

VALERIA MICILLO

Classical Tradition and Norse Tradition in the “Third Grammatical Treatise”*

0. Some of the most interesting problems related to Óláfr Þórðarson's *Third Grammatical Treatise* are connected with the sources to which the Icelandic grammarian had access to prepare his work. It is generally held that in the first part of the treatise, dealing with phonetic and orthographic questions, he avails himself basically of books I and II of Priscian's *Institutiones Grammaticae*, while for the last part, handling rhetorical and stylistic matter, he draws essentially from the third book of Aelius Donatus' *Ars Maior*. However, many passages show a very vague correspondence with the source(s) presumably used. In fact Priscian's and Donatus' works, in which concepts and ideas of the great philosophers and grammarians of ancient times meet and melt together, enjoyed an enormous popularity and gave rise to innumerable commentaries, explanations and collections of quotations, which greatly contributed both to the spreading and to the distortion of their theories. Also, other passages in the treatise clearly belong to different traditions than the ones most commonly used, and sometimes points of contact can be found in traditions of local origin.

The problem therefore is basically that of ascertaining: 1) whether Óláfr used the texts of the classical tradition in a (more or less faithful) “standard” version, or through one or more of the many commentaries of later derivation; 2) which sources other than the traditional ones were available to him.

The present work is an attempt to examine the first part of Óláfr's treatise in such a perspective.

0.1. I wish to point out that I have addressed myself primarily to the investigation of direct sources, while indirect or secondary sources have been considered only upon occasion. Reference is made therefore mostly to the Latin grammatical tradition. However, as is well known, this is ultimately based on philosophical and linguistic speculations of ancient Greece. The “classic” tradition of grammar developed on the theoretical foundations provided by Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics between others, and it was later

* A preliminary version of this paper was read at the VIII International Saga Conference: “The Audience of the Sagas”, Göteborg, Aug. 11–17, 1991.

codified in Dionysius Thrax's *Téchnē grammatiké* and Apollonius Dyscolus' syntax. Grammatical studies in Rome essentially followed the patterns previously established by the Greek scholars but usually failed to achieve original results. The Latin contribution to grammatical scholarship is nonetheless of great significance inasmuch as it preserved the rich Greek heritage concerning language. It can be said that later grammarians owed most to Greek linguistic scholarship, although often unknowingly, as it was transmitted and formalised in the works of Latin scholars.

This picture underlies also Óláfr's treatise, but a discussion of the influence of Greek philosophic and linguistic thought on the treatise and on Icelandic grammatical tradition is beyond the scope of this essay. Greek sources are referred to occasionally, but no systematic attempt is made to trace any point back to its ultimate origin.

1. The *Third Grammatical Treatise* (henceforth TGT) starts, like many works of its kind, with a chapter on the *vox*, its definition, characteristics and different types. I print here the first sentence, together with the relevant passage in Priscian's *Institutiones*. (Quotations are from Ólsen 1884 for TGT and from Keil 1857–1880, within brackets, for the Latin parallels, unless otherwise stated.)

1,1 Allt ær hlioð, þat ær um kvikvæ-
dis æyrv ma skilia.

Prisc. *Inst.* I,1 (II 5) Philosophi definiunt, vocem esse aerem tenuissimum ictum vel suum sensibile aurium, id est quod proprie auribus accidit.

We can see at once that the definition of 'voice' in TGT is completely different from that in Priscian. The only point of contact is the fact that both regard the 'voice' as something to be perceived through the sense of hearing. It is also to be noted that while Priscian speaks of *vox*, Óláfr deals with *hljóð*, usually meaning 'sound'. The point is relevant as until at least the later Middle Ages the Latin word *vox* is commonly employed both for the (human) voice and for sound, as an equivalent of *sonus*, while this would not appear to be the case with the Norse grammatical tradition. The two concepts are generally indicated by different names, viz. *hljóð* (sound) and *rqdd* (voice), for example in TGT and in the *Second Grammatical Treatise* (Raschellà 1982:77–78) at least, while the situation is more complicated in the *First Grammatical Treatise* (see Albano Leoni 1975:13–14; Haugen 1972:60–61; Benediktsson 1972:61–64).

