

Some Notes on the Revival of Modistic Linguistics in the Fifteenth Century: Ps.-Johannes Versor and William Zenders of Weert

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Summary: Fifteenth-century modistic, and broadly speaking speculative, grammar receives bad press in the history of linguistics. It is commonly held that by that period modistic grammar no longer contributed to the doctrinal development of linguistics, and that it was being slowly but surely superseded by the humanists' approach to grammar and language. A closer inspection of the texts shows, however, that up to the beginning of the sixteenth century speculative grammar was still in vogue and played an important role in the training of the future intellectual elite. The interest in it is not only noticeable in highly theoretical works, but also in textbooks that were used extensively in the schools, like Ps.-Versor's *Commentary on the Donatus minor* and William Zenders of Weert's *Opus minus* on the *Doctrinale*. Moreover, the reflections on grammar and the explanatory analyses of language were part of the famous *Wegestreit*, since it turns out that the *antiqui* or *reales*, on the one hand, and the *moderni* or *nominales*, on the other, each had their own distinctive approach to grammar.

1. Introduction

In this essay, I will discuss a few elements of late fifteenth-century linguistic thought. Jan Pinborg claimed that a revival of modistic grammar occurred at that time, and he associated this revived modism with the *via antiqua*, but he immediately added the harsh criticism that “no theoretical innovations [were] recorded” in this period.¹ This remark

1. Pinborg 1982: 256: “After 1300 no original contribution to modistic theory was made, although modistic terminology continued to govern grammatical description.” See also Ashworth 1988: 153: “By 1350 the doctrines of speculative grammar had already lost their importance for philosophers of language. No original contributions had been made after 1300, and the theoretical framework had been subjected to strong attacks.”

together with his previous characterisation of late medieval modistic thought in his famous *Die Entwicklung*² enticed me, notwithstanding the bad press that late modistic grammar has generally received in modern scholarship, to investigate this branch of fifteenth-century linguistic thought. Moreover, the reason for giving serious attention to late medieval linguistics is obvious. It is not only justified by the need to record the development of linguistic thought, but also by the fact that linguistics played a central role in late medieval thinking. A serious examination of what really was going on in linguistic theory at the end of the Middle Ages is, therefore, of paramount importance for our understanding of not just the linguistic thought of the period but also of the intellectual climate in general.

In the late Middle Ages and the first decades of the sixteenth century, modistic grammar still enjoyed widespread popularity and influenced the teaching of grammar at all but the elementary level.³ The large number of texts written in the period – many of which remain all but unexplored in manuscripts and early printings – testify to this fact. On the other hand, the verdict that it is a theory with little new to offer has obviously deterred modern research into this area. Consequently, a number of important questions have not been asked. We must bear in mind that, in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, “modism” was not a uniform line of linguistic thought that developed towards a single culminating point. Several branches were to be found in various parts of Europe. Of course, all forms of modism shared a few basic tenets by which they are and were recognised to be modistic; but the modistic grammarians were quite prepared to disagree amongst themselves on several important topics, as Rosier-Catach has emphasised in her contribution to the *History of Language Science*.⁴ Consequently, when we talk of a “revival”, several questions arise: what was revived? Which issues were considered important, and why? How were they handed down? And what was the philosophical and educational framework within which this revival took place? It is necessary to answer these questions in order to obtain a clear understanding of modism’s contribution to the creation of the late medieval intellectual. These

2. Pinborg 1967: 195-212.

3. For more general studies I refer the reader to, *inter alia*, Heath 1971; Overfield 1984; Kaluza 1988; Tewes 1993.

4. Rosier-Catach 2000: 548b.

answers will also enable us to understand and evaluate the attacks by the humanists who, starting from a completely different view of language, showed their disagreement with the linguistic traditions that they themselves or their teachers had learned.

In this essay, I will not deal with any theoretical treatises containing full-blown modistic doctrine; rather I propose to examine two low-level grammatical texts, in which modistic theory played an indisputable but not always an equally prominent role. These grammatical texts are the commentary on the *Donatus minor* attributed in the early printings to John Versor (but which was, in all probability, not authored by him), and the commentary on Alexander de Villa Dei's *Doctrinale* by the Cologne master William Zenders of Weert.⁵ Although these commentaries are vastly different from each other in character, nevertheless they have in common the fact that they were used extensively in schools; their widespread popularity can be deduced from frequent reprints throughout the last decades of the fifteenth century and even in the early sixteenth century. An interesting characteristic of these texts is that they present us with applied versions of modistic theory. A further advantage is that neither text has yet been subjected to the fillet knife of modern research.

We must bear in mind that, beginning in the second half of the fourteenth century, three main currents developed in linguistic thought: modistic grammar, nominalist or ultra-mentalist grammar, and humanist grammar. The three currents were in strong competition with each other and, taken together, they dominated the linguistic scene. I shall

5. For the problematic attribution of the *Donatus* commentary to Versor, and the late fifteenth-century manuscript in which this text is ascribed to a master Gaufredus or Ganfredus, see below, at and around nn. 59-63. I shall refer to the author as Ps.-Versor. For a survey of the printings of Ps.-Versor's commentary, see Hain 1838: 492, where seven printings are listed [nrs 16057-16063]. I have used the Heidelberg 1489 edition (Hain 16058; copy: Cambridge, UL, Inc. 5. A 32.2). See also below, at n. 62.

William Zenders (or Senders) of Weert's commentary on the *Doctrinale* has been transmitted in 11 printed texts, two of which contain the commentary on the first part only; the other nine print the commentary on the second part only. See GW I, col. 640-46 [nrs 1167-1177]. For my research on Zenders, I have used the Den Haag, Koninklijke Bibliotheek copy of the Heinrich Quentell Köln 1500 edition of this text; for this edition, see GW 1176, where the Den Haag copy is not mentioned. There are no known manuscripts containing William's commentary, only the fifteenth-century printed editions. In all of the manuscripts the text has been attributed to William Zenders / Senders of We(e)rt or William Wert.

start, therefore, with some general remarks about modistic, nominalist or ultra-mentalist, and humanist grammar. An analysis of Ps.-Versor's *Resolutio* will then follow, and specific reference will be made to his use of modistic theory. I shall then discuss some features of Zenders' commentary, and conclude the paper with a few final remarks.

