

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEXT

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There is a gap in our knowledge of medieval grammatical theory between Petrus Helias and the Modistae, or in other terms between ca. 1140 and 1270. Of the earlier grammarians, even of Petrus Helias himself and of his main source William of Conches, only excerpts have been published¹. But concerning the above-mentioned period we are still worse off: only a few studies of single texts have so far appeared².

By common consent the most important work from the latter part of this period is the corpus of grammatical commentaries ascribed to the English Dominican Robert Kilwardby. Apart from some extracts of his commentary on the Priscianus minor edited by Thurot and Harrison Thomson³ none of these texts are accessible to the historians of grammar and linguistics. This issue of the Cahiers is intended to make further texts available. The sheer bulk of the commentaries discourages a complete edition; in the MS Cambridge UL Peterhouse 191 the commentary on the Priscianus maior takes up 111 folios, that on the Priscianus minor 118. For comparison the 140 pages edited below correspond to 13 folios; accordingly a complete edition of both commentaries would correspond to approximately 2500 pages.

We have chosen to concentrate on such sections from the commentary on the Priscianus maior which may give an impression of their author's fundamental linguistic and semantical doctrines. This should make possible a preliminary assessment of his contribution to the development of linguistic thought leading up to the speculative grammar of the Modistae. Even

1. Thurot 1869. R.W.Hunt 1941-43. E.Jeauneau 1960. J.Pinborg 1961. L.M. de Rijk 1967. K.M.Fredborg 1973. For exact bibliographical references, p. 10+.

2. Ch. Fierville 1886. Reichling 1893. J. Leclercq 1943-45. R.W. Hunt 1950. M. Grabmann 1956. L.M. de Rijk 1967. J. Pinborg 1969. R.W. Hunt 1975. K. Reichl forthcoming.

3. Thurot 1869. S. Harrison Thomson 1938.

if the problem of authorship is rather complicated⁴ the intrinsic interest of the texts will, we hope, justify our choice.

The Manuscripts

The commentary on the Priscianus maior is transmitted in three MSS:

A = Cambridge Univ. Libr. Peterhouse 191 sect. 1, ff. 1r-111v (s.XIII).

This is our oldest MS, written in a clear hand. Unfortunately the text is rather corrupt often to the point of nonsense. The text is almost complete, stopping abruptly in the middle of a line introducing the discussion on continuative conjunctions. Expl.: Sequitur de continuativis, et de eius significatione dubitatur quod haec coniunctio significat.

B = Cambridge Univ. Libr. Peterhouse 206, ff. 308-329r (s.XIII/XIV). This is only a fragment stopping in the middle of the discussion on diphthongs. The MS is neatly written and has a text sounder than that of A. Nevertheless it is of no great value for the establishment of the text. It has common faults and lacunas with both A and C, but appears hardly ever to preserve an independent, genuine reading. Expl.:...quia non habet diphthongum aequipollentiae apud Graecos et hae sunt 'ae', 'oe'; aequipollent enim istis 'ai', 'ou', sed 'au' et 'eu' non habent *** (lac.sex fere litt.) et aequipollenter (vel aequipollentur).

C = Cambridge Univ. Libr. Kk III.20, ff. 25r-224r + 228v-229v (s.XV).(ff. 228v-229v give a section which was mistakenly omitted on f. 142v). This MS, though late, appears to be dependent on the same hyparchetype as the other two MSS, since some lacunae and faults are common to all, but C's text is generally superior, preserving a true reading against A or the consensus of A and B. However the scribe seems prone to make minor redactional changes, clarifications and additions to the text, so that his testimony is to be used with caution. The text is almost complete, stopping immediately before the unfinished sentence which concludes A. Expl.: ...quaedam vero diversas substantias diversis accidentibus tantum ut 'Aeneas fuit pius, Achilles quidem fortis'; et haec de copulativa sufficient.

4. Cp. Below, the contribution by O. Lewry p. 12+ ff.

The rest of the MS includes:

ff.1r-15r: *Dicta*⟨*mina*⟩ *Guidonis* ⟨*Fabae*⟩ (ed. Gaudenzi in *Il propugnatore*, nouv. ser. V.1:86-129 & V.2:58-109, Bologna 1892).

ff.15r-24v: *Extractationes Guydonis* = the Exordia by Guido Faba, in a fuller selection and an order slightly different from the text printed in O.Redlich, *Eine Wiener Briefsammlung..*, Wien 1894 (= *Mittheilungen a.d.Vaticanischen Archive*, Bd.II)p.317 ff. For the different redactions of the Exordia cp. V.Pino, *La Summa de vitiis et virtutibus di Guido Faba*, *Quadrivium I*, Bologna 1956, pp.41-152, esp.p.42,49-50.

