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PLEASURES OF GRAMMAR¹

My paper is divided into two somewhat independent parts concerning the pleasures of grammar. The first part is based on the prologue² and the second on two of the questions to *Priscianus minor*, ms. Kraków BJ 649 (ff. 231ra–252vb).³ The whole work has been given a somewhat inadequate title in the catalogue of manuscripts in the Jagellonian Library: *Quaestiones super Institutionibus grammaticis Prisciani*, since the questions refer only to books 17 and 18 of the *Institutiones*, that is, to *Priscianus minor*.⁴ The text was written, most probably, in Paris at the end of the 13th or in the beginning of the 14th century and possesses all the characteristic features of classical modism. The manuscript may have been brought to Poland from Prague. Because it belonged to the rectors of collegiate schools in Sandomierz and then in Kraków, it may have played the role of a school manual there.⁵ The commentary includes many elements characteristic of the works of Martin of Dacia and Simon of Dacia and two of its questions are identical with those of Radulphus Brito.⁶ A comparison with

¹This paper was presented at 13th SIEPM Congress “Pleasures of Knowledge” held in Freising in August 2012 and is based on the chapter IV.B. 2.2 of my book *Jan z Głogowa i tradycja gramatyki spekulatywnej*, Warszawa 2008. I wish to thank to Prof. Marek Gensler for the linguistic revision of this text.

²Prooemium, ms. Kraków, BJ 649, ff. 231ra–b; ed. K. KRAUZE-BŁACHOWICZ, [in:] eadem, *Jan z Głogowa i tradycja gramatyki spekulatywnej*, Warszawa 2008, pp. 345–351.

³“Utrum constructio sit in constructibilibus sicut in subiecto,” ms. Kraków, BJ 649, ff. 234ra–b; ed. K. KRAUZE-BŁACHOWICZ, [in:] eadem, *op. cit.*, pp. 359–364; “In quo sint modi significandi ut in subiecto,” ms. Kraków, BJ 649, ff. 235va–236ra; ed. K. KRAUZE-BŁACHOWICZ, [in:] eadem, *op. cit.*, pp. 365–370.

⁴ANONYMUS, *Quaestiones super Institutionibus grammaticis Prisciani*, ms. Kraków BJ 649 (ff. 231ra–252vb). *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum medii aevi Latinorum qui in Bibliotheca Jagellonica Cracoviae asservantur*, vol. IV, M. Kowalczyk (et al.), Vratislaviae 1988, p. 403–404.

⁵Cf. K. KRAUZE-BŁACHOWICZ, *op. cit.*, p. 50–51; p. 67, n. 224–227.

⁶ANONYMUS, *Quaestiones super Institutionibus grammaticis Prisciani*, q. 35 “Utrum participium possit supponere verbo” (ms. BJ 649, ff. 248ra–va) and q. 37 “Utrum vocativus possit construi cum verbo in ratione suppositi” (ms. BJ 649, ff. 249ra–250ra). Respectively, qq. II. 14 and II. 4 in RADULPHUS BRITO, *Quaestiones super Priscianum minorem*, H.W. Enders, J. Pinborg (edd.), Stuttgart 1980, pp. 408–415, 358–375. Cf. J. PINBORG, *Leben und Werke des Radulphus Brito*, [in:] RADULPHUS BRITO, *Quaestiones super Priscianum minorem*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

the latter shows that the work of Brito must have been composed later.⁷ This anonymous commentary was copied several times. In the Archive of the Prague castle (Hradčany), there is a 15th c. copy of its prologue (former Bibl. Kap. Cod. 1320 (L.LXXIV),⁸ k. 78r–v.), and a 15th c. manuscript copy of the whole text is preserved, as I discovered, in Stuttgart's Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. poet. et phil. 4^o 67, k. 1r–125v).⁹ Moreover, a very similar prologue is included in the commentary of Albert Swebelin, a late 13th c. author, to the text of Martin of Dacia.¹⁰