2. Linguistics in the Late Middle Ages: A Survey

For a good understanding of modistic linguistics, it must be kept in mind that this branch of grammar was not concerned with the imposition of words on the *significata specialia*, for the consideration of the *significata specialia*, the modists held, belongs to specialists in the various fields of the sciences. Furthermore, the grammar that regulated the daily use of spoken or written language was the domain of the ordinary grammar master. The medieval grammarians typically called these two domains of grammar *grammatica positiva* and *grammatica usualis* respectively, and they assigned to them different methods. No one can possibly know the *grammatica positiva* without having knowledge of the essence of the *res* on which the words are imposed. The *grammatica usualis*, on the other hand, does not consider the *res*; its method is based on parallel cases and induction. In contrast to both of these methods, the modistic grammarian paid attention exclusively to the causes and principles of *spoken* language,⁶ i.e. the *modi significandi*, in order to establish the general rules about the properties of the parts of speech, congruity, and perfection of speech, the *conclusiones grammaticales*.⁷ The *modi significandi* were considered to be independent of the particular languages, and were thought to be ultimately rooted in the properties of

6. See e.g. Radulphus Brito, *Quaestio* 14, *Ad solutionem*, 137; cf. Rosier-Catach 2000: 544a.

7. Cf. Radulphus Brito, *Quaestio* 3, *Ad quaestionem* 4^o, 99: "ille qui invenit grammaticam a priori pertractando principia ad conclusiones grammaticales, cum sic pertractavit fuit grammaticus, quia grammatica est cognitio effectus grammaticalis per eius causas. Unde causatur grammatica ex pertractione principiorum grammaticalium ad conclusiones grammaticales. Ergo simul cum quis pertractavit illa principia grammaticalia ad conclusiones grammaticales fuit grammaticus. Quia posita causa simul ponitur et effectus."

the things (“every *active* mode of signifying comes from some property of the thing”),⁸ or materially the same as the modes of being (“the modes of being, the passive modes of understanding, and the passive modes of signifying are the same materially and in reality, but they differ formally”).⁹ We must bear in mind, however, that the modistic grammarian’s interest in the *res* is secondary. He considers the *modi essendi* only because knowledge of them is necessary in order for him to gain knowledge of the *modi significandi*. Moreover, the modistic grammarian accepted a full and equal distinction between the domains of the logician and of the grammarian: both of them were speculative sciences *sui iuris*; consequently, they did not accept a dependence of grammar on logic.¹⁰

The second line of linguistic thought is the nominalist – or rather ultra-mentalistic – grammar: the grammar of mental language, which was the ultimate result of the grammaticalisation of thought.¹¹ The adherents of this current considered spoken language to be completely conventional. They denied any real existence to the modes of signifying, using them only as metaphors; the term ‘*modus significandi*’ was taken to indicate only the ‘*modus agendi intellectus*’, which has the intellect as its subject.¹² In the domain of syntax, they removed as independent entities in their linguistic ontology the modistic *passiones* of the parts

8. Thomas of Erfurt, *Grammatica speculativa*, c. II, 136-37: “Omnis modus significandi activus est ab aliqua rei proprietate.”

9. Thomas of Erfurt, *Grammatica speculativa*, c. II, 142-43: “modi essendi, et modi intelligendi passivi, et modi significandi passivi, sunt idem materialiter et realiter, sed differunt formaliter.”

10. Cf. Radulphus Brito, *Quaestio 4, Ad quaestionem 2^o*, 104: “sicut logicus non considerat res nisi per accidens, ut scilicet super eas fundantur intentiones secundae, sic etiam grammaticus non considerat per se et primo significatum nec etiam vocem, licet totum aggregatum ex istis consideret; sed considerat illa ut ibi fundantur quaedam rationes significandi vel quaedam proportionales modorum significandi.”

11. For “grammaticalisation de la pensée”, see the important work by Panaccio 1999: 265.

12. Aurifaber in Pinborg 1967: 227: “Tertio distingo hoc membrum ‘modus significandi’, qui potest accipi dupliciter: Uno modo pro modo agendi intellectus, qui modus est in intellectu subiective Alio modo accipitur ‘modus significandi’ pro quodam derelicto in constructione per intellectum, mediante quo vox significat et habet modum sue actionis significandi et consignificandi. Et sic negatur modus significandi, quia vox ex solo usu et exercitio significat et non ex aliquo, quod sibi formaliter vel subiective acquiratur.”

of speech, i.e. *constructio*, *congruitas*, and *perfectio*.¹³ Because the nominalists did not consider the grammar of spoken language universal, that grammar could not be a speculative science. The grammarians occupied themselves with the grammars of the various languages, which all had a thoroughly conventional character. The grammar of mental language, on the other hand, was universal; its consideration belonged to the logician and the metaphysician.¹⁴ This is the grammar in which the masters of the *via moderna* were interested. They considered the grammar of spoken language completely dependent on the grammar of mental language.¹⁵

The third line of linguistic thought, prominent from the second half of the fourteenth century onwards, is humanist grammar. This was rooted in the secondary-level normative grammar of the late twelfth century, and it continued to make an, albeit selective, use of the terms and concepts that were developed in this secondary-level grammar. As early as the first decades of the thirteenth century, the grammarians of the important city-states in southern Europe developed an interest in grammar that differentiated them from their northern European colleagues. They mainly prepared their pupils for the civil service and for the notarial, legal, and medical schools, and not exclusively for a clerical career or for further studies in philosophy or theology.¹⁶ For this

13. See master Marcilius in Kneepkens 1992: 166: “Ex isto concluditur quod unio constructibilium non est quid distinctum a constructibilibus unitis. ... Confirmatur: Sicut est in natura, sic erit in arte. Sed sic est in natura quod stat aliqua corpora uniri sine generatione alicuius accidentis in aliquo illorum, ut patet de duobus asseribus. Igitur sic etiam erit in arte constructibilia adinuicem uniri sine generatione alicuius accidentis in aliquo illorum.”

14. Aurifaber in Pinborg 1967: 231, sub 25: “considerant [sc. logicus et grammaticus] easdem partes [sc. orationis] diversimode: loycus quidem ut illa consideratio videtur esse communis omni lingue; gramaticus autem non sic universaliter, quia non considerat, ut sint communia omni lingue, cum aliqua considerat gramaticus <***> lingua latina tantum invenitur, et iste gramaticus grecus congruentia lingue grece.”

15. See Kaczmarek’s edition (1994) of the *Destructiones modorum significandi*, 58: “congruitas, regimen et constructio nulli competunt nisi orationi mentali et orationi vocali et orationi scriptae. Sed orationi vocali et orationi scriptae non competunt, nisi quia competunt orationi mentali. Ergo praedicta tria [sc. congruitas, regimen, constructio] competunt orationi mentali primo et per se secundo modo [*i.e.* naturaliter] ... si oratio vocalis vel scripta numquam esset subordinata orationi mentali, nec esset congrua nec incongrua, nec in ea esset regimen nec constructio.”, and master Marcilius in Kneepkens 1990: 54: “Dato quod nulle essent uoces uel scripta, sed solum conceptus, adhuc in mente esset regimen gramaticale et esset sciencia de regimine grammaticali. Et illa sciencia finaliter sciscetur in speculari.”

