known as *treasuries* (Roberto Stefano's *Dictionarium seu latinae linguae thesaurus* [1531–33]; Enrico Stefano's *Thesaurus graecae linguae* [1572]: "Ob tantam formularum Latine loquendi vim et incredibilem copiam, doctissimis quibusdam visum est hoc nostrum opus Linguae Latinae Thesaurum iure dici posse" is written in the introduction to the former). The dictionaries of the vernacular language, after the bilingual stage, when the vernacular was treated as a vicarious language used for translating Latin, recorded the language of chosen authors, thus transferring to the vernacular the humanistic ideal of a timeless, perfect and absolute literary language, a model language, precisely like the Latin (whether Ciceronian or syncretistic) of the humanists. I should like to cite as the supreme example of this the Italian dictionary published by the Accademia della Crusca in 1612, which pays scarce attention to the spoken language, and almost exclusively records only those words used

by the best fourteenth century Florentine writers, or by those who adopted Florentine usage. It thus furnished the new authors who consulted it and took it as their guide with a carefully chosen language which was not entirely current, in other words a language that was already "classical." The lemmas of this language, which according to the compilers was the flower or treasure of the Florentine tongue, now in decline, were arranged alphabetically, and each lemma was presented in examples from the best writers. Thus an illustration was given of the syntactic and stylistic use of the lexical items in the various literary genres and registers pertinent to them. The dictionary user could therefore distinguish poetic from prose usage, learned from popular, and courtly from common.

Thus, in Europe, a selective and archaizing lexicography predominated, which was highly normative also as regards the new, living, national languages that were beginning to replace Latin, not only in literature but also in administration, law, science and the technical field. Not even dictionaries of the spoken language, with examples expressly devised by their compilers, like that of the French Academy (1695), escaped this puristic tendency. This was because the French used in Parisian conversation, on which the dictionary was based, was the language of that cultivated élite of the literary salons and the court, and was the same as the literary language of the Grand Siècle, since French, unlike Italian, had no recourse to an archaic, classical language. Thus, apart from rare exceptions, all the lexis not destined for men of letters, such as the lexis of the sciences, the crafts and the arts, was excluded from the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* as it was from the Accademia della Crusca dictionary. In France technical or encyclopaedic dictionaries were compiled such as the Richelet (1680), the Furetière (1690) the Corneille (1694) and the very famous *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (1751–72), and in Italy there were methodical dictionaries which were a sociolinguistic mirror of Italian crafts. The *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* of the Spanish Academy (1726–39), because of the unitary development of the language, followed the literary and puristic model of the Crusca dictionary.

The aim of Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), based on quotations from authors from the Elizabethan period onwards, was also, as its compiler states, to preserve the purity of the language, to ascertain the meanings and fix the best usage. To this end a great deal of attention is paid to spelling and pronunciation. However, this dictionary was not aimed exclusively at writers, but also at people of little culture who would turn to it for aid, and had the right to find therein technical words as well as foreign neologisms whose meaning they ignored. So it was both normative and instrumental, a kind of "first aid" for the speaker and the reader, as a not dishonorable compromise in lexicography. Dr Johnson writes in his dedicatory epistle: "The exact and pure idea of a grammatical dictionary" must give way to practical, social needs: "in lexicography, as in other arts, naked science is too delicate for the purposes of life. The value of a work must be estimated by its use: it is not enough that a dictionary delights the critic, unless, at the same time, it instructs the learner."

With reference to the Grimm brothers' *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (1852–1960), as it took more than a century to compile and is consequently discontinuous, we should merely like to mention that the original feature that distinguished it from earlier dictionaries was that it was strictly historical, and based on quotations taken from modern High German texts from the sixteenth century onwards, so that the history of words exclusively from old and middle High German is lacking.

## II.

Humanistic lexicography entered a crisis in our century. In 1923, at the request of the new university culture, the fifth edition of the Accademia della Crusca dictionary, in many respects a very remarkable work, was interrupted. The great swing in the modern world towards science and technology finally reached the collective linguistic consciousness, persuading it that the language of a nation, in that it expresses all its culture, is one, even though it is multiple in its unity, like the sectors of knowledge and activity to which it gives expression. There was, and is, a need to distinguish, not to repudiate or ignore in such a complex

articulation, and therefore it was urgent to find a lexicographical method that responded to the needs of this new totalitarian linguistic consciousness.