I

The model of a prologue, in which the author stresses the importance of science in general, was probably used not only in the lectures on grammar that I have mentioned here but also in lectures in other disciplines of learning in the 13th century; regrettably, I have not found any such examples.¹¹ In this case, the introduction was adapted for the needs of grammar, which is presented as the “foundation of knowledge, basis for other sciences, which are empty and speechless without it.” Placed in a grammatical commentary, this prologue serves not only to locate knowledge, which cannot be attained without grammar, in the realm of *bona optima*, but also to link the study of grammar, in a very traditional fashion, with moral instruction. It blends traits coming from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* with those from the moral epistles of Seneca. The leitmotif of the prologue is: “bonum est, quod omnia appetunt” (the good is that at which all things aim), and “omnia delectari appetunt” (all things pursue pleasure). Both phrases are medieval travesties of original quotations from Aristotle: “the good

⁷J. PINBORG, *ibidem*.

⁸G.L. BURSILL-HALL, *A Census of Medieval Latin Grammatical Manuscripts*, Stuttgart–Bad Canstatt 1981, p. 212

⁹*Codices poetici et philologici*, eds. W. Irtenkauf, I. Krekler, I. Dumke, Wiesbaden 1981, p. 132–133 (Die Handschriften der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek Stuttgart, Reihe 1, Bd. 2).

¹⁰Ms. Linz, St. Florian Stiftsbibliothek, XI 264, ff. 189ra–213vb, ff. 189ra: “Scribit Philosophus in libro *Ethnicorum*: «bonum est quod omnia appetunt.» Ad cuius declarationem est notandum, quod hic ponuntur tria. Scilicet: ‘bonum,’ ‘omnia,’ et ‘appetunt.’ De primo notandum quod duplex est bonum, quoddam est bonum simplex, aliud est bonum apparens. Et sicut scribitur secundo *Physicorum*, bonum simplex est quid bene se habenti bonum est. Bonum apparens est, quod male se habenti malum est. Adhuc sunt alia bona exteriora et interiora. Bona exteriora sunt pecunia et alia huiusmodi, bona interiora sunt duplicia, quaedam bona corporis et quaedam bona animae. Bona corporis sunt ut pulchritudo et bona dispositio membrorum et alia huiusmodi. Bona autem animae sunt tria, scilicet: virtus, scientia et dilectio...”

¹¹E.g. there is nothing corresponding to it either in C. LAFLEUR, *Quatre introductions à la philosophie au XIIIe siècle. Textes critiques et étude historique*, Paris 1988 or in ROBERT KILWARDBY, *De ortu scientiarum*, ed. A.G. Judy, London 1976.

has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim”¹² and “both brutes and men pursue pleasure.”¹³ The desired good and pleasure are associated with intellectual cognition. These assumptions allow the reader to reach the expected conclusions concerning the value of learning and thus the value of grammar. The prologue’s argument can be summarized briefly as follows. As has been said, the good is that which is pursued by all. It is divided into apparent good (*bonum apparens*) and good as such (*bonum simplex*).¹⁴ A later classification concerns only good as such. The concept of pursuit has its divisions, too. It is divided into natural (*naturalis*) and spiritual (*animalis*) varieties. A spiritual pursuit is an inclination of the soul (*inclinatio mentis*), which characterizes beings capable of cognition. Cognition itself is also twofold: sensual and intellectual. Intellectual cognition is pursued by the intellect and will, and this is the pursuit that our author is interested in.¹⁵ Simple goods are divided into external and internal ones. The internal goods may refer either to the body or to the soul. The goods of the soul are virtue, pleasure, and science or wisdom. As spiritual goods they are superior to all other goods, which means that they are, simply, the best (*optima*).¹⁶ In this way, science is the best of all goods, with the added remark that these goods are the best “in this life,” so that it is made very clear that the good of philosophy, as described by Aristotle and Seneca, is not identical with the summum bonum of theology. Our author gives a list of obstacles to attaining this good. The authorities he quotes are usually in agreement as to the character of those obstacles. We can, however, observe an interesting lack of agreement with respect to the role of external goods. According to Aristotle, the absence of these goods is an impediment to happiness.¹⁷ Our author quotes this opinion

¹² ARIST., *Ethic.*, I, 1094a.

