

CLASSICAL TRADITION AND NORSE TRADITION IN THE 'THIRD GRAMMATICAL TREATISE'

Valeria Micillo

Ist. di Linguistica - Univ. della Basilicata - Potenza (Italy)

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 presumably used, while others clearly belong to different traditions. In fact the works by Priscian and Donatus, 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.

The basic problems seems therefore to ascertain: 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 section of Óláfr's treatise in this perspective. The passage considered shows only a very vague affinity with the sources most commonly used, while points of contact can be found with texts from other, especially local, traditions.

The *Third Grammatical Treatise* (from now on 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 Olsen [1884] for TGT and from Keil [1857-1880] for the Latin parallels, unless otherwise stated.)

1,1 Allt ær hljóð, þat ær um kvikvændis 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.

What we can see at once is that the definition of 'voice' we have here for TGT is completely different from that in Priscian. The only point of contact can be found in 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*, Oláfr deals with the *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 (human) voice and for sound, as an equivalent of *sonus*, while this seems not to be the case with Norse grammatical tradition. The two concepts are generally indicated by different names, viz. *hljóð* (sound) and *rødd* (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.)

The points discussed above already indicate that the formulation of *hljóð* in TGT does not depend on Priscian. Conclusive evidence to this is a statement by Oláfr, 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.

The next quotation sets forth Oláfr's classification of sounds.

1,2-3 *hljóð hæfir margar kynkvíslir, ok verðr hljóð þat, sem natvrliga megv æyrv greina, af samkvamv tvægga líkama, ænn çnnvr hljóðsgrein ær sv, ær hæilavg ritning sægir hljóða andliga hlvtí. líkamlíkt hljóð verðr annat af líflígv hlvtvm, ænn annat af líflavsum 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 grammar 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 uoce* [I 420]; Probus *Inst. Art.: De uoce* [IV 47]; Marius Victorinus *Ars Gramm.* I, 1 [VI 3]). Further types are obtained by combining and/or modifying variously the preceding ones.

In Oláfr'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 'bodily' (or 'material') vs 'spiritual' (= *likamlikt* vs **andlikt*) is implicitly established. It also appears that while 'bodily sounds' can be perceived 'naturally', 'spiritual sounds', as seems to be implied, can not.

The 'bodily 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. A passage in Audax, however, may be taken into consideration:

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

Attention is drawn to this passage also by Olsen [1884]: 1, fn. We find here an explicit link between the *uox* 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'.»

The next part of the quotation 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 nature of spirit. We may conclude, therefore, that the affinity between Oláfr'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.

One important clue to this question might come from the passage of the Holy Scripture mentioned in TGT, which concerns sounds deriving from 'spiritual' things. Unfortunately, in spite of all examinations, no definite results could be attained. A suggestion by J. Pedersen quoted in Finnur Jónsson's edition of TGT [1927]: 20, fn., attempts to explain the sounds under consideration as «uforstáelige lyd», that is, sounds unintelligible to men. According to this interpretation, one instance could be found e.g. in St. Paul (Cor. II 12,4), 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.»

Pedersen's interpretation may very well 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. All things considered, it appears that Pedersen's theory is not supported by conclusive evidence.

The description of sounds of 'spiritual' origin is not carried on in TGT. This may perhaps suggest that Oláfr's source is unable to provide further details on the subject. In fact a voluntary omission would seem rather unlikely in view of Oláfr's well structured and balanced classification.

Unlike 'spiritual' sounds, the *likamlikt hijóð* in TGT branches into many sub-types:

1,3-11 *likamlikt hlioð* verður annat af *lifligvm* hlvtvm, ænn annat af *liflavsvm* hlvtvm. *Hlioð* þat, ær hæriz af *liflavsvm* hlvtvm, verður annat af .ij. ræriligvm skæpnvm, ænn annat af v-rÆriligvm, annat af samkvamv ræriligra lvtv ok oreriligra. Af rÆriligvm lvtvm verður *lioð* sëm af hofvðskæpnvm eldi, vindvm ok vøtnvm. Af vrÆriligvm hlvtvm verður *lioð* sëm stæinvvm æða malmi æða strengivm, ok verður þo þæss kyns *lioð* iafnan af rÆring nØkcurs *likama* lifligs æða vlifligs. Af samkvamv ræriligra lvtv ok vræriligra verður *lioð* sëm þa ær vindr æða vçtn æða ælldr slær sínv aflí við iorð æða aðra vræriliga luti. *lioð* þat ær verður af *liflavsvm* lvtvm ær svmt ogreíniliht sem vinda gnyr eða vatna þytr eða reiðar þrvnvr, en svmt *hlioð* er greiniliht æptir natv-riligri samlioðan. Þeirri ær philosophi kçllvðv mvsicam, ok verður þat *lioð* hit æfsta ok hit æzta af ræring ringa þeirra .vij., ær sol ok tvngl ok .v. merkistiornvr ganga i, þær ær planate ærv kallaðar, ok hæitir þat celestis armonia æða himnæsk *lioða*-græin. Þessar stiornvr sagði plató hafa lif ok skyn ok vera odavðligar. Greiniliht *lioð* verður iliflavsvm lvtvm, þat sëm ver kçllvm listvliht *lioð*, sëm i malmi ok strengivm ok pipvm ok allz kyns sçngfærvvm. J *lifligvm* lvtvm ok vitlavsvm verður *lioð*, sëm i viðvm æða gravsvm ok þo af hræring nokkvrðs ræriligs *likama*. Af lifandi lvtvm þeim ær skyn hafa verður annat *lioð*, þat ær rodd hæitir, ænn annat, þat ær æigi ær rçdd, sëm fota stapp æða handa klapp ok annat sliht.