All this already indicates that the formulation of *hljóð* in TGT does not depend on Priscian. Conclusive evidence to this is a statement by Óláfr, to be examined later, set at the end of the first paragraph (1,13), where

Priscian's definition is reported and explicitly contrasted with the one previously discussed (see below).

Apart from Priscian, another well known *grammaticus* deals with the *vox*, Aelius Donatus. In his *Ars Maior* he reports:

Don. *Ars Gramm.* I,1 (Holtz 1981:603) *vox est aer ictus, sensibilis auditu, quantum in ipso est.*

This definition is shorter than Priscian's, differently formulated and partly problematical because the last phrase, *quantum in ipso est*, has been interpreted in various ways. Again the treatment of *hljóð* in TGT shows no point of contact with Donatus, excepting the usual reference to the 'voice' as something perceived through hearing.

2. The next quotation sets forth Óláfr's classification of sounds.

1,2–3 *hlioð hæfir margar kynkvísir, ok verðr hlioð þat, sæm nattvrliga megv æyrv greina, af samkvamv tvæggia likama, ænn qnnvr hlioðsgrein ær sv, ær hæilæg ritning sægir hlioða andliga hlvti. likamlikt hlioð verðr annat af lifligvm hlvtvm, ænn annat af liflæsum hlvtvm.*

Again, no direct relationship with Latin grammatical tradition can be established. The passage above seems to have only one characteristic in common with conventional sound classifications, that is, the identification of different types of sound. Traditional classificatory patterns can usually be traced back either to Donatus or to Priscian. The former employs a twofold scheme originating in the Greek grammatical tradition, the latter distinguishes four basic types with various sub-types.

Don. *Ars Gramm.* I,1 (Holtz 1981:603) *Omnis uox aut articulata est aut confusa.*

Prisc. *Inst.* I,1 (II 5) *Vocis autem differentiae sunt quattuor: articulata, inarticulata, literata, illiterata.*

Donatus' simpler pattern apparently enjoyed a greater popularity than the more complex classification adopted by Priscian. Formulations similar to, or identical with that found in Donatus occur in previous and contemporary grammarians as well as in later texts (see e.g. Diomedes *Ars Gramm.* II: *De voce* [I 420]; Probus *Inst. Art.: De voce* [IV 47]; Marius Victorinus *Ars Gramm.* 2,1–2 [Mariotti 1967:66]). Further types are obtained by variously combining and/or modifying the preceding ones.

In Óláfr's treatise sounds are classified according to different criteria. A first general distinction is drawn between a kind of sound perceivable "naturally", originating from two bodies coming into contact, and another kind deriving from "spiritual" parts. Here an opposition "corporeal" (or

“material”) vs. “spiritual” (= *likamlikt* vs. *andlikt*) is implicitly established. It also appears that while “corporeal sounds” can be perceived “naturally”, “spiritual sounds”, it would seem, can not.

The “corporeal vs. spiritual” opposition is a well-known topic of the philosophical-theological speculation in ancient and mediaeval times, but so far I have been unable to find any trace of such a dichotomy in connection with sound (but see below). A passage in Audax, however, may be taken into consideration:

Aud. *Excerpta: De voce* (VII 323) Vox quid est? Aër ictus auditu sensibilis. Vocis species quot sunt? Duae. Quae sunt? Articulata et confusa. (...) Vox corporalis est, an incorporalis? Secundum stoicos corporalis, qui eam sic definiunt, ut nos in principio respondimus. Plato autem non esse vocem corpus putat: “non enim percussus”, inquit, “aër, sed plaga ipsa atque percussio, id est vox”. Democritus vero ac deinde Epicurus ex indivisis corporibus vocem constare dicunt, corpus autem esse efficiens aut patiens.