¹³ ARIST., *Ethic.*, II, 1106b.

¹⁴ ANONYMUS, *Quaestiones*, ed. K. Krauze-Błachowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 345: “Primo notandum quod bonum est duplex. Quoddam enim bonum est simplex, quoddam est vero apparens.”

¹⁵ *Ibid.*: “Appetitus autem animalis est quaedam inclinatio mentis consequens rem cognitionem habentem, et de tali loquitur Philosophus I *Ethicorum* dicens, quod omnia delectari appetunt. Et talis appetitus solum consequeretur rem cognitionem habentem. Circa quod notandum, quod duplex est cognitio et secundum hoc duplex est appetitus. Quaedam enim est cognitio sensualis, et tali debetur appetitus sensitivus. Alia est cognitio intellectualis, et istam appetit intellectus et voluntas.”

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 346: “Alia autem sunt bona animae, et illa sunt haec: virtus, sapientia, delectatio et scientia;” *Ibid.*, p. 347: “Unde advertendum est, quod bona animae sunt optima. Et huius ratio est, quia sicut se habet anima ad corpus et ad ea, quae corporis extrinseca sunt, sic se habent bona animae ad bona corporis et ad bona rerum extrinsecarum. Modo ita est, quod anima est nobilior corpore et rebus exterioribus. Sequitur ergo, quod bona animae sunt optima;” *Ibid.*, p. 348: “Scientiae ergo et virtutes, et delectationes sunt optima vitae. Scientia ergo est bonum optimum.”

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 346: “Est autem notandum, quod duplicia sunt bona: interiora et exteriora. Exteriora sicut pecunia; et dicuntur exteriora, quia ista requiruntur ad felicitatem tamquam ea, quae felicitati organice vel instrumentaliter sunt deservientia. Unde Philosophus I *Ethicorum* dicit:

but reports on many sources which show that poverty is a favourable condition for philosophizing: Socrates, Boethius, Seneca. Seneca's authority is especially important to him, as it was, somewhat later, for Buridan in his commentary on the *Ethics*.¹⁸ The last and by far most important obstacle for achieving pleasure in learning is the lack of sufficient instruction in logic and grammar. Here, at last, our author can present the standard set of eulogies of grammar as the *alma mater* of all sciences, which is the proper introduction to a work devoted to the study of grammar. In the speculative, modist grammar, which we find in the ms. Kraków BJ 649, grammar is not merely the foundation of all sciences. As a *grammatica doctrinalis*, the study of *modi significandi* is believed to be a theoretical science and, consequently, in accordance with the argument presented in our prologue, the aim of intellectual pursuit and thus both a desirable good and a pleasure.

II

Among the intellectual pleasures of grammar provided by our modist author himself is his interest in the important problem concerning the intellect, which is a problem mostly neglected by the rest of the modist teachers.

In the texts of some modist grammarians we come across the phrase: 'the first creator of words', who gives meaning to words; it is evident that this refers to the 'first intellect', which is understood as analogous to the human intellect, which assigns meanings and modes of signification in the process of interpersonal communication. The intellect is the efficient cause of signification and consignification in relation to the sound matter of the language, which it furnishes with senses. The majority of modists do not reflect on nuances concerning the transition from the sphere of concepts to the sphere of spoken or written language. The ms. Kraków BJ 649 is a witness to a rare instance of interest in explaining how to understand the action of the intellect in the light of the formation of linguistic phenomena. As in all modist grammars, we can see two parallel orders here: the triad thing-thought-word and the triad mode of being-mode of understanding-mode of signification. Thought is related to a thing through

«videtur enim sine numero eorum, quae exterius sunt, bonorum impossibile vel non facile bene agere;» Ibid., p. 348–349: «Alii autem non attingunt scientiam propter necessariorum vitae carentiam. Et de talibus loquitur Philosophus in III *Topicorum*, quod licet philosophari sit melius quam ditari, tamen indigenti ditari melius est quam philosophari. Tamen Socrates dicit, quod paucissima sunt quae homini sufficiunt. Ad hanc intentionem loquitur Boethius in *De consolatione philosophiae*: «Paucissimis contenta est natura, quam si urgere velis superfluis aut in eo iniucundum quod infunderis fiet aut noxium.» Unde dicit Seneca *Ad Lucilium*: [...] «Multis enim ad philosophandum obstantes sunt divitiae, paupertas enim secreta est et laeta vel expedita.»