Let us attempt to specify these new needs in relation to the limits of nineteenth century lexicography.

It is taken for granted that the nineteenth century general dictionaries (whether they were historical or not) recorded a privileged lexis: the lexis of literary tradition, understood, it is true, in a less restricted sense, since they now included the language of the fathers of philosophical and scientific thought. They bristled with a terminology which was mainly artificial and supranational, developed without prejudice according to conventions within each specialized field, and strictly monosemic. This terminology, apart from symbols and syntaxemes from other codes, was not concerned about the understanding of those who were not specialists, and when one of its elements entered everyday language and became common, tended — as has been noted — to replace it. Moreover, the few scientific texts dealt with by general dictionaries are treated as literary or historical sources, namely as bearers of words and expressions that have already entered a more widespread, non-specialist, intellectual circulation. Thus, items having a long literary tradition or an inveterate common usage acquire, via quotations from authors given in a dictionary, a diachronic depth that enables one to trace their formal, semantic and social history. However, scientific or technical items remain attached to sporadic quotations, and are as uprooted from their cultural matrix as they are isolated from the real flux of the language. In her essay on the "haphazard relationship," in the various editions of the Accademia della Crusca dictionary, "between literary lexis and historico-artistic lexis," the art historian, Paola Barocchi, has pointed out that figurative items only appear relatively late in the dictionary (treatise writers and historians such as Cennini, Leonardo, Vasari and Bellori enter it via the canon of the fifth edition), but the examples are so few and heterogeneous that their historical value is neutralized. "The incidental exemplification of a lemma," she writes "becomes a mere abstraction and . . . only the historical depth of the texts *can* suggest the

lessons, and therefore the real meaning of the words, whether they are technical terms or predicates." As far as technical terms are concerned she warns us against specialized dictionaries which, if they are not based on historical documentation, that is, on a comparison between the technical language used by writers and that used in the workshops as proved by the existing documents from a precise time and place, they risk becoming mere hand-books. In fact this is how Paola Barocchi judges a dictionary that, "in separating these technical terms, confines them to an achronic, pseudoencyclopaedic, instrumental limbo."

These statements made by an art historian, though they concern only the sector of figurative lexis, are a healthy reminder to us lexicographers. They not only reconfirm the need for major lexicography, whether general or specialized, to have a historical dimension, in an age where linguistic syncretism is so widespread, but also encourage one to aim for a completeness and dynamism that traditional lexicography seems unable to achieve.

As far as completeness is concerned it is evident that the writer's personal language must be accompanied by the collective language of contemporary documents. These recontextualize it both socially and chronologically, and prevent it from being an isolated and therefore relatively abstract lexis. As far as dynamism is concerned, I must point out that diachrony and synchrony are, in effect, not contradictory but complementary parameters. The synchronic state of a language can only be seen and understood as a confluence of phenomena that are partly crystallized, and partly still at a vital stage of flux and development, in other words, as a momentary and unstable balance. On the other hand a diachronic study, restricted to an isolated phenomenon, does not have full linguistic value, if it is not seen in relation to other phenomena and set in a broader context that conditions and motivates it. Unfortunately none of the dictionaries published to date offers any ready possibility of interaction between these two parameters. The scholar has to seek this for each individual case, where possible, in the material selected by the lexicographer, and consigned to the pages of the dictionary or in the unused index cards.

I used the word "lexicographer" in the singular because the old dictionaries, even the large ones (such as the Johnson dictionary, the Littré and the Tommaseo), were often the work of a single compiler (to use the Greek term, they were monocephalic), and are therefore marked by a personal conception of and attitude towards the language, which augment the selective and normative aspects of the work. And they augment them in reverse proportion to its bulk, as may be seen in the concise, school versions of the big dictionaries, which inevitably provide minimal historical information and are mainly prescriptive. They take on the appearance and function of a lexical reception ward, where the demand and supply are minimal.