16. Black 2001: 90.

reason, normative grammar, as opposed to philosophical reflection on language, was their predominant interest. They paid more attention to Alexander de Villa Dei's *Doctrinale* than to Martin of Dacia's *Summa de modis significandi*.¹⁷ As early as the fourteenth century, these Renaissance grammarians were quoting abundantly from the works of the ancient Roman authors in order to illustrate the syntactic phenomena of the Latin language.¹⁸ In the fifteenth century, the humanist grammarians insisted on the *imitatio veterum* as the most important means of acquiring a refined style and the correct use of the Latin language. In Italy, Valla's *De linguae Latinae elegantia* and Perotti's *Rudimenta grammatices* occupied a key position in this development, and the influence of their writings was felt all over Europe.¹⁹ One example of this is Thomas Linacre, who composed his *De emendata structura Latini sermonis* in the 1520s. This work is generally considered one of the first humanist textbooks on syntax for advanced students. The pivotal role assigned by Linacre to the imitation of the ancient authors becomes clear in his discussion of grammatical construction: the correct composition of the parts of speech according to the requirements of proper grammatical principles: *recta grammatices ratio*. The *recta grammatices ratio* turns out to be those grammatical principles that were typically used by the most excellent of the ancient authors when they were speaking or composing texts.²⁰ Given these three lines of linguistic thought, it must be emphasised that a fundamental difference existed between, on the one hand, modistic grammar and the grammar of mental language, and, on the other hand, humanist grammar, a difference already noted by Apel and by Pinborg.²¹ It is true that modistic grammar and the grammar of

17. It is not my intention to argue that modistic / intentionist grammar was completely absent in South-Europe or even in Italy. On the contrary, there are some modistic texts composed by Italian grammarians, but their number is quite limited. I mention Gentilis of Cingulo's questions (1992) on Martin of Dacia's *Summa* and Matthew of Bologna's questions concerning the modes of signifying (1992); for the situation on the Iberian Peninsula, see Percival 2001: 5-8.

18. See Black 2001: 120.

19. See Padley 1976: 16-17; Percival 1981; Percival 1982: 810-11; Percival 1986: 57.

20. Thomas Linacre, *De emendata structura Latini sermonis libri sex*, 1527, 35a: "Est igitur constructio, debita partium orationis inter se compositio, sicuti recta grammatices ratio exigit. Porro recta grammatices ratio ea est, qua veterum probatissimi plurimum, cum loquendo tum scribendo sunt vsi." For a survey of his life and writings, see Jensen 1996: 578, and Colombat 1998b. For the *imitatio* as the criterion for considering an author a humanist, see Witt 2000: 22 and 199-200.

21. Cf. Apel 1963: 17-18, 172-174; Pinborg 1967: 210-11.

mental language were rooted in fundamentally different philosophical frameworks, but they agreed in their ultimate aim: the acquisition of knowledge. *Scire* was the goal of every speculative science, and modistic grammar and the grammar of mental language are *scientia*, i.e. they are concerned with the causes and principles underlying language. This concern is the driving force behind both of these grammatical approaches, and they were, therefore, both considered to be forms of speculative, i.e. theoretical, grammar. Because their practitioners considered them to be an indispensable step in the process of acquiring knowledge, these same practitioners placed both modistic and ultramentalist grammar among the speculative sciences.²² In contrast, according to the humanist grammarian, language is primarily a means to be used in the creation of human “*Lebensraum*”, i.e. the conditions for a truly human life, for which grammar, taken in a broad sense, is an absolute “must”. To illustrate this attitude, I refer to the first book of Leonardo Bruni’s *Dialogues* with Paulus Hister. Bruni clearly showed his enthusiasm for an *éducation permanente* “*in grammaticis*”, but he did not mean “an education in speculative grammar or in learning the Latin language,” but “in the *ars* that instructs us to read and *enjoy* the *auctores*”, i.e. literature in a broad sense.²³

22. For modistic grammarians, see e.g. Boethius Dacus, *Quaestio* 3, 18: “grammatica est scientia speculativa, non tamen ipsa est naturalis nec mathematica nec divina. Et hoc quia ipsa non est essentialis pars philosophiae, sed est scientia introductoria et valet ad cognitionem scientiarum speculatarum, quae essentialia partes philosophiae sunt.” and Radulphus Brito, *Quaestio* 1, *Ad quaestionem*, 91: “Etiam grammatica est scientia speculativa quia est propter scire.” For ultramentalist grammar, see e.g. master Marcilius quoted in Kneepkens 1990: 53: “Ex parte finis scientia dicitur speculativa, que finaliter acquiritur propter speculari solum. ... Ex parte obiecti scientia dicitur speculativa, que considerat aliqua non sub ratione sub qua circa ipsa aliquid libere operamur per voluntatem et intellectum.”

23. Leonardo Bruni, *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum*, 239, § 10: “Equidem memini, cum puer adhuc Bononiae essem ibique grammaticis operam darem, me solitum quotidianie, vel aequales lacescendo vel magistros rogando, nullum tempus vacuum disputationis transisse. Neque id <quod [cf. *app. crit. ed. Baldassarri*]> in pueritia feci, postea vero, annis crescentibus, dereliqui; sed in omni aetate atque vita nihil mihi gratius fuit, nihil quod aeque expeterem quam doctos homines, si modo potestas data sit, convenire, et quae legerim et quae agitaverim et de quibus ambigerem illis exponere, eorumque in his rebus percontari iudicium.”

3. Ps.-John Versor's *Resolutio*

It is commonly accepted that modistic grammar disappeared completely from the University of Paris in the 1320s, although there are indications that this view needs to be qualified to a certain extent. In central Europe, however, a strong modistic tradition continued "in grammaticis". It is likely that its revival in the western part of Europe, especially in Paris, started with the commentary on Alexander de Villa Dei's *Doctrinale* by Johannes de Nova Domo or Nieuwenhuysen, the founder of the Albertist school in Paris at the end of the fourteenth century. Johannes' commentary has yet to be closely examined, but it is clear that he argued that knowledge of the modes of signifying is essential for congruous sentence construction. The authoritative text that he relies on is the modistic *Grammatica speculativa* by Thomas of Erfurt, who is mentioned by name as "Thomas".²⁴

The Dominican John Versor (d. c. 1485) was reputed to be a Thomist;²⁵ he composed several commentaries on Aristotelian works, Peter of Spain's *Tractatus*, and Thomas Aquinas' *De ente et essentia*. We encounter in the commentary on the *Donatus minor* that was printed under Versor's name frequent use of an elementary version of modism. Before I provide a more systematic discussion of this text, a few preliminary remarks must be made that might possibly explain this situation.

First, I have to warn my readers that I refer to the author of this work as "Ps.-Versor", since, as mentioned above, in all probability John Versor was not the actual author. I shall return to this question at the end of this section.