Attention is drawn to this passage also by Ólsen (1884:3, fn.). We find here an explicit link between the *vox* and a distinction *corporalis/incorporalis* which recalls the opposition *likamlikt/andlikt* found in TGT. A closer analysis, however, shows that the connection is actually rather tenuous. We may first observe that the Latin adjective *incorporalis* is not a perfect equivalent of Icelandic *andlikt* (= related to the spirit, ‘spiritual’), although this may be a minor difference. The main difficulty is that Audax here is *not* drawing a distinction between two types of sound, one *corporalis*, the other *incorporalis*. In fact he has already dealt with sound types in the previous context by the same dichotomy *vox articulata/vox confusa* used by Donatus in his *Ars Maior* I,1 (Holtz 1981:603, cf. quotation above):

“How many kinds of ‘voice’ are to be found?” “Two kinds.” “Which are they?” “The articulate ‘voice’ and the confused ‘voice’.”

Actually the quotation from Audax which we saw above is a discussion of the nature of sound in general. The point at issue is whether the *vox* is a body or not, and Audax reports here the opinions of the foremost philosophers. Instead the distinction in TGT is based on the origin of sound, which can be either from a body or from some other element having the nature of spirit. We may conclude, therefore, that the affinity between Óláfr’s dichotomy and the distinction found in Audax is no evidence for a closer connection. It cannot be excluded, however, that the opposition actually originated within the context of such philosophical speculations as those referred to by the Latin grammarian.

2.1. One important clue to this question might come from the passage of the Holy Scriptures mentioned in TGT, which concerns sounds deriving from

“spiritual” things. A suggestion by J. Pedersen, quoted in Finnur Jónsson’s edition of TGT (1927:20, fn.), attempts to explain the sounds under consideration as “uforstælige lyd”, that is, sounds unintelligible to men. Reference is made to one passage in St. Paul’s letters, where we read about a man who “was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (II Cor. 12,4).

Pedersen’s interpretation might be true. In fact TGT describes the *likamlikt hljóð* as “perceivable naturally”, which could imply that the sound of “spiritual” origin does not possess the same property. On the other hand, it may seem strange that such an important characteristic is not mentioned at all in the Icelandic treatise. Also, it is not clear whether we are concerned with the impossibility for a man to understand, to hear or to utter such a kind of sound.

Another passage in St. Paul (I Cor. 2,12–13) might in my opinion throw a better light on the question. Here “the words which man’s wisdom teacheth” are contrasted with those “which the (Holy) Spirit teacheth” and this opposition would appear to recall the “corporeal/spiritual” dichotomy in TGT, although in a slightly different perspective. However, even if this reference is more convincing than the previous one, it would be unwise to draw any definite conclusions only on the basis of such evidence.

2.2. The description of sounds of “spiritual” origin is not carried on in TGT. This may perhaps suggest that Óláfr’s source is unable to provide further details on the subject. In fact a voluntary omission would seem rather unlikely in view of Óláfr’s well structured and balanced classification. Unlike “spiritual” sounds, the *likamlikt hljóð* in TGT branches into many sub-types:

1,3–11 likamlikt hljóð verður annat af lifligum hljótum, ænn annat af liflæsrum hljótum. Hljóð þat, ær hæyriz af liflæsrum hljótum, verður annat af .ij. ræriligum skæpnrum, ænn annat af v-ræriligum, annat af samkvamum ræriligra lvtu ok oreriligra. Af ræriligum lvtum verður hljóð sæm af hofvðskæpnrum eldi, vindrum ok vøtnrum. Af v-ræriligum hljótum verður hljóð sæm stæinrum æða malmi æða strengivum, ok verður þo þæss kyns hljóð iafnan af ræring nökurs likama lifligs æða vlifligs. Af samkvamum ræriligra lvtu ok v-ræriligra verður hljóð sæm þa ær vindr æða vøtn æða ælldr slær sínv afli við iorð æða aðra v-ræriliga luti. Hljóð þat ær verður af liflæsrum hljótum ær svmt ogreinilikt sem vinda gnyr æða vatna þytr æða reiðar þrvumv, en svmt hljóð er greinilikt æptir natvriligri samliorðan, þeirri ær philosophi kqllvðv mvsicam, ok verður þat hljóð hit æfsta ok hit æzta af ræring ringa þeirra .vij., ær sol ok tvngl ok .v. merkistiornvr ganga i, þer ær planæte ærv kallaðar, ok hætitir þat celestis armonia æða himnæsk liorðagræin. Þessar stiornvr sagði plató hafa lif ok skyn ok vera oðaðligar. Greinilikt hljóð verður iliflæsrum hljótum, þat sæm ver kqllvum listvlikt hljóð, sem i malmi ok strengivum ok pípvum ok allz kyns söngefærvum. J lifligum hljótum ok vitlæsrum verður hljóð, sæm i viðrum æða græsrum ok þo af hræring nokkvrer ræriligs likama. Af lifandi hljótum þeim ær skyn