ff.224r-228v: ⟨*Quaestiones de interiectione*⟩. Anon., probably late 13th century author. The text is written in the same hand as the preceding text. Inc.: *De interiectione prima quaestio est, utrum sit pars orationis et quomodo, et ideo primo dubitatur an sit pars; et videtur quod non per Priscianum in magno volumine dicentem, quod nihil aliud est esse partem orationis quam mentis conceptum significare... Expl.: Sed hoc in omnibus tribus personis. Hoc igitur modo de significatione et constructione interiectionis probabiliter dici potest etc.*

The Edition

In consequence of the relative properties of the three MSS we have chosen to make A our basic MS, in order to avoid arbitrary redactional changes of C. This means that in case of disagreement between A and C (or BC in the first part, pp. 1-48) we have preferred A when its reading is not disqualified by offering a poorer sense or no sense at all. Whenever C's or BC's reading offers a better sense than A's we have felt free to accept it. For the convenience of the reader the orthography has been normalized.

In order that the critical apparatus should not be disproportionately full we have dropped all variant readings which do not affect the sense in a meaningful way. We have thus omitted to mention pairs of synonyms (like *iste/illic/is, vel/aut/et*), omissions of single words, omissions by homoioteleuta, dittographies, nonsensical readings (especially in A), rephrasings which do not alter the sense (especially in C) and insignificant changes in word-order (especially in C). For the first part of the text (pp. 1-48) where all three MSS are extant we have generally noted the places where we diverge from the consensus of two MSS except for insignificant variants (synonyms, pointless omissions, changes of word-order).

On the rather few places where we have emended the text against the MSS we have of course given the readings of all the MSS in full.

We have tried to verify the quotations to the greatest possible extent. This has been quite laborious, since the quotations are often unusually imprecise. When a quotation is not verified in the apparatus, it is a sign that we have not been able to find anything like it in the sources referred to. - Implicit quotations are not noted.

The Form of the Commentary

The text of Priscian is divided into 'lectiones'. The text of each lectio is discussed according to a scheme generally used in commentaries from round the middle of the 13th century, the basic structure of which is:

- 1) *Sententia in generali*: A short survey of the contents and a division into parts.
- 2) *Sententia in speciali*: A paraphrase and an explanation of the text in detail.
- 3) *Ordinatio*: A discussion of the order of the text, both concerning the place of this lectio in the work and the inner structure of the lectio. The *ordinatio* is often left out or included in 4.
- 4) *Dubia*.

Our author adheres to this scheme somewhat irregularly: 1 is always found, generally it is longer in the beginning of the work than near the end; 2 is often left out, sometimes indicated by the remark that "*sententia patet in littera*". This part too is more often found in the beginning of the work than in the later parts. 3 is never found. 4 is substantially longer than in most commentaries of this type. Sometimes, but not regularly, the author indicates that he proceeds from part 1 to part 2, e.g. of a lectio.

All texts in our edition are taken from the *dubia*-passages. We have tried to clarify their main structure by using a decimal notation.

The Sources

The main sources of the commentary are, of course, Priscianus and Petrus Helias, who are also the authors quoted most. Several passages and discussions are taken over almost literally from Petrus Helias; this holds true not only for the explicit quotations, but also for other passages,

especially such which are discussing aspects of Priscian's text. There is no doubt that our author wrote with Petrus Helias at his elbow.⁵ What however distinguishes him from these models is the great amount of quotations from Aristotle; especially the quotations from the Posterior Analytics and the Metaphysics are numerous and revealing. Other new sources are Iohannes Damascenus (for the concept of the inner word, p. 58-59)⁶ and the Arabs: Avicenna, Algazel and Averroes are quoted at crucial points (see Index nominum). This alone changes the whole character of the grammatical debate and adds points of view and general questions which are absent from the earlier texts. Also the central role assigned to Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, especially in the introductory sections on the nature of the sign, should be noted; the notion of sign is in this way made central to grammar, in a way which was unknown to the classical authors. The existence of terminist logic is hinted at (p. 124), but its influence seems slight.

The Date

We can confidently assume that the commentary was written at some time after 1230, the approximate date for the translation of Averroes. A terminus ante quem can only be argued from the place of the commentary in the doctrinal development. This would imply that it was written before 1265/70, when Martinus de Dacia and Boethius de Dacia wrote their *Modi significandi*. It is difficult to point to any clues which could suggest a more precise date within this span of years. If, however, the "aliqui" referred to should prove to be Robert Kilwardby on the Priscianus minor (cp. below Lewry p.15+) and Roger Bacon (p. 114), then a date in the 1250es seems indicated. But greater exactness in these matters can only be expected when we possess a much wider knowledge of the grammatical literature of the time.