Second, it should be noted that the *Donatus minor* is an elementary textbook. Even if Ps.-Versor's treatment is of a more advanced level, it

24. Cf. Kaluza 1988: 95 and ms. Erlangen 650, f. 16rb: "modi significandi gramaticales sunt principia sermonis congrui, ergo contra negantes modos significandi non fieret disputatio. Minor patet per omnes autores modorum significandi et precipue per Thomam in suo libro modorum significandi, ubi in principio probat quod constructio congrua nulla possit haberi sine cognitione modorum significandi; ergo concluditur quod sciencia de modis significandi in gramatica summe est necessaria."

25. Several of Versor's commentaries on Aristotle's works were printed at Cologne with the remark "secundum processum Burse Montis", i.e. the Cologne *Bursa Montana*, which favoured later Thomism; for Versor's Thomism, see, *inter alios*, Lohr 1971: 290; Lohr 1988: 597-600; Meuthen 1988: 185; Tewes 1993: 389-90; recently Bos 2002 stressed, however, Versor's inclination to Albertism in logic.

does not reach the highest theoretical level. In all probability, it was intended for teachers. In his commentary, Ps.-Versor follows a strict pattern. He divides his work into ten parts: his comments on (1) the title, (2) on the definition of the part of speech (*pars orationis*), and on (3-10) the eight specific parts of speech. Each discussion of a specific part of speech, with the exception of the interjection, is divided into two parts, one on the definition of the part of speech in question and another on its accidents. In each part, Ps.-Versor first notes the wording of the *littera* on which he is commenting, and presents a short introduction to the *littera*. Next he adduces four topics that are central to the introductory section; they are labelled as follows: “sciendum primo / secundo / tertio / quarto”. A set of five counter-arguments to some elements of these four positions follows, and finally these five counter-arguments receive comprehensive responses.

Third and last, we must bear in mind that Ps.-Versor compiled a commentary and not a textbook or a *summa*, and further that he was well aware that the *Donatus minor* was a Latin primer for *minus proveci*.²⁶ His main objective was to present and explain the linguistics that, in his opinion, underlay Donatus’ primer, and he tried to perform this task with the help of contemporary methods, in combination with the theory to which he adhered.

In his text, we encounter an interesting section on the place of grammar among the disciplines, which are divided into civil and non-civil categories. The civil disciplines are, in turn, subdivided into low-level or mechanic disciplines; middle-level disciplines, which include the moral ones; and, finally, high-level disciplines, involving the contemplation of things. Among the latter we find the rational disciplines, i.e.

26. In his treatment of nominal accidents, Ps.-Versor has to account for the differences between the list of accidents given by Priscian and that given by Donatus. He “explains this away” by pointing to the difference in level of their intended audience: Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, A6v: “Sciendum tertio quod licet Priscianus assignet aliqua accidentia nominis que Donatus non assignat, et Donatus assignat aliqua que tamen non assignat Priscianus, non tamen est controversia inter ipsos, quia diversimode assignaverunt accidentia nominis, et etiam diversimode locuti sunt. Nam Priscianus loquebatur perfectis et sapientibus, Donatus vero pueris et iuvenibus locutus est. Unde scire derivationem vocabulorum pertinet ad perfectos et sapientes et non ad pueros. Ideo Priscianus assignat speciem pro accidente nominis, non tamen assignat Donatus. Quia Donatus est informator iuvenum et instructor puerorum, ideo ad maiorem informationem eorum assignat Donatus comparisonem, ut instruat ipsos qualiter debeant comparare.”

grammar, logic, and rhetoric, as well as the real disciplines, i.e. physics, metaphysics, and mathematics. On the basis of this division and, especially, the position he allotted to grammar, we may conclude that the grammar that Ps.-Vorsor deals with in this commentary can be equated with speculative grammar.

An overall examination of the commentary indicates that Ps.-Vorsor's main goals were:

- the analysis with the help of logic of the definitions at issue
- determining the grammatical use of those terms that have a wider application than in the field of grammar only
- the presentation and comparison of Priscian's and Donatus' definitions
- the explanation of the differences between these grammarians.

It is evident that his intention is not to teach correct daily use of the Latin language. In order to obtain his goal, he refers, whenever he deems necessary, to the *modi significandi* and, implicitly, modistic grammar. Such references, however, always have the appearance of a means to an end: it is obviously not his intention either to compose a treatise on modistic grammar or a full-blown modistic commentary. Consequently, one looks in vain for a systematic treatment of the modes of signifying; they are only occasionally adduced. Moreover, and even more remarkably, the modes of being and the modes of understanding are not mentioned at all, though a few casual remarks reveal some familiarity with the fact that the modes of signifying refer to properties of the *res* and not to the *res* as such. For instance, Ps.-Vorsor deals with this topic in the section on nominal gender, where he points to the traditional correspondence of the modes of signifying to properties of a thing in reality,²⁷ e.g. a stone. A masculine noun was assigned to the *res*

27. Ps.-Vorsor, *Resolutio*, B3v-B4a: "Contra predicta arguitur primo sic:

Quecunque respectu unius et eiusdem sunt eadem, illa inter se sunt eadem. Sed masculinum et femininum et neutrum sunt eadem respectu unius et eiusdem rei, ut lapis est masculini generis, petra feminini generis, saxum neutri generis, et tamen ista nomina eandem rem significant; ergo masculinum, femininum et neutrum non sunt genera distincta.

Quinto sic: Sicut est in natura, sic debet esse in arte, quia ars imitatur naturam. 2^o *Phisicorum*. Sed in natura non sunt nisi duo genera, scilicet masculinum et femininum. Ergo erunt etiam in arte nisi duo genera.

“stone” to signify its active property: ‘lapis’;²⁸ on the other hand, a feminine noun was assigned to stone to signify its passive property: ‘petra’.²⁹ In fact, this traditional lore is to be found in the writings of such early modistic grammarians as Martin of Dacia.³⁰ It was repeated, however, time and again in modistic treatises.

The level of the modistic theory that we meet in Ps.-Vorsor’s commentary is rather basic. One looks in vain for the widely used distinction between the active and passive modes of signifying and, as mentioned above, for the theoretical framework involving the modes of being and the modes of understanding, both of which were integral parts of modistic theory. On the other hand, he does distinguish between the essential and the accidental modes of signifying. The essential modes of signifying are subdivided into the general essential mode and the specific essential mode. Both these latter modes are constitutive of the part of speech in question, but the general essential mode can be shared by another part, while the specific or special mode is unique to that part of speech and places a word in the category of the specified part of speech. It is through the specific or special mode, then, that a particular part of speech cannot be any other particular part of speech. The general mode and special mode are comparable to matter and form, and the general mode is said to be the mode of matter, while the specific mode the mode of form. For instance, the noun and the pronoun both share in signifying the mode of substance, while signifying the mode of

Ad argumenta in oppositum: Ad primum: Illa que sunt eadem uni tertio secundum rem et rationem simul sunt eadem inter se. Modo licet illa nomina idem significant secundum rem, non tamen secundum rationem, quia imponuntur a diuersis rationibus siue proprietatibus in illa re repertis. Nam in illa re reperitur una proprietas actiua que est ledere pedem, et sub hac imponitur in masculino genere; reperitur etiam in illa re alia proprietas passiuua, scilicet pede trita, et sub hac imponitur in feminino genere. Ideo cum oriatur genus a proprietate rei, et ille proprietates sunt diuersae, ob hoc illa genera erunt diuersa.