Oláfr 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) motile, 2) non motile or 3) motile things meeting non motile ones.

Such a complex classification 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 Oláfr 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 *greiniliht* type and the *ogreiniliht* 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, quotation 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 waters 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 þytr* 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.

It may be interesting to compare Oláfr'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 jörð eða grjótt hrymr; Þetta hljóð heitir gnýr ok þrymr ok dunur ok dynr. Svá þat hljóð, er málmarnir gera, eða mannaþyssinn; 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 sækvikindin; 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 menninir 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 vitlavsvm verðr líoð, sëm i viðvm æða gravsvm ok þo af hræring nokkvr̄s reriligs likama. Af lifandi lvtvm þeim ær skyn hafa verðr annat líoð, þat ær rodd hæitir, ænn annat, þat ær æigi ær rødd, sëm fota stapp æða handa klapp ok annat slikt.

Again, also in TGT 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 living 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 (see the underlined parts in the quotation), making allowance for the voices of animals never mentioned in TGT. Another feature the two Icelandic treatises have in common 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.

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 líoð fram fært af kvikvændis mvnni, formærat af .ix. natvrligvm tolv̄m, lvngvm ok barka, tvngv ok tveim vçRvm ok .iiij. tçnnvm.

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.* 1, 15 (Helm [1898]). Duo labia velut cimbala verborum commoda modulantia, lingua ut plectrum quae curuamine quodam uocalem format spiritum, palatum cuius concavititas profert sonum, gutturis fistula quae tereti meatum spiritalem praebet excursu et pulmo qui velut 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 Autissioderensis, 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; Olsen [1884]: 35, fn.). The latter uses Petrus Helias' commentary to Priscian as a source for book II of his *Speculum Doctrinale*.

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 simphónie. (...) Stafasetning sjá, sem hér er rituð, er svá sett til máls, sem lykklar til hljóðs í músika, ok regur fylgja hljóðstöfum svá, sem þeir lykklar málstöfjum. Málstafir eru ritaðir með hverri regu bæði fyrir ok eftir, ok gera þeir mál af hendinum þeim, sem þeir hafa við hljóðstafina fyrir eða eftir. Köllum vér þat lykka, sem þeir eru í fastir, ok eru þeir svá settir hér í spáziunni, sem lykklar í simphónie, ok skal þeim kippa eða hrinda, ok drepa svá regustrengina, ok tekr þá þat hljóð, sem þú vilt haft hafa.

Such a particular 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.

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

R. Bacon, *Summa Grammatica*
 (Steele [1940]: 233) Alio modo [i.e., proprie] dicitur vox sonus prolatus ab ore animalis, (...) naturalibus

instrumentis formatus, que
sunt hec, pulmo, guttur, den-
tes, lingua, palatum, labia.

1,12 Rodd ær lioð fram fært
af kvikvændis munnni, formærat
af .ix. natvrligvum tolvm.
Ívngvum ok barka, tvngv ok
tveim vçrvum ok .iiij. tçnnvum.

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.

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

1,13 Ænn priscianus kallar
rodd vera hit grannligsta
lopzins havgg ok æiginliga
æyrvum skilianlíkt.

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

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 Oláfr. 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 Oláfr is referring specifically to 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 Oláfr the *rodd* is *lopzins havgg*, 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:

And. *Excepta: De voce* (VII 323) Vox corporalis est, an incorporealis? 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 percussio». 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 cxxxxi) 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.

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* ... 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 ESS (I:67), but may be closer to *percipibilis* found e.g. in Marius Victorinus 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.

A few concluding remarks. This brief investigation has limited itself to a short passage of Óláfr's treatise, though interesting for its socio-implications. A definite assessment of the text would need an accurate study of the whole work. In fact I am planning. Meanwhile I will restrict my observations 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, Oláfr 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 Oláfr'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.

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ç = ç
 ý = y
 é = e
 ð = ð
 ó = ó
 av = ar