¹⁸ Cf. J.B. KOROLEC, *Filozofia moralna Jana Burydana*, Wrocław 1973, p. 100, 102.

function, that is, the faculty to comprehend (*the ratio intelligendi*); word is related to a thing through the *ratio significandi*. In a parallel way, in the second triad, we usually find the *ratio cointelligendi* and the *ratio consignificandi*, which join, respectively, the mode of understanding and the mode of signification with the mode of being. Both triads reveal two moments necessary for communication: the moment of cognition and the moment of expression.¹⁹

As in the process of generation of signification, in the process of generation of the modes of signification we find a philosophical assumption that thoughts can accurately reflect things, and words accurately reflect thoughts. Moreover, in agreement with the well-known formula *significare est constituere intellectum*, it is assumed that words owe their sense to operations of the intellect. Just like the intellect is the real subject of imposition, or giving sense, the *modus intelligendi* supports signification with consignification thanks to the operation of the intellect.²⁰

Now, how can the intellect influence the extramental matter of language? The author of the ms. BJ 649 takes up this problem in the context of two questions:

1. "Whether syntactical construction is contained in words as in its subject (literally, *in constructibilibus*)?"
2. "What is the subject, that is the substrate, of the modes of signification?"²¹

His argument *quod non* in the first question looks like this: The construction is not contained in words, because the action of the agent, whose operation is not transferred into the matter beyond it, is in the soul. According to Aristotle the operation of the intellect is not transferred into the matter beyond it. Here we read that construction is an operation of the intellect, therefore it can't be transferred into the matter beyond it.²² The author's reply is focused on refuting the argument's minor premise, which says that construction is an action of the intellect. He says that we can perceive that the intellect is twofold, namely practical and speculative. It is true that operation of the speculative intellect is not transferred into the matter beyond it. However, the operation of the practical intellect is easily transferred into the matter beyond it. Construction is not

¹⁹J. JOLIVET, *L'intellect et le langage selon Radulphus Brito*, [in :] *Preuve et raisons à l'Université de Paris. Logique, ontologie et théologie au XIV siècle*, J. Jolivet, Z. Kaluza, P. Vignaux (ed.), Paris 1984, pp. 83–95, p. 83.

²⁰Cf. J. JOLIVET, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

²¹See n. 2, pp. 359–364; 365–370.

²²ANONYMUS, *Quaestiones*, ed. K. Krauze-Błachowicz, *op. cit.*, p. 359: "Et arguitur, quod non, [...] Hoc idem probatur secundo, quia actio agentis, cuius operatio non transit in materiam extra, est in anima ut in subiecto. Modo constructio non transit in materiam extra, quod probatur per Philosophum IX *Metaphysicae* dicentem, quod operatio intellectus non transit in materiam extra. Nunc autem constructio est operatio intellectus; ergo etc."

therefore an action of the speculative intellect but of the practical one, since construction sometimes occurs at the liking and will of the constructor. It can well be transferred into the matter beyond it, and therefore is not in the intellect as in its subject.²³