Ad argumenta in oppositum: Ad quintum: Licet accipiendo genus ut dicitur a genero .as. are. Vel a genero .aris., scilicet quia uel generatur uel generat secundum quem modum non sumitur genus a grammatico, nec est accidens nominis: sunt tantum duo genera, tamen accipiendo genus ut est modus significandi consignificans proprietatem rei possunt esse plura genera quam duo secundum quod illa proprietas potest multipliciter reperiri in rebus. Et sic patet quod licet in natura sint tantum duo genera, tamen secundum artem sunt plura.”

28. Sc. lapis quasi laedens pedem.

29. The etymological result of ‘pede trita’.

30. Martinus de Dacia, *Modi significandi*, 35-37.

quality is unique to the noun. Again, this is traditional material, and Ps.-Versor uses it to counter the objection that, since no accident can have accidents, a verb cannot have accidents, because it is itself an accident. According to Ps.-Versor, the objection holds only if it is made about reality. We have to bear in mind, however, that although a verb is not a substance in reality, in the linguistic universe it is indeed a composite, namely the result of its essential modes: the mode of matter and the mode of form. Just as a substance in the extra-linguistic world is composed of matter and form, the verb is understood to be composed of these two modes of signifying. This enables a verb or another substance in the linguistic universe to be the bearer of linguistic accidents; in other words, it enables these particular accidents to be in the verb. Ps.-Versor concludes that a verb is indeed an accident when considered as a real substance, but it has the mode of substance when considered in terms of its accidental modes of signifying. In fact, he claims that an isomorphy exists between the structure of an extra-mental entity and the structure of a linguistic entity of spoken language: their ontologies are analogous.³¹

The matter/form analogy is also part of the modistic tradition; we encounter it already in Martin of Dacia's *Summa*.³² But notwithstanding Ps.-Versor's lack of originality in this respect, his use of the distinction between the general essential mode and the specific essential mode is interesting. Jan Pinborg has shown that there were two main ways of dealing with the essential modes in modistic thought.³³ One view adopted a sort of Porphyrian tree model. At the top of the "tree", it was assumed that the single most general essential mode (*modus generalissimus/generalis*) embraces every word falling under that part of speech. This most general mode is proper to that part of speech only, although

31. Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, E6v: "Licet uerbum non significet substantiam, habet tamen modum substantie, eo quod constituitur in esse per suos modos significandi essentialis, qui sunt significare per modum fluxus et fieri et per modum dicibilis de alio, quorum primus est generalis habens modum materie et secundus specialis habens modum forme. Nam separat et distinguit uerbum ab aliis partibus orationis et reponit ipsum uerbum sub esse partis. Et ideo sicut substantia materialis componitur ex materia et forma, ita uerbum intelligitur componi ex istis duobus modis significandi. Ex quo patet quod uerbum habet modum substantie, ideo sibi possunt inesse aliqua accidentia, ita quod licet uerbum comparatum ad substantiam sit accidens, tamen comparatum ad suos modos significandi accidentales habet modum substantie."

32. See Pinborg 1967: 125.

33. See Pinborg 1967: 125-26.

this mode of signifying sometimes can be divided up into two components. One of these two components is shared with another part of speech, and it functions, therefore, as matter; the other component is not shared and functions as form. For instance, Martin of Dacia states that the *modus significandi essentialis generalis* of the noun is the mode of signifying by means of the mode of state and rest and of the mode of determinate understanding. This implies that being a noun is based, for every noun, on this mode of signifying, which is a *compositum* consisting, as every *compositum* does, of matter and form: the mode of state and rest acts as the matter and the mode of determinate understanding as the form. The mode of state and rest is shared with the pronoun, which also has a *modus significandi essentialis generalis*, but a simple (i.e. non-composed) one, i.e. the mode of state and rest alone.³⁴ It must be stressed that the mode itself is considered as a whole and, as a whole, it is shared by no other part of speech. Under this most general mode, we find subaltern modes (*modi subalterni*) that are constitutive of special sets, for instance proper nouns or common nouns. Finally, at the bottom of the “tree” is the most specific mode of signifying, corresponding in the Porphyrian model to the *species specialissima*. Martin of Dacia, Radulphus Brito, and Thomas of Erfurt are representatives of

34. Martinus de Dacia, *Modi significandi*, 9-12: “nam omnis pars orationis est pars per suum modum significandi essentialem generalem. Dicitur autem essentialis pro tanto, quia est de essentia cuiuslibet sub se contenti ... Dicitur autem generalis pro tanto, quia generaliter cuiuslibet sub se contento convenit, vel dicitur generalis respectu modorum specialium ... [c. vi, paragr. 16] modus significandi essentialis generalis nominis est modus significandi per modum habitus et quietis et per modum determinatae apprehensionis, et hic modus significandi est qui facit omne nomen esse nomen. Ad cuius intelligentiam est notandum quod iste modus significandi est compositus sive confectus ex duobus, scilicet ex modo habitus et quietis et ex modo determinatae apprehensionis. Et quia omne compositum ex necessitate vult componi ex materia et forma, ... ideo sciendum quid illorum sit materiale et quid formale ... Nota ergo quod modus habitus et quietis materialis est in modo essentiali generali nominis, modus autem determinatae apprehensionis est formalis. ... Modus significandi pronominis est modus significandi per modum habitus et quietis”; according to Martin, the pronoun has only one essential general mode of signifying, *ibid.*, c. vii: “Modus significandi pronominis est modus significandi per modum habitus et quietis. Per hunc enim modum pronomem est pronomem. Unde quod materiale est in modo significandi nominis, hoc est formale et completivum pronominis. Hic enim est modus significandi pronominis. Pronomen enim non significat per modum determinatae apprehensionis sicut nomen significat Ideo significat per modum habitus et quietis solum quod est sibi formale et est totus modus significandi essentialis generalis pronominis.”

this tradition. The other way of explaining essential modes in modistic thought starts with a distinction between the general and the specific essential mode. Both of these modes are essential, but the general mode can be shared by more than one part of speech, while the specific essential mode applies only to one, so that there are only eight specific modes. For parts of speech like the preposition, the general and the specific modes coincide. The general mode and the specific mode are related to each other like matter and form. Boethius of Dacia, Simon (Dacus ?), Siger of Courtrai, Michael of Marbais, and the Pseudo-Albert adhered to this latter line of thought.³⁵ It is evident that Ps.-Versor also adhered to it, although this view contradicts his remark in the general section, where he indicates that no part of speech can share an essential mode of signifying with another part.³⁶