hafa verðr annat líoð, þat ær rodd hætir, ænn annat, þat ær æigi ær rōdd, sæm fota stapp æða handa klapp ok annat slikt.

Óláfr builds here a well articulated structure of a pyramidal type, in which each item is usually described, provided with examples and sometimes briefly commented upon. This classification can easily be translated into a tree scheme, where the first node, *likamlikt*, dominates two other kinds of sounds: one coming from animate (*lifligum*) beings, the other deriving from inanimate (*liflausum*) things. A further step subdivides the latter sounds according as such inanimate entities are 1) mobile, 2) non mobile or 3) mobile things meeting immobile ones.

Such a complex classification, which is further developed in the treatise, does not seem to match with any of those recorded in the tradition. A tenuous echo may be found, perhaps, in a passage of the *Instituta Artium* by Probus. The chapter *De voce* starts with a definition of sound followed by a distinction, also found in Donatus, between *vox articulata* and *vox confusa*:

Probus *Inst. Art.: De voce* (IV 47) nunc omnis vox sive sonus aut articulata est aut confusa. articulata est, qua homines locuntur et litteris comprehendi potest (. . .). confusa vero aut animalium aut inanimalium est, quae litteris comprehendi non potest. animalium est ut puta equorum hinnitus, rabies canum, rugitus ferarum, serpentum sibilus, avium cantus et cetera talia; inanimalium autem est ut puta cymbalorum tinnitus, flagellorum strepitus, undarum pulsus, ruinae casus, fistulae auditus et cetera talia. est et confusa vox sive sonus hominum, quae litteris comprehendi non potest, ut puta oris risus vel sibilatus, pectoris mugitus et cetera talia.

In Probus the *vox confusa*, a kind of sound which cannot be expressed by means of letters, comes either from animate beings (*animalia*) or from inanimate things (*inanimalia*). This could make a parallel to the distinction drawn by Óláfr in TGT, but not a perfect one. In fact the general structure in the two texts under consideration is completely different. TGT shows a more complex scheme with a greater number of categories, while Probus has a simpler classification in which a distinction is made between the *vox confusa* deriving from *animalia* and that deriving from *inanimalia*. Instead TGT distinguishes within the sound of inanimate origin the *greinilikt* type and the *ogreinilikt* one. This is a discrimination which is usually regarded as practically equivalent to the *articulatus* vs. *inarticulatus* dichotomy of the Latin tradition. It is to be noted that also the *vox confusa* is often described as “quae scribi non potest” (e.g. Diom. *Ars Gramm.* II: *De voce* [I 420]; Aud. *Excerpta: De voce* [VII 323], etc.) or “quae litteris. comprehendi non potest” (e.g. Probus, quoted above). In this respect, therefore, we have in TGT the reverse situation to that found in Probus.

As regards the examples provided in each text, again we find divergencies.