### III.

The essential characteristics and, we might say, defects, of nineteenth century lexicography were therefore selectivity and inertia. These were, up to a point, the result of the fact that the traditional dictionary was limited in its scope, compilation and consultation. The worst was that the dictionary users and their needs were as limited as the work itself, and confined to Procrustes' bed: the dictionary and its readers were alike. But nowadays the relationship has been reversed. The dictionary no longer has as a pedagogical aim the education or guiding of the student or writer but, on the contrary, it is the dictionary user who seeks a lexicographical aid capable of answering questions involving the language itself and its relations with culture and society. What the modern dictionary user expects is the following:

(i) a specific lexicography that goes beyond both the specialized and the general;

(ii) a lexicography that is also particular, or of particular genres, currents and traditions, but connected to its "sources", in other words, to that which makes it concrete and motivates it;

(iii) a truly historical lexicography, that situates every item in its chronological setting and particular area or environment;

(iv) a lexicography that is not only semasiological, but also onomasiological, which is concerned not only with the semantic history of words, but also with their relationship with things, in other words, with the denomination of objects, with the aim of tracing the meaning of obsolete words that

no longer have a referent or, vice versa, the denomination of ancient objects that have no name. This is one of the most pressing problems that has arisen from the extension of historical-linguistic studies to documents, inventories, old papers and, vice versa, from the extension of antiquarian studies to the minor arts and customs. This is all related to the census-taking of our cultural heritage and the widening of the horizon of museums, which the very modern sense of the organization and social responsibility for culture has promoted;

(v) finally, a dynamic lexicography, that is capable of anticipating and answering these and so many other questions, and of becoming, in a reversal of the traditional roles, the addressee, rather than the addresser, of the user.

A lexicography of this type demands a completely different technique from the traditional, sparse, manual sorting, subject to individual taste, and the dispersive and inert alphabetical order. The methods used for compiling methodological dictionaries and certain encyclopaedias provide some suggestions. The words may be grouped under professions or branches of the tree of knowledge, or according to the theory of semantic fields which develops conceptual systems, or according to componential analysis.

### IV.

The new tool that has made a new lexicography possible has been the computer, as applied to information retrieval and storage. Some lexicographical undertakings that emerged or re-emerged after the Second World War intuitively understood the extraordinary possibilities of this new technology and used the computer for sorting entire texts, compiling concordances and frequency indexes. Two examples of this kind of undertaking are the *Trésor de la langue française* from Nancy and the *Dizionario storico integrale della lingua italiana* promoted by the Accademia della Crusca in 1964. However, in these two undertakings, and other similar ones, the aim has always been to produce an alphabetical dictionary, restricted by the printed page and its rigid structure, and the new technology is merely a more objective, complete, rapid and partially automatic means to this end. Nobody denies the scientific importance of

these works, which, with the aid of the computer and accurately devised programs for sorting and selecting data, undoubtedly mark an advance in the historical and structural understanding of a language. However, one doubts their flexibility and responsiveness when they are used as a means rather than an end, in other words, as tools, as is inevitable in the case of texts not destined to be read as a whole, but to be occasionally consulted. Despite the technological breakthrough these works still retain the vice of excess, the plus-value of humanistic dictionaries, because they visibly and tangibly represent — with statuesque rigidity, I should say — the language of national culture, and therefore have a monumentality that exercises a paradigmatic action of prestige even on the most expert users. Lexicographical mobility lies beyond these works, in the archives of "occurrences" and concordances that they generated during their preparatory phase.

The latest form of electronic dictionary, the data bank, that is, an open and questionable electronic memory offers maximum usefulness and flexibility. This memory may be vast or limited, total or partial, and even restricted to individual genres or authors. Moreover, it has no quantitative limits and may progressively increase and change. Thus there is no longer the need for the selection imposed by the physical dimensions of the traditional dictionary, and the censorship implicit in this, and the arrangement of the items in alphabetical order, which makes the dictionary less flexible and dynamic, is rendered unnecessary by an information retrieval program.