The way in which Ps.-Versor sometimes deals with these two essential modes of signifying is astonishing. In his discussion of the nominal accidents, for example, he raises the objection, stemming from the *Praedicabilia* treatises, that an accident can be present or absent without the corruption of its subject. A problem consequently results from the fact that the accident of *figura* cannot be absent from the noun, since every noun, being either a simple or a compound noun, is of some figure. One must conclude that figure is not an accident of the noun. It is obvious that we are here confronted with an equivocal use of the term 'accidens', sc. between the logical accident and the grammatical accident, an equivocal use that had been causing problems in the two domains of grammar and logic for a long time. It is, however, more interesting for us to note that, even if some noun could have no figure, Ps.-Versor would still place it in the category of the noun because of its specific essential mode of signifying, which is signifying by the mode of state and rest.³⁷ The difficulty is that every other modistic grammarian who distinguished between two essential modes considered this essential mode or its equivalent the *general*, and not the *specific* essen-

35. See Pinborg 1967: 124-26.

36. Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, A 4-v: "ideo licet una dictio possit habere plura significata, tamen una pars orationis non potest habere plures modos significandi essentialis, sic quod unus modus significandi essentialis unius partis importaretur per aliam partem orationis."

37. Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, C1r: "Ad argumentum secundum in oppositum: Licet omne nomen sit alicuius figure, tamen figura potest sibi abesse, quia si nomen non haberet aliquam figuram, adhuc reponeretur in specie partis per suum modum significandi essentialis specificum, qui est significare per modum habitus et quietis."

tial mode. On first consideration, one might, of course, think that this is simply an error on Ps.-Versor's part. But we meet the same mode of signifying again as the specific essential mode of the noun in the discussion of the different modes of the verb and adverb.³⁸ Is this the result of Ps.-Versor's sloppiness or ignorance of the matter, or is there a line in modistic grammar that supports this view? I do not have an adequate answer to that question, but it brings us to the discussion of Ps.-Versor's sources, and we must determine if it is possible to say anything about them.

Ps.-Versor sometimes refers to medieval grammarians like Alexander de Villa Dei (c. 1200) and John of Garland (c. 1230), but they were commonly used sources. Of greater importance for us is the *auctor modorum significandi*, who is mentioned several times. The search for this author brings us, in the first place, to Michael of Marbais (fl. c. 1260/70), for the definitions of the several accidental modes of signifying given by Marbais show a striking similarity to those supplied by Ps.-Versor, whereas the definitions by other well-known modists are not that close. There are, however, strong indications that Ps.-Versor did *not* have Marbais on his desk when he composed his commentary. In his discussion of the essential modes of the pronoun, Ps.-Versor insists that, according to the "*auctor modorum significandi*", the pronoun's essential mode of signifying is "signifying its *res* by the mode of indeterminate substance."³⁹ Marbais explicitly rejected this view. For him

38. Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, H5r: "Sciendum primo licet adiectivum nominis (scilicet albus et niger) ponatur in eadem parte orationis sicut suum substantivum, cum etiam sit nomen, tamen adiectivum verbi, quod est adverbium, non ponitur sub eadem parte orationis cum suo substantivo. Cuius ratio est quia modus significandi specificus, qui reponit nomen in specie partis scilicet significare per modum habitus et quietis, bene convenit adiectivo nominis, nec sibi repugnat modus significandi nominis." It is noteworthy that, in the same discussion, Ps.-Versor gives a correct description of the specific essential mode of signifying of the verb: "Modus significandi autem specificus verbi, scilicet modus dicibilis de altero, non convenit adverbio, sed sibi repugnat."

39. Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, C5v: "Quod pronomen quiddam sic diffinitur ab auctore modorum significandi: Pronomen est pars orationis significans per modum substantie indeterminate. Et ista diffinitio est essentialis data per eius principia essentialia, scilicet per genus et differentiam, quia per hoc quod dicitur 'pars orationis', tangitur genus, et per hoc quod dicitur 'significans per modum substantie indeterminate', tangitur differentia ab aliis partibus orationis, quia per hoc quod dicitur 'substantie', differt ipsum a verbo et ab aliis partibus indeclinabilibus. Et per hoc quod dicitur 'indeterminate', differt a nomine."

the pronoun has two essential modes. The noun and the pronoun share the mode of signifying of substance (i.e. the mode of rest and state or permanency). Therefore, this mode is the general essential mode of signifying for both parts of speech. Furthermore, Marbais adduces another essential mode of the pronoun: the mode of being determinable or of being distinguishable. This mode is not shared by any other part of speech and it functions as the specific mode of the pronoun. He emphasises that he cannot accept that the mode of signifying indeterminate substance is the pronoun's specific mode. To his mind, the pronoun does not designate any indetermination concerning its *res*, since then it would seem as if the pronoun signified not a mode of being that is in the *res*, but rather the opposite mode of being. For this reason, he prefers to accept two essential modes for the pronoun: the mode of signifying a substance, the general mode, and the mode of signifying a thing under the condition of being specifiable, the specific mode.⁴⁰ This explicit rejection of a view that was fully accepted by Ps.-Vorsor does not make Marbais the most obvious candidate for one of Ps.-Vorsor's sources.

Closer to Ps.-Vorsor is the work of no less an author than Johannes Josse of Marville (fl. c. 1320), or rather the commentaries on Johannes Josse's work. In the first decades of the fourteenth century, Johannes Josse must have been a big name in grammar, although the modern historians of medieval linguistics have not thought much of him. As early as the 1860s Victor Le Clerc wrote: "Jean de Marville ... ne put que rédiger péniblement, en deux cent cinquante-cinq vers latins sur les *modi*, des idées qui avaient pour lui peu de clarté."⁴¹ Jan Pinborg judged him even more harshly, saying: "und schliesslich die metrischen *Modi significandi* des Johannes Josse de Marvillia, 1322 geschrieben, die vielleicht den Lernprozess erleichtert haben, aber inhaltlich unbedeutend und oft abstrus sind. Dieser Traktat konnte sich einer grossen Popularität erfreuen, ist aber inhaltlich ohne jede Bedeutung."⁴² As these historians testify, Johannes Josse's didactic poem is very obscure and it is extremely difficult to elicit a coherent modistic theory from it. On the other hand, we have to bear in mind that this poem is nearly always accompanied by commentaries in which it is possible to detect a more consistent approach. Of course, there are various commentaries on Josse and these differ in content – Jan Pinborg has already identified