The Latin passage exhibits a wide variety of items, well balanced both numerically and syntactically, with a neat distinction between *animalia* (in this context = ‘animals’) and *inanimalia*. The instances found in TGT are not many and tend to concentrate in the “inanimate” section, to which such natural elements as wind, water, earth, thunder, etc. are ascribed. They can recur in various contexts: wind and water are quoted three times, fire twice. Man is mentioned, of course, among animate beings, to which also trees and grass belong, not a common inclusion in the classical grammatical tradition. Analogies, although vague, can be found e.g. between *vatna þýtr* and *undarum pulsus*, and musical instruments occur in both texts. But the Icelandic treatise contains a longer passage regarding music which is not in Probus. Other affinities may perhaps be found, but as they refer to general or natural phenomena, they are not enough to prove any concrete relationship between the texts.

2.3. It may be interesting to compare Óláfr’s classification of sounds with that set forth in the *Second Grammatical Treatise* (= SGT; all quotations and translations from Raschellà 1982):

SGT (Raschellà 1982:50,2–17) þat er ein grein hljóðs, er þýtr veðr, eða vatn eða sær eða björg eða jörd eða grjót hrynr; þetta hljóð heitir gnýr ok þrymr ok dunur ok dynr. Svá þat hljóð, er málmarnir gera, eða mannabyssinn; þat heitir ok gnýr ok glymr ok hljómr. Svá þat ok, er viðir brotna eða vápnin mætast; þetta heita brak eða brestir, eða enn, sem áðr er ritað. Allt eru þetta vitlaus hljóð. En hér umfram er þat hljóð, er stafi eina skortir til máls; þat gera hörpurnar ok enn heldr hin meiri söngfæri; en þat heitir söngr. Önnur hljóðsgrein er sú, sem fuglarnir gera eða dýrin ok sækvikindiñ; þat heitir rödd, en þær raddir heita á marga lund. (. . .) Allar þessar raddir eru mjök skynlausar at viti flestra manna. En þriðja hljóðsgrein er sú, sem menninr hafa; þat heitir hljóð ok rödd ok mál. (. . .) En hverju orði fylgir minni ok vit ok skilning.

In the treatise, said to have been written between 1270 and 1300 (Raschellà 1982:130), three main categories of sound are distinguished which, as pointed out by Raschellà (1982:78), “are presented in a strictly hierarchical progression following a growing order of ‘significance’”. We start from the kind of sound produced by inanimate entities, called *vitlaus* ‘irrational’, then we find animal cries, defined *skynlausar* ‘senseless’. From the point of view of their significance, the first two categories may be regarded as one, since no clear-cut distinction can be made between the terms *irrational* and *senseless*. This sound class is contrasted with that represented by human speech, about which we are told that “hverju orði fylgir minni ok vit ok skilning”, that is, “each word is accompanied by memory, sense, and discernment”. It appears that we are confronted with an implicit opposition “rational/irrational”, which can also be traced in TGT:

1,10–11 J lifligvm lvtvm ok vitlāsvm verðr lioð, sām i viðvm æða grāsvm ok þo af hræring nokkvr̄s reriligs likama. Af lifandi lvtvm þeim ær skyn hafa verðr annat lioð, þat ær rodd hæitir, ænn annat, þat ær æigi ær rōdd, sām fota stapp æða handa klapp ok annat slikt.

In TGT, too, the opposition is not expressed symmetrically since an adjective, *vitlaus* ‘irrational’ is put in contrast with a periphrasis, *af lifandi lvtvm þeim ær skyn hafa* (“from livings beings endowed with reason”). It is interesting to note that, although the two classifications may not coincide, the examples provided show many points of contact. Practically all of those quoted in TGT occur also in SGT, making allowance for the voices of animals never mentioned in TGT. Another feature shared by the two Icelandic treatises is the prominent position granted to music. The general impression is that both texts draw from the same source(s), redistributing the material in different ways.

3. In his description of voice as a kind of sound proceeding from “living beings endowed with reason”, Óláfr makes an interesting reference to the organs of speech:

1,12 Rodd ær lioð fram fært af kvikvændis mvnni, formærat af .ix. natvrligvm tolv̄m, lvn̄gv̄m ok barka, tv̄ngv̄ ok tveim v̄qrv̄m ok .iiij. tq̄nnvm.