5. Only explicit quotations are indicated in the notes, except for a few cases. Further parallels may be found by comparing the text to some of the relevant passages partially edited in the studies mentioned above (note 1).
6. The translation used is that of Burgundio (MS Oxford Bodl. Laud. Misc. 268, f. 54r-v), not that of Grosseteste (MS Oxford Bodl. Libr. Ash. 1526, f. 139r).

Some points of doctrine

The linguistic doctrine of our text reflects a middle stage between Petrus Helias and the Modistae. The most significant advance from Petrus Helias is the application of the new strict concept of science derived from Aristotle's Posterior Analytics. In order to be a science grammar must be universal i.e. common to all human languages and it must have a unitary subject which is indifferent to change. This new emphasis is illustrated clearly in the adaptation of Petrus Helias' *accessus to grammar* (p.46-48). Where Petrus Helias had been content to describe grammar as an 'ars' with mainly practical aims, our author sets out to give a parallel description of grammar as a science.

These additions to Petrus Helias are based on the thorough discussion of the principles of grammar to be found in the introductory part of the commentary (p.1-40). Grammar is defined as one of the three sciences which deal with signs. Since particular and sensory signs as such do not fit the description of a scientific subject they must be considered in a special way in order to satisfy: what science really is about is not the sign-tokens but the sign-types (*signa sub ratione universalis abstracti a particularibus signis*, p.8). Further they are not considered in their relation to the changing objects to which they refer (*ea quae significant*, p.4-5) but in their relation to their unchanged meaning (*ea quae nata sunt significare*, *ibid.*). In other words: what is really constant about signs seems to be their meaning.

In grammar we are concerned with a special kind of signs, i.e. vocal signs which have received their meaning through an act of the intellect. A salient feature of our text is the broad space devoted to questions of the imposition of words (pp.49-80). Of course, this is where the most difficult problems for a universalistic conception of language will arise. In analogy with the general theory of signs the general trend of the discussion is to situate the constancy of the vocal signs with their meanings, whereas the vocal forms vary from language to language. In medieval terms this is expressed by the formula that meaning (*significatio*) is the *forma* of the word (p.12;79-80). The meanings or the intelligible aspect of words and sentences form a '*sermo in mente*' (p.12) which is a product of the intellect as such and accordingly constant and necessary i.e. common to all languages (p.14). However, this '*sermo in mente*' is somewhat am-

biguous. Primarily it abstracts from particular languages, and so is to be identified with the conceptual contents of the mind (= *passiones animae*, *intellectus*, *species intelligibiles*, which all appear to be synonymous, see *Index terminorum*); these are the proper meanings of vocal signs and in their turn likenesses (*similitudines*) of the extramental objects. On the other hand the intellect through its '*virtus appetitiva*' forms a '*sermo interior*' which is isomorphical with the '*sermo exterior*' (p. 10; 58-9). The latter is involved when we express ourselves; the former is said to be the real subject of scientific investigation.

This ambiguity of the '*sermo interior*' makes it somewhat difficult to see exactly which kind of problems the grammarian is supposed to solve. His work can hardly remain exclusively within the '*sermo interior*' understood as the invariant concepts and their interrelations; somehow he must link this up with a consideration of the actual choice of vocal forms (be they interior or exterior), since he has to describe '*vox articulata respectu congrui, quae articulatio est per modos significandi generales*' (p.47). I am afraid that this problem has no solution within the framework of our commentary. So long as the '*forma vocis*' is taken to be its meaning as something independent of the expression itself, it is difficult to find a place for the science of grammar at all⁷. Our author glosses over his difficulties by saying that the task of the grammarian is to describe the '*universal principles*' which enable us to construe a congruent language. These universal principles cover a substantial part of any actual language; this is evident from the enumeration of these principles given on p.29: '*Litterae, syllabae, dictiones et orationes, et modi pronuntiandi substantiales elementorum ut 'omnis vocalis per se sonat, consonans cum alio' et quod 'omnis vox postposita plus sonat se ipsa praeposita', et similiter modi significandi et consignificandi generales et speciales*'⁸. Consequently the accidental principles or variables are the following: '*Figurae elementorum et nominationes et accidentales potestates et alia accidentia quae sumuntur a parte vocis, cuiusmodi sunt terminatio in -a vel in-us*'. This presupposes that all languages have substantial and

7. The modistae tried to remedy this by defining the '*forma vocis*' as the relation existing between the expression and the object signified. Cp.e.g. Pinborg 1967,p.43 n.78.

8. '*speciales*'supplied from p.26.

formal universals and moreover that these universals are identical with the common conceptual structures.