40. See Michael de Marbasio, *Summa de modis significandi*, 59-61.

41. Le Clerc 1865: 422.

42. Pinborg 1967: 100-101.

several different commentators⁴³ – and what is more, the contribution of Johannes Josse and the commentary tradition on his work has yet to be fully investigated. But it is evident from an initial comparison of several references in Ps.-Versor's *Resolutio* with three Josse commentaries that, when he appealed to the *auctor modorum significandi* and the *liber modorum significandi*, he did use such a commentary, and not Michael of Marbais. To support this hypothesis, I provide a survey of the definitions of the accidental modes of signifying of the noun that occur in Marbais, in the Josse tradition, and in Ps.-Versor. The three commentaries I have used as instances of the Josse commentary tradition are as follows. The first is the marginal commentary in ms. Paris, BnF lat. 16671, ff. 41-48;⁴⁴ this is a highly developed commentary on Josse's text. The second commentary is preserved in the ms. Berlin, SBPK, Theol. Q 26, ff. 107-48 (hereafter: Berlin (1)).⁴⁵ The third is the question-commentary on Josse that is found in the same Berlin ms. on ff. 149^v-86^r (hereafter: Berlin (2)).⁴⁶ In addition, the definitions of the nominal accidental modes of signifying found in two modistic texts unassociated with the Josse tradition are given in order to show that the

43. Pinborg 1967: 310-12; see also Thurot 1869: 47-48.

44. It is important to stress that this marginal commentary is very early. Thus it proves that Josse's text was, in all probability, always read with the help of a commentary from as little as a decade after its appearance onwards. The colophon of this text informs us that it was copied by Jacobus de Bellomonte, who completed the task on July 24, 1334 at Marville: "Expliciunt modi significandi versificati compositi a magistro Iohanne de Maruilla. Anima eius beatificetur. Et eisdem scripsit Jacobus de Bellomonte in Maruilla in anno Domini M^o.CCC^o.XXX^o.IIII^o. Vigilia beatorum Iacobi et Cristofori apostolorum. Versus .CC. et .LV." The name of this scribe is not found in *Colophons*, vol. 3 (1973): I-J. For this text, see also Bursill-Hall 1981, no. 208.263.5.

45. For a description of this ms., see Rose 1905: 1243-45. According to the colophon, this text was copied in 1463 at the college of Tournai in Paris: "Finito libro isto sit laus et gloria Cristo. Anno domini M^oCCCC^o63 scriptum Parisius in collegio Tornacensi." In Pinborg's list it is commentary A 17; cf. Pinborg 1967: 312. Based on the incipit, "Sicut dicit Philosophus in primo Posteriorum ad cognitionem rei necesse est cognoscere causas", he was even able to identify 7 mss. of this commentary with certainty, and held the possibility open that one more existed. Without any doubt, more mss. of this text are still hidden in the libraries. See also, Bursill-Hall 1981, no. 24.62.3.

46. For this text, see Bursill-Hall 1981, no. 24.62.4. This text was copied in Paris in 1464 by the scribe Cristianus Lupi (Christian Wolff), who finished the work on 19 November: "ffinitus est iste liber per me cristianum lupi parisius anno domini m^occcc^olxiiii in die sancte elisabeth siue in profesto almanorum de sero hora quinta." In the same place one year earlier, Christian Wolff also wrote the *praelectiones* in ms. Rose 981 (Berlin, lat. Q.87): "Finitus est iste liber parisius a.d. 1463 ... per me Cristianum lupi." Cf. *Colophons*, vol. 1 (1965), nos. 2606 & 2607.

Josse line of thought – closely related to Marbais – is the one that Ps.-Versor typically adopts. One of the control texts that I have selected is Thomas of Erfurt's *Grammatica speculativa*, for although this work dates from the 1310s, it was widely used in the later Middle Ages.⁴⁷ The other control text is Erhard Knab's commentary on the *Donatus minor*, which was composed in 1458. Knab's text is especially interesting, since its author went from being an adherent of the *via antiqua* to an adherent of the *via moderna*; in this commentary, although it was written during his *via antiqua* period, we often find both modistic and "modern" definitions.⁴⁸

Qualitas accidentalis [i.e. the Donatian quality, which is an accident of the noun, not the Priscianic quality, which is an essential part of the semantics of the noun]:

- Marbais *qualitas nominis est modus significandi datus ipsi nomini ad designandum rem sub modo essendi multiplicabilis in plura sive inmultiplicabilis in plura*
- Paris 16671 *qualitas est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem sub modo essendi multiplicabilis in plura uel inmultiplicabilis in plura*⁴⁹
- Berlin (1) *qualitas capitur pro quodam modo significandi accidentali dato nomini ad significandum rem in plura supposita multiplicabilem uel non multiplicabilem*
- Berlin (2) *qualitas accidentalis est quidam modus significandi datus uoci ad significandum rem suam per modum multiplicabilis uel non multiplicabilis*
- Ps.-Versor *qualitas est quidam modus significandi accidentalis datus nomini ad designandum rem suam in plura supposita multiplicabilem uel non multiplicabilem*
- Thomas Erf. Thomas considers *qualitas* to be an essential mode of signifying creating two subaltern essential modes of signifying
- Erhard Knab *qualitas modus significandi nominis per modum communis uel appropriati*⁵⁰

47. See the introduction to the edition and translation by Bursill-Hall.

48. This text has been preserved in the ms. Città del Vaticano, BAV, Pal. lat. 1589, ff. 211^v-318^v; cf. Bursill-Hall 1981, no. 288.95.2. It must be mentioned that Erhard generally adds a definition "secundum modernos" to the definitions by the *modiste* that he considers incorrect. For Erhard Knab, see also Kaczmarek 2000.

49. In this commentary no definition of *qualitas* is given, but only of *qualitas propria* and *appellatiua*.

50. Erhard casts nominalistic doubt on this definition by adding the remark: "An autem ille modus significandi nominis sit aliquod distinctum a nomine patebit forte in fine huius operis," where he explains, after his conversion to the *via moderna*, how to interpret his commentary.