The phonation process is described as the result of the performance of nine “natural instruments”. *Instrumentum* is a common term among early grammarians to indicate the parts of the human body concurring to the production of sound, not only in the usual sense ‘means, tool’, but also with a metaphoric implication, meaning ‘musical instrument’. This is of course a consequence of the analogy between the production of voice and that of music. An African mythographer, Fulgentius, explicitly compared the speech organs to musical instruments already in the fifth century A.D. (cf. Melazzo 1985:422):

Fulg. *Myth.* I, XV (Helm 1898:25) Duo labia uelut cimbala uerborum commoda modulantia, lingua ut plectrum quae curuamine quodam uocalem format spiritum, palatum cuius concauitas profert sonum, gutturis fistula quae tereti meatum spiritalem praebet excursu et pulmo qui uelut aerius follis concepta reddit ac reuocat.

In the ninth century Sedulius Scottus writes a commentary to Donatus’ *Ars Maior* containing the same comparison as Fulgentius (4, 30–39, Löfstedt 1977), while at the end of the century Remigius Autissiodorensis, a commentator from Auxerre, includes the same reference to speech organs in his commentary to *Donatus Minor* (17, 15–18, 2, Fox 1902). In the so-called *Commentum Einsidlense in Donati Artem Maiorem*, another text belonging to the tenth century, sometimes also ascribed to Remigius, again we find the

same musical simile (Hagen 1870:220). The above references are also quoted in Raschellà (1982) and Melazzo (1985).

Later in time, in the thirteenth century, Michael of Marbais and Vincent of Beauvais also speak of “natural instruments” in relation to the phonatory organs (Thurot 1869:41–42, 135; Ólsen 1884:35, fn.). The latter uses Petrus Helias’ commentary to Priscian as a source for book II of his *Speculum Doctrinale*.

3.1. Icelandic grammatical writing also provides a reference of the same type. In SGT another kind of musical simile is developed in an extremely original way:

SGT (Raschellà 1982:54, 24–26 and 72, 70–76) Muðrinn ok tungan er leikvöllr orðanna; á þeim leikvelli eru reistir stafir þeir, er mál allt gera, ok hendir málit ymsa svá til at jafna sem hörpustrengir, eða eru læstir lykklar í simphóníe. (. . .) Stafasetning sjá, sem hér er rituð, er svá sett til máls, sem lykklar til hljóðs í músika, ok regur fylgja hljóðstöfum svá, sem þeir lykkl[ar málstöf]um. Málstafir eru ritaðir með hverri regu bæði fyrir ok eptir, ok gera þeir mál af hendingum þeim, sem þeir hafa við hljóðstafina fyrir eða eptir. Köllum vér þat lykka, sem þeir eru í fastir, ok eru þeir svá settir hér í spáziunni, sem lykklar í simphóníe, ok skal þeim kippa eða hrinda, ok drepa svá regustrengina, ok tekr þá þat hljóð, sem þú vilt haft hafa.

This very peculiar image, which also includes two figures where all the letters and their possible combinations are placed, does not compare either with the traditional descriptions examined above, or with the very brief reference in TGT to the “natural instruments” producing human speech. However it is interesting to note that here, once again, the two Icelandic treatises appear to echo a common knowledge, although elaborated in different ways.

3.2. A clearer correspondence with the passage in TGT under consideration is shown in Roger Bacon’s *Summa Gramatica*. In defining voice, the English philosopher and theologian employs expressions which closely recall those used in Óláfr’s treatise:

R. Bacon, <i>Summa Gramatica</i> (Steele 1940:233) Alio modo [i.e., proprie] dicitur vox sonus prolatus ab ore animalis, (. . .) naturalibus instrumentis formatus, que sunt hec, pulmo, guttur, dentes, lingua, palatum, labia.	1,12 Rodd ær lioð fram fært af kvikvændis mvnni, formærat af .ix. natvrligvm tolv, lvnqvm ok barka, tvngv ok tveim vqrvm ok .iiij. tønvm.
--	---

The two passages are practically identical and even the speech organs are mentioned in almost the same sequence, inside to outside. Minor differences are the loss of *palatum* in the Icelandic text and the displacement of the teeth to the end of the sentence. It is evident, however, that both authors draw

from a common source or, possibly, from different sources belonging to the same tradition.