The argument in the other question looks similar. It is argued — says the author — that modes of signification are in the soul as their subject, and not in the signifying sound because that which is operated upon by the speculative intellect is in the intellect as its subject (since the operation of the intellect is not transferred into the matter beyond it). Now the active mode of signification is an operation of the speculative intellect, so it is in the intellect as its subject. This is so because, if the modes of signification were caused and operated upon by the practical intellect, it would follow that in causing the modes of signification the intellect would require instruments and organs. It would also follow that the intellect would require organs in imposing sounds for signification and consignification. But we can see that the intellect does not require any instrument, and therefore the modes of signification are operated upon by the speculative intellect and are in the soul as their subject. Our author replies to the argument saying that modes of signification are caused and operated upon by the practical intellect. He says that the practical intellect requires instruments for its operations whenever there is a resistance of matter against the practical intellect. But when there is no resistance of matter, and when it is sufficiently disposed for receiving the operations of the intellect, the intellect can well operate without instruments. In the case of an utterance (*dictio*) there is no resistance to the action or active mode of signification; therefore, it is not necessary for the practical intellect to require any instrument, but it is sufficient for it only to understand. The author argues again that the practical intellect is the proper agent to impose sounds for signification and consignification due to the fact that they are at pleasure and will. Recall that arbitrariness pertains to the practical intellect, as has been seen above.

The first argumentation can be best summarized as follows: to the argument that no syntactic construction can be built beyond the intellect, since according to Aristotle construction is created by the intellect whose operation is not

²³Ibid., p. 363: Ad aliam rationem, quando dicitur, quod actio agentis, cuius operatio non transit in materiam extra, est in agente sicut in subiecto, verum est. Sed ad minorem, quando dicitur, quod constructio est actio intellectus etc., possumus distinguere intellectum, quod duplex est intellectus secundum Philosophum in III *De anima*, scilicet practicus et speculativus. Verum est, quod operatio speculativi intellectus non transit in materiam extra secundum Philosophum in IX *Metaphysicae*. Operatio autem intellectus practici bene transit in materiam extra. Modo constructio non est actio speculativi intellectus, sed practici. Constructio enim habet aliquando fieri a placito et a voluntate construentis. Cum igitur constructio speculativi intellectus non sit actus, bene potest transire in materiam extra; et ideo non est in intellectu sicut in subiecto.

transferred into the matter beyond it, our author replies that creating grammatical constructions is the domain of the practical mind and that the Aristotelian prohibition referred to the theoretical mind only. Similarly, in the second argument, it is the practical mind that furnishes words with modes of signification.

In the questions composed later by Radulphus Brito, one finds the puzzling idea of the co-operation of active and passive intellect in the creation of the modes of signification. This was detected by Jean Jolivet.²⁴ Radulphus' opinion on the role of the intellect is that the intellect, which actively gives modes of signification to words, is at the same time passive, because it could not perform its function if it was not subjected to the influence of the property of a thing and determined by it.²⁵ This is an evident truth on the basis of the Aristotelian tradition. On the other hand, what is new with respect to Aristotle is specifying the aim for this determination. The aim is giving a sense to sounds and modes of signification coming from the intellect (the modes of signification are in the intellect as their efficient cause, nevertheless they are in the words as in their subject).²⁶ In the opinion of Jolivet, when Radulphus speaks of the cognitive passiveness of the intellect and the active establishing of meanings, he does not refer to the classical Aristotelian distinction between the active and passive intellect. Here, the intellect's passiveness indicates an Aristotelian receptivity of things, which makes thinking and cognizing one.²⁷ The intellect's activeness, in turn, belongs to the semantic, rather than cognitive, order: the intellect acts insofar as it transfers sense onto the sonoric matter. The distinction of passiveness and activeness in the intellect does not mean that the latter is identical with the agent intellect of Aristotle's commentators. It is, actually, the distinction between the theoretical and practical intellect. What is needed here is the action of the theoretical intellect, since it is the first to cognize a thing and its properties and then, informed by the cognition of the thing and its properties, moves on to praxis and action and thus to furnishing words with meanings and consignifications. This is why it is said that words signify arbitrarily and by will. The theoretical and practical intellects are not different: it is one and the same

²⁴J. JOLIVET, *op. cit.*

²⁵RADULPHUS BRITO, *Quaestiones super Priscianum minorem*, p. 164: "intellectus est imponens modos significandi vocibus et est virtus passiva; ergo nisi intellectus determinetur a proprietate rei numquam imposeret voces ad significandum rem sub determinato modo significandi;" J. JOLIVET, *op. cit.*, p. 84; p. 93, n. 10.