Gradus comparationis:

- Marbais *gradus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem intensibilem vel remissibilem ut est in subiecto simpliciter aut in excessu*
- Paris 16671 *gradus positivus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem intensibilem uel remissibilem in subiecto simpliciter et absolute existentem*
gradus comparativus est quidam modus significandi et <c>. citra terminum existentem
*gradus superlativus est quidam modus significandi etc. in termino subiecto excessus existentem*⁵¹
- Berlin (1) *gradus est quidam modus significandi datus parti ad significandum rem suam intensibilem uel remissibilem in subiecto simpliciter uel in subiecto citra terminum uel in subiecto ut in termino*
- Berlin (2) *gradus ut hic sumitur est modus <significandi> datus dictioni ad significandum rem intensibilem uel remissibilem in subiecto absolute sine excessu uel cum excessu citra terminum uel cum excessu (!) in termino*
- Ps.-Versor the modistic definition of the degrees of comparison is missing
 Thomas Erf. this mode is called an essential mode by Thomas “secundum aliquam eius speciem”
- Erhard Knab *est autem gradus comparationis modus significandi quo nomen significat adhuc dictionem siue rem simpliciter et sine augmento uel cum excessu siue augmentato*

Genus:

- Marbais *genus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem sub modo essendi uirtutis actiuae uel passivae uel indifferentis ad utrumque*
- Paris 16671 a modistic definition of genus is missing
- Berlin (1) *genus est modus significandi datus parti ad designandum rem suam per modum uirtutis actiuae uel passivae uel indifferentes se habentis ad utrumque*
- Berlin (2) *genus est modus significandi accidentaliter ortus a proprietate rei datus dictioni ad significandum rem suam per modum proprietatis actiuae uel passivae uel indifferentes se habentis*
- Ps.-Versor *genus est quidam modus significandi datus parti orationis ad designandum rem suam sub qualitate actiua uel passiva uel indifferentes se habentem ad utrumque*

51. In this text, a definition covering all three degrees is lacking; the text of the definition of the *gradus superlativus* appears to be not completely correct. Michael of Marbais’ definition runs as follows (p. 34): “Superlativus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem intensibilem vel remissibilem ut est in subiecto termino excessus.”

- Thomas Erf. *genus est modus significandi activus quo mediante nomen proprietatem agentis vel patientis vel utrumque significat*
- Erhard Knab *dixerant Modiste quod genus in se nichil aliud sit quam modus significandi accidentalis respectuus attributus parti orationis ab intellectu secundum quod uere uel similitudinaliter significat sub proprietate agentis uel patientis uel neutri uel utriusque*

Numerus:

- Marbais *numerus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem sub modo essendi actualis unitatis uel actualis multiplicationis*
- Paris 16671 *modus significandi qui significat rem sub modo essendi actu multiplicatam, non actu multiplicatam*
- Berlin (1) *numerus est quidam modus significandi datus parti ad significandum rem suam per modum unitatis actualis uel per modum pluralitatis actualis*
- Berlin (2) *numerus est quidam modus significandi datus parti ad designandum rem suam per modum unitatis actualis uel pluralitatis*
- Ps.-Versor *numerus est modus significandi datus parti ad designandum rem suam per modum actualis unitatis uel pluralitatis*
- Thomas Erf. *numerus ergo est modus significandi accidentalis nominis mediante quo nomen proprietatem indivisibilitatis, quae est proprietas unius, vel proprietatem divisibilitatis, quae est proprietas multitudinis, significat*
- Erhard Knab *numerus est modus significandi accidentalis respectuus parti orationis attributus secundum quod per se uel attributionem significat rem suam per modum unius uel indiuisi siue per modum plurium et diuisi essentialiter uel accidentaliter*

Figura:

- Marbais *figura est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem suam sub esse simplici vel composito*
- Paris 16671 *figura est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem sub esse simplici uel composito*
- Berlin (1) *figura est quidam modus significandi datus parti ad designandum rem suam sub esse simplici uel composito*
- Berlin (2) *figura est quidam modus significandi accidentalis absolutus datus parti orationis ad significandum rem sub esse simplici uel composito*
- Ps.-Versor *figura est modus significandi accidentalis datus parti ad designandum rem sub esse simplici vel sub esse composito*
- Thomas Erf. *figura ergo est modus significandi accidentalis nominis mediante quo nomen proprietatem simplicis, compositi vel decompositi significat*
- Erhard Knab *figura est modus significandi accidentalis attributus parti orationis ab intellectu secundum quod imponitur a simplici conceptu uel composito ad significandum rem uel res*

Casus:

- Marbais *casus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem sub modo essendi ut quod est alterum, vel ut cuius est alterum, vel ut cui acquiritur alterum, vel ad quod terminatur alterum vel sub ratione termini excitationis vel sub modo essendi ut a quo fit alterum*
- Paris 16671 a modistic definition of casus is missing
- Berlin (1) *casus est quidam modus significandi datus parti ad designandum rem suam per modum ut quis uel ut cuius uel ut cui uel ut significat rem suam ut a quo alterum terminatur uel ut ad quem uel per modum excitati ad actum uerbi persequendum*
- Berlin (2) *casus est quidam modus significandi datus nomini ad designandum rem suam sub modo essendi ut <quod> est alterum uel cuius est alterum uel ut cui est alterum uel ut <ad> quod terminatur alterum uel in ratione [lac. fere 5 litt.] excitationis uel sub modo <a> quod est alterum*
- Ps.-Versor *casus est quidam modus significandi accidentaliter datus nomini ad significandum rem suam per modum ut quod, vel cuius, vel per modum ut cui vel per modum ut quem vel per modum excitati ad actum uerbi prosequendum vel per modum ut a quo*
- Thomas Erf. *casus igitur est modus significandi accidentaliter nominis mediante quo nomen proprietatem principii vel termini consignificat*
- Erhard Knab *casus est modus significandi accidentaliter respectu attributus parti orationis quo per se uel per attributionem significat sub ratione principii uel termini tantum uel sub ratione utriusque.*

Even upon first inspection, a close affinity between the definitions given by the commentator of Berlin (1) and Ps.-Versor is readily apparent. This is confirmed by the discussion of the mode of signifying of the pronoun referred to above.⁵² It appears that Johannes Josse rejects the opinion that a pronoun signifies mere substance, i.e. the substance that is stripped of all form; instead he argues that it signifies substance merely, i.e. it signifies substance as being stripped of all form. The terminology used to express this opposition is *significare meram substantiam* vs. *significare substantiam mere*. This distinction, as explained by the commentator of Berlin (1), means that the pronoun's general mode of signifying allows it to signify its substance in an indeterminate way.⁵³

52. See above, at and around nn. 39-40.

53. Ms. Berlin, Theol. Q 26, fol. 128v-29r: "Sciendum primo quod cum dicit auctor in textu 'non est res uera', destituit quandam [fol. 129r] falsam opinionem dicens quod pronomen non significat substantiam meram ab omni forma denudatam sicut materia prima, significat tamen substantiam mere, idest indeterminate. Et ibi li 'mere' dicit modum significandi substantie denudate et non substantiam meram, quia talis signifi-

On the other hand, both Josse and the commentator stress that the pronoun also has a *modus specificus* that is a more formal mode: the well-known *modus formalis*.⁵⁴ Just as the noun has the mode of determinate understanding as its specific mode, so the pronoun has the mode of indeterminate understanding, which is also called the mode of the distinguishable.⁵⁵ The commentator brings both modes together in his definition of the pronoun: “pars orationis significans per modum substantie indeterminate uel per modum distinguibilis.” In fact, Ps.-Vorsor is here providing the modistic definition of the pronoun.⁵⁶ Another feature that the Josse commentary tradition and Ps.-Vorsor have in common is that they lack the distinction between the active and passive modes of signifying.

In