4. Immediately after the passage quoted above, Óláfr introduces a definition of ‘voice’ taken from Priscian’s *Institutiones*. I print it below together with the Latin source:

<p>1,13 Ænn priscianus kallar rodd vera hit grannligsta lopzins hægg ok æiginliga æyrvm skilianlikt.</p>	<p>Prisc. <i>Inst.</i> I,1 (II 5) Philosophi definiunt, vocem esse aerem tenuissimum ictum vel suum sensibile aurium, id est quod proprie auribus accidit.</p>
--	--

There is no word-for-word correspondence between the texts but there seems to be no doubt as to the origin of the definition. A few differences must be pointed out. One regards the authorship of this description of ‘voice’, which is ascribed to “philosophers” in the Latin text, but to Priscian himself by Óláfr. Another important divergence concerns the meaning attributed to *rodd* on the one hand, and to *vox* on the other. In fact it is clear that Priscian is talking about sound in general, while Óláfr is referring specifically to the human voice, as can be seen from the preceding context (see quotation 1,12). Finally, a basic difference lies in the definition itself. Priscian, like Donatus and the majority of the ancient grammarians, states that the ‘voice’ is *aer ictus*, that is, ‘whipped air’. To Óláfr the *rodd* is *lopszins hægg*, the ‘percussion’ itself, the ‘whipping’. This is not a minor difference to ancient grammarians, as results e.g. from a passage by Audax, already quoted above:

Aud. *Excerpta: De voce* (VII 323) Vox corporalis est, an incorporalis? Secundum stoicos corporalis (. . .) Plato autem non esse vocem corpus putat: “non enim percussus”, inquit, “aër, sed plaga ipsa atque percussio, id est vox”.

The quotation reports Plato’s opinion about the nature of the *vox* which, he says, “is not whipped air, but the whipping itself and the percussion”. This same interpretation is found in one *ars grammatica* in Cod. Bern. 2:

Papias *De arte gramm. ex Prisciano excerpta: De voce* f.136^a col. II (VIII clxxxi) Vox est aeris tenuissimi ad linguam percussio uel quod proprie auribus accidit.

On the other hand, Sedulius Scottus reports both this definition and the traditional one:

Sed. Scot. in *Priscianum* (Löfstedt 1977:65) Itaque quia non omnis tenuissimus aer, nisi quolibet pulsu percussus fuerit, uox est, signanter addidit, non solum uocis aerem esse tenuissimum, sed et ictum, siquidem nulla uox nullusque sonus fieri potest, si non aliquo pulsu aeris tenuissimi efficiatur. (. . .) *Idcirco definitur sonus: percussio aeris in indissoluta usque ad auditum.* (my italics)

5. The last part of Priscian's definition of *vox* contains one controversial phrase, *vel suum sensibile aurium, id est quod proprie auribus accidit*. Ancient commentators already removed part of the difficulty by adopting *vel sonum sensibile aurium* instead of *vel suum* etc. TGT shows yet another version: *æiginliga æyrvm skilianlikt*, literally 'properly perceivable by the ears'. Óláfr has totally eliminated the first part and has retained the last one, explaining it by clearer words. He employs an adjective, *skilianlikt*, related to the verb *skilja* 'to distinguish, to discern, to perceive', which is rendered by *intelligibilem* in the Latin translation of Snorri's Edda in ESS (I,67), but may be closer to *percipibilis* found e.g. in Marius Victorinus 2,1 (Mariotti 1967:66) and in others. The whole modification aims to attain a better comprehension of the passage and appears to fall within a series of simplification procedures adopted for didactic purposes.

6. A few concluding remarks. This brief investigation is limited to a short passage of Óláfr's treatise, though interesting for its source implications. A definite assessment of the text would need an accurate study of the whole work. Meanwhile I will restrict my conclusions to some observations of a general kind.