²⁶RADULPHUS BRITO, *op. cit.*, p. 92: "immo ex aliquibus modis essendi et proprietatibus rerum determinatur intellectus ad sic imponendum voces ad significandum res sub talibus modis significandi;" *Ibid.*, p. 151: "quamvis in intellectu sint [modi significandi active], hoc tamen est sicut in causa efficiente, nihilominus tamen sunt in voce significativa sicut in subiecto;" J. JOLIVET, *op. cit.*, p. 84; p. 93, n. 11–12.

²⁷J. JOLIVET, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

intellect that is theoretical and practical, but the cognition of things pertains to the theoretical intellect, whereas giving meanings and consignifications to words pertains to the practical one.²⁸

The presence of the above-discussed matters in the late 13th century modist text written before Radulphus Brito composed his *Quaestiones* shows that Radulphus' endeavour was not a unique one. Despite the fact that we have found only two samples of such a discussion so far, we may assume that the troublesome philosophical question of how it is possible that the internal activity of the intellect can be transferred into the sound-material of words was not neglected by the modist current in grammar. There is hope of discovering other developments in the vast sea of manuscripts that have not yet been thoroughly examined.

To review, so far, the anonymous author of ms. BJ 649, and Radulphus Brito after him, are the only authors known to have made an attempt to describe the actions of the intellect with respect to imposing sense upon sounds. According to them, it is the domain of the speculative intellect to cognize things and their properties and to create modes of understanding. The modes of signification originate and function in the sound-material thanks to the activity of the practical intellect.

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²⁸RADULPHUS BRITO, *op. cit.*, p. 161: "ibi est operatio intellectus speculativi requisita, quia ille est qui primo cognoscit rem et eius proprietatem et postea informatus cognitione rei et suae proprietatis extendit se ad praxim et operationem et hoc ad imponendum voces ad significandum et consignificandum: et ideo dicitur quod voces significant ad placitum et a voluntate. Nec intellectus scilicet speculativus et practicus sunt diversi, sed una et eadem intellectio est, quae est speculativa et practica; sed cognoscere rem pertinet ad intellectum speculativum et postea cum se extendit ad operationem ad imponendum voces ad significandum et consignificandum tunc est practicus;" J. JOLIVET, *op. cit.*, p. 86, p. 93, n. 21.

PRZYJEMNOŚCI GRAMATYKI

S T R E S Z C Z E N I E

Anonimowy autor *Kwestii do Pryscjana* (*Quaestiones super Institutionibus grammaticis Prisciani* rkps. Kraków, BJ 649 ff. 231ra–252vb) powstałych w końcu XIII wieku w Paryżu podzielał wiarę uczonych swoich czasów w zbawienny charakter wiedzy. Gramatyka jako podstawa innych nauk i — dodajmy — nauka teoretyczna, bo taki charakter ma wykład naszego autora, jest według niego upragnionym dobrem (*bonum appetendum*) i jedną z najlepszych rzeczy w życiu (*optima vitae, bona optima*). Sam autor przysparza nam w dwóch spośród swoich kwestii także pewnego niezaprzecznego dobra (i przyjemności). W latach osiemdziesiątych XX wieku Jean Jolivet zwrócił uwagę na to, że Radulphus Brito był bodaj jedynym autorem modystycznym, który próbował odpowiadać na pytanie o to, jak to jest możliwe, że twory intelektu, jakimi są sposoby oznaczania, wiążą się ze słowami mówionymi i pisanymi, czyli materialnymi, i mają na nie wpływ. Otóż okazuje się, że Radulphus nie był tutaj pierwszy. Taka problematyka i jej rozwiązanie pojawia się u wcześniejszego od Radulpha anonimowego autora znanego z rękopisu BJ 649. Powie on wcześniej to, co odkrył u Radulpha Jolivet, a mianowicie, że co prawda sposoby oznaczania są dziełem intelektu spekulatywnego, ale możliwość ich oddziaływania na materialne wyrazy zawdzięczamy intelektowi praktycznemu.