A capital role in the study of grammar, especially as regards those parts which concern the significative elements of speech, is played by the term 'modus significandi'. Unfortunately it is never defined. This again is a maior difference from the Modistae proper. However, some indications as to its use can be given. A modus significandi belongs to the vox (which vox?) as distinct from the modus intelligendi which is a part of the concept. A modus significandi a parte vocis and a corresponding modus intelligendi go together to form a part of speech (pars orationis, p.105). The concept is an aggregate of the res intellecta and the modus intelligendi; correspondingly the meaning of a word is an aggregate of the res significata and the modus significandi (p.133). Now, the grammarian is only concerned with the 'modus'-element; the special conceptual content (significatum speciale) is no concern of his (p.103f.) This resembles Modistic doctrine, but for the fact that there is no mention of a 'modus essendi'. This, however, does not mean that the modus intelligendi is arbitrary, only that its status is left undefined.

We meet different types of modi significandi: the general which define the parts of speech, the special modi the meaning of which is unclear, and the modi accidentales which are identical with the traditional accidents of the parts of speech. Sometimes they are even called modi consignificandi. Even if the use of these different modi significandi is not as systematical as with the Modistae proper the elements for a redefinition of grammatical forms in terms of 'modi significandi' are all present.

The sufficientia partium orationis given by our author (p.107-8) is somewhat different from the one given in Kilwardby's commentary on the Priscianus minor, which may be drawn thus (MS Paris BN lat.16221,f.5ra):

pars orationis significans

- 1.mentis affectum.....*interiectio*
- 2.mentis conceptum
 - 2.1.rem et per modum rei
 - 2.1.1.se habentem per modum per se stantis
et substantiae
 - 2.1.1.1.substantiae purae.....*pronomen*
 - 2.1.1.2.substantiae perfectae sive completae
 - 2.1.1.2.1.sine actione et passione.....*nomen*
 - 2.1.1.2.2.cum actione et passione.....*participium*
 - 2.1.2.se habentem per modum fieri.....*verbum*

- 2.2.disponentem circumstantiam sive habitudinem rei
 2.2.1.habitudo substantiae ad actum.....*praepositio*
 2.2.2.habitudo actus ad substantiam.....*adverbium*
 2.2.3.habitudo indifferens utriusque ad invicem... *coniunctio*

One difference is that the Priscianus maior sufficientia does not comprise the interjection. From the rather extensive commentary on this part of speech, it is manifest that this is only an apparent difference. The interjection differs from the other parts of speech by signifying 'per modum affectus' just as in Kilwardby. Our author then follows Petrus Helias in distinguishing three kinds of interjections, only one of which is a real part of speech, namely the one which signifies through convention, the other two kinds are natural sounds¹⁴.

The main division, common to Kilwardby and our author, between words which signify 'rem aut modum rei' (the declinables) and such which signify 'circumstantias rerum' (the indeclinables) may be inspired by Boethius (De trinitate, ed. Stewart & Rand, IV, 95sq.). The indeclinables are thus conceived as words which do not signify the essential properties of things, but only their external relations. Concerning the definitions of the declinable parts of speech it is worth emphasizing their great similarity to the definitions given by the Modistae.

For Kilwardby as well as for our author the parts of speech are distinguished according to their 'modus significandi generalis' and the way in which they conceive the extramental objects, not according to the actual properties of their special significata (pp.104-5). In this the doctrine characteristic of Modistic grammar has already been attained.

The 'modi significandi' play an important part in the discussions on syntax. They are the causes of congruent construction or in other terms: a congruent construction is a construction where the 'modi significandi' of the elements correspond. Like the Modistae our author distinguishes between a 'convenientia proportionis' and a 'convenientia similitudinis' (p.94), corresponding approximately to rection and congruence of traditional grammar.

Even the 'significatum speciale' may influence constructions, when considered not absolutely but in their relations to other significata (p.95-

14. Cp. Pinborg 1961.

96). This seems to be different from the solution of Kilwardby (Cp. Thurot 1869 pp. 219-21).

The different types of construction are defined according to these principles. We must remark that the transitive/intransitive distinction is still only used for the construction between declinable parts, and that the "significatum speciale" is especially important for the constructions including indeclinable parts¹⁵.

All the features sketched above seem to justify the claim made in the beginning of this section; the text studied here is a significant link between Petrus Helias and the Modistae proper. Many of the elements which characterize the speculative grammar of the Modistae are present, and linguistic thought has moved a long way from the first introduction of the term "modus significandi" by William of Conches and his contemporaries. But all these new elements have still not found their place in a new paradigm.

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15. Cp. C f. 219rb: Dicendum quod duplex est constructio: quaedam est declinabilis ad declinabilem, quae habet dividi per transitivam et intransitivam, et haec attenditur penes convenientiam similitudinis vel proportionis in modo significandi vel consignificandi. Alia est indeclinabilis cum declinabili, quae attenditur penes convenientiam modorum significandi indeclinabilis partis proportionalis significato vel consignificato alterius, quod patet in constructione adverbii cum verbo et praepositionis cum casuali.

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