We notice first that traditional sources such as Priscian and others do contribute to the composition of the text. However, the role they play, at least in the chapter considered, appears to be different from what we expected. We find quotations scattered through the text rather than a general underlying structure in which other elements are inserted. It is also evident that some material is drawn from a local tradition, probably one source common to both TGT and SGT. All things considered, Óláfr appears to be more than a mere collector of quotations. He seems to elaborate constantly the material available, so that in the end we get a peculiar picture not really comparable with any of the original sources. Several divergences which can be detected between these and TGT are in my opinion due to Óláfr's conscious intervention, aiming to work out a well-balanced, carefully constructed structure where traditional learning and more original elements of various, especially Norse, provenance combine with peculiar elaborations.

References

- Albano Leoni, F., ed. (1975), *Il primo trattato grammaticale islandese*. Studi linguistici e semiologici. Il Mulino, Bologna.
- Benediktsson, Hreinn, ed. (1972), *The First Grammatical Treatise*. Institute of Nordic Linguistics, Reykjavík.
- ESS = *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar. Edda Snorronis Sturlaei* (1848–1887), I–III. Sumptibus legati arnamagnaeani. J. D. Qvist, Hafniae.

- Fox, W., ed. (1902), *Remigii Autissiodorensis in Artem Donati Minorem commentum*. In aedibus B. G. Teubneri, Lipsiae.
- Hagen, H., ed. (1870), see Keil, H. (1857–1880).
- Haugen, E., ed. (1972²), *First Grammatical Treatise. The earliest Germanic phonology. An edition, translation and commentary*. Longman, London.
- Helm, R., ed. (1898), *Fabii Planciadis Fulgentii v.c. Opera. Mitologiarum libri tres*. In aedibus B. G. Teubneri, Lipsiae.
- Holtz, L. (1981), *Donat et la tradition de l'enseignement grammaticale. Étude et édition critique*. Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris.
- Jónsson, Finnur, udg. (1927), *Óláfr Þórðarson – Máhljóða- og málskrúðsrit. Grammatisk-retorisk afhandling*. Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-filologiske Meddelelser XIII, 2. Andr. Fred. Høst & Søn, København.
- Keil, K., ed. (1857–1880), *Grammatici Latini*. I–VII. In aedibus B. G. Teubneri, Lipsiae.
- (1870), VIII. *Supplementum continens Anecdota Helvetica*. Ed. H. Hagen. In aedibus B. G. Teubneri, Lipsiae.
- Löfstedt, B., ed. (1977), *Sedulius Scottus. In Donati Artem Maiorem*. Brepols, Turnholti.
- Mariotti, I., ed. (1967), *Marii Victorinii Ars Grammatica. Introduzione, testo critico e commento*. Biblioteca Nazionale – Serie dei classici greci e latini, VI. Le Monnier, Firenze.
- Melazzo, L. (1985), “The opening of the so-called Second Grammatical Treatise: In search of the sources”. P. Janni, D. Poli, C. Santini (a c. di), *Cultura classica e cultura germanica settentrionale*. Quaderni linguistici e filologici, III. Università di Macerata, Macerata, pp. 399–424.
- Ólsen, Björn Magnússon, udg. (1884), *Den tredje og fjærde grammatiske afhandling i Snorres Edda*. Islands grammatiske litteratur i middelalderen, 2. Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur, København.
- Raschellà, F. D., ed. (1982), *The so-called Second Grammatical Treatise*. Filologia Germanica. Testi e studi, II. Le Monnier, Firenze.
- Steele, R., ed. (1940), *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Bacon. XV. Summa Grammatica magistri Rogeri Bacon necnon Sumule Dialectices magistri Rogeri Bacon*. E typographeo Clarendoniano, Oxonii.
- Thurot, Ch. (1869), *Notices et extraits de divers manuscrits latins pour servir à l'histoire des doctrines grammaticales au moyen âge*. Imprimerie Impériale, Paris.
- Repr. Minerva GmbH, Frankfurt a.M. (1964).