The linguistic material may be transferred to the memory from already existent, traditional dictionaries, which then become a single mechanical dictionary compiled by using automatic devices such as optical scanners. But it is not difficult to see that this type of material, which is so conditioned and limited by outdated research and needs, would not be very useful. In order to have a data bank that serves a really useful purpose the results of new research must be entered in the memory, and carefully programmed according to the basic questions of the research. In so saying we are not falling into the paralogical and tautological circular trap of stating that the memory must already contain the solution to all

the problems. However, it must contain the possibility of contributing to their solution or, in other words, as in all scientific research, the data must be prepared in such a way as to become the factors in a constructive calculation. The nature and the validity of the memorizable material are not therefore preconstituted or prejudiced by extrascientific criteria (as long as censorial intentions do not pollute — and this is always a danger — this fundamental stage of the work), but are established each time by the aims of the research. There is therefore a mutual relationship between the richness of the material in the memory and the richness of the research program. For instance, the modern linguist demands that the memory of a language such as Italian should supply polyhedric information: regarding statistics, chronology, fields, morphosyntax, etymology, categories, topology, association, synonyms, antonyms, hyperonyms and hyponyms, sociolinguistics and stylistics. He demands specialized dictionaries, handbooks, inverse dictionaries (very useful for checking derivatives and suffixes), collections of rhymes, or names. Consequently the words cannot be abstract, isolated items in the memory, but linguistic exponents of a network of contextualized references, far superior to the bloodless grammatical and stylistic metalanguage of the traditional dictionaries. It will therefore be possible to obtain onomasiological information, to trace lost or forgotten terms by evoking the nomenclature of whole conceptual fields, certain associations, certain hyperonymic-hyponymic chains, the range of topics of certain documents or spheres.

I have described above a linguistic macroprogram of data storage and research, aimed at compiling a complete dictionary of the Italian language. But this was for the sake of putting forward a thesis. On the plane of reality, it must be said that a dictionary of this kind is a mirage to be approached gradually in small stages, through microprograms that allow one to produce a constellation of dictionaries whose density is in inverse proportion to their extension. These dictionaries will meet mature needs and problems, and the equivalent data banks will allow one not only to solve the problems raised, but to pose new ones, thus broadening the horizons of the research.

But what does "density" mean for our pur-

poses? It means specificity and historicity, two strictly complementary aspects, that are obtained with the maximum documentation within the context, and that do no prejudice other aspects, whose premise and foundation they are.

## V.

What I have just said, in my capacity as a linguist, with reference to a linguistic dictionary, also applies to dictionaries that are not merely linguistic. I say "not merely linguistic," because even data banks of a cultural heritage that does not only consist of words (documents, books, manufactured goods, works of art, etc.) cannot exist without language, whether in the form of primary terminology, or a substitute or normalizing terminology, such as that for prehistoric objects or used for the convenience of creating an inventory or catalogue. Some technical dictionaries are also not merely linguistic, and the Accademia della Crusca has been concerned with these for some years now. Although it dealt with the lexicography of the literary language for four centuries, the Accademia, in addition to compiling a complete, historical computerized dictionary of the Italian language, based on an open lexical archive that can be continually added to (a task that the National Research Council has assumed) the Accademia has recently turned to compiling technical dictionaries. This especially entails seeking out and sorting unusual and even unknown sources, such as handwritten inventories, and retrieving a terminology that is almost entirely extraneous to the literary tradition, and that often differs according to time and place. Moreover, this terminology is now partially devoid of real and certain meanings and references. Hence there is a new and very lively interest in objects, and a need to supply the words with real linguistic information that contextualizes them as much as possible, in order to render them less opaque and isolated. The initial filing of this kind of dictionary, whether manual or computerized, must be the same. It must not be sparse or subject to individual taste, nor must it show a preference for safe and transparent items, but it must replace the grid of selection and elimination, pertaining to literary or ordinary dictionaries, with the grid of concentra-

posed with idiomatic, geographical and chronological variety, must proceed very cautiously in equalizing and normalizing, as this might result in different things being identified with one another or the irretrievable loss of certain words, the pawns in a chess-set with missing pieces. Maximum caution should be exercised when elaborating those categorical pictures known as "treasuries," that permit one to evoke the material of the memory; and also in those diagrams which, together with the normalization of terminology, certain technical dictionaries supply as an aid in identifying and cataloguing the objects.

The Accademia della Crusca was first encouraged to venture into technical lexicography, by Severina Parodi's (then the Accademia's secretary) discovery of Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici's tion and concurrence. The lexicographer, when unpublished papers in the historical archives of the Accademia. These papers contain lists of technical words connected with the trades of blacksmith, goldsmith, cloth maker, arms maker, hatter, etc. Some contain descriptions of the art of distillation, military and naval constructions, shoeing horses, equitation, and so forth. It is all material directly associated with the artisan workshops and seventeenth century living usage. It is clear that Cardinal Leopoldo, Galileo's disciple, who was in favour of modernizing the Accademia della Crusca dictionary, intended to include these terms in a new edition of the literary dictionary, or to compile a separate technical dictionary. Severina Parodi directed the work of processing the data contained in those papers, and retrieved all the technical lexis. She extracted the lemmas and the definitions for some of them that the Cardinal had outlined, and compared them with the third edition of the Accademia dictionary (1691), in which some of the terms, with their relative definitions, had been included.

We have already said that Paola Barocchi had a more complex and more socially integrated — we might say more historical — conception of art, and was fully aware of the importance of specialized lexis. She had, in fact, produced an example of this by compiling and publishing the indexes of sixteenth century theoretical treatises and part of Vasari's *Lives*. On hearing about the Accademia

della Crusca's new interest in technical lexis, she invited the Accademia to collaborate, as regards the linguistic aspect, on initiatives involving the art object. Gabriella Cantini Guidotti's projects are part of this collaboration, and they have proved to be more fruitful than expected. One of these is a study of the lexis of glass-making, that is based on sixteenth to eighteenth century inventories from workshops and glass furnaces in Florence, Pisa and Murano, and that resulted in a computerized dictionary. The users of this dictionary include lexicologists, economic historians, art historians and catalogue compilers. Since the documents (official inventories) are reliable as far as the correspondence between word and object is concerned, every item, corresponding to an object in the inventory, has been stored in the memory, together with its archive reference, time, place, and faithfully transcribed example. When the work is completed it will consist of more than a thousand entries. Meanwhile, the Accademia della Crusca has published a book entitled *Tre inventari di bicchierai toscani fra Cinque e Seicento*, in which Gabriella Cantini Guidotti gives the manual model of the computerized dictionary, and provides its historical and social background by reconstructing the Tuscan glassmaking industry, and its relationship with that of Venice. She also stresses the difficulties inherent in correlating the word and its object, and in identifying the object in a terminology that has outlived its referents.

What, then, can a linguist eager for a more advanced lexicography learn from the information technology of the figurative arts? First and foremost, an awareness of language as the interpreter of a specific, complete experience, that permits distinction but excludes selection. The technical language of the writers is compared with that of the workshops and markets at a precise time and place, dialectal and foreign borrowings are accepted without prejudice, so that the whole depth of the experience is accompanied by the whole depth of the language that interprets it, only these joint aspects can confer complete historicity. Second, the perception of the difficulties and problems arising from the incumbent presence, potential or real, of objects in relation to the retrieval of their meaning, when the objects are

missing or their corresponding referents are uncertain. Hence the heuristic need for antiselection, namely a greater abundance and greater flexibility of examples in order to achieve, by combination, the recontextualization of the term, and consequently its denotative value. Third, the need for close collaboration between the linguist and the expert in technology, that avoids abstractions and approximations. These methodological applications remove lexicography and language from the limbo of literary purism and general standardization, two ideals that have, at different periods, dominated both lexicography and linguistic practice.

## VI.

I should now like to describe briefly the other computerized lexicographical projects undertaken by the Accademia della Crusca.

(i) "Lessico dell'oreficeria" and "Lessico dei tessuti antichi" (Gabriella Cantini Guidotti).

These two works aim at retrieving the technical lexis of these two above-mentioned sectors, which both old and new lexicography have largely ignored.

The systematic sorting of the "files of inventories" and "samples of inventories" of the State Archives of Florence "Pupilli avanti il Principato" (1373—1531) and "Pupilli del Principato" (1531—1795) and chance findings in the "Carte Stroziane," in the "Catasto del 1427" and in the "Guardaroba Mediceo," in the Florence State Archives, have led to the discovery of inventories, nearly all previously unpublished, of the houses and workshops of fifty-two goldsmiths active in Florence and Pisa.

The legal reason for drawing up these documents and the existence of estimators and compilers who were goldsmiths by trade, guarantee that the lexical choices do in fact correspond to the real object to which they refer.

After each document was transcribed in full — an operation that was indispensable for estimating the terms in their context — each item, roughly corresponding to each individual object in the inventory, was then stored in the memory by means of the UNESCO CDS/ISIS system.

The following data were stored: archive refer-

ence (archive, section, file number, name in which the inventory is registered, page on which the particular example is found); the time; the place; the lemmas one wishes to point out each time; the faithfully transcribed example.

Inventories from textile workshops, belonging to haberdashers, silk manufacturers and linen manufacturers and so on are currently being stored in the memory, using the same system and criterion adopted for the goldsmith inventories. In these cases the period under consideration is limited to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, because of the availability of real objects for comparison.

(ii) The lexis collected by Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici (Severina Parodi).

Another program we have computerized is the one regarding the lexis collected by Prince, and later Cardinal, Leopoldo de' Medici, between 1648 and 1675, in preparation for the third edition of the Accademia della Crusca Dictionary (Florence, 1691). The Prince used an original and highly modern system of on-the-spot enquiry, he asked the experts — in this case the teachers of the arts and the palace suppliers — to describe their trade, the workshop tools, materials, techniques and operations they used in their work. These investigations resulted in a series of lists of terms — items mostly accompanied by definitions — and, particularly, in 27 important fragments of manuscripts of the artisans' replies to Leopoldo de' Medici's enquiries, which add up to a total of more than a hundred pages, mainly in folio.

The collection is scattered in fourteen codices and two large boxes containing around 600 loose papers in the Accademia archives. For fear of not being able to sort them all, the first essential step was to put the material in alphabetical order, in order to be able to study the lemmas, which were mostly not to be found in the historical and linguistic dictionaries and the later encyclopedias, in which the names of materials and techniques which have since disappeared do not figure.

It was therefore logical to think that the computer would speed up the task of recording the data, since the material could be stored in the

order it appeared in the documents (not alphabetical order) and it could then be reorganized later. We therefore studied a very simple procedure that contains, in the first list, the lemma, not normalized, but in the form in which it is found in the document; in the second, the definition, wherever it exists; and in the third its collocation in the collection, as well as early comparative data from the first three editions of the Crusca Dictionary — if, that is, the word is a lemma, in sublemma, recorded with a different meaning, or completely absent.

(iii) The storing of the first Accademia della Crusca Dictionary (Mirella Sessa Vassallo).

The Accademia and the Bassilichi Group of Florence (represented by the technician Fabio Gurrieri), in close technical and linguistic collaboration, have begun to store the first edition of the *Vocabolario degli accademici della Crusca* (1612), which they aim to use for an in-depth comparison between the methods adopted by old and new lexicography. They also plan to verify the limits of the "circularity" of the dictionary and consequently to retrieve the language included in the definitions and examples but not in the lemmary, thus exposing the gap between the instrumental range of the compilers, that of the *auctoritates* quoted, and that ideally proposed to the writers. This complex operation will make a big contribution towards a better understanding of the structure and nature of that dictionary, and linguistic awareness in Florence between the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. We hope that the final result of this project of selective and global indexing will not simply entail the storing of the Dictionary (in order to highlight the items used in the articles of the individual lemmas), but the "dictionary" of the seventeenth century (the re-articulation and re-contextualization of all the items, whether they be lemmatized or not).

The project starts from the transfer onto CD ROM and uses the BASIS program for an *ad hoc* application written in Pascal, devised by Fabio Gurrieri and Mirella Sessa, and named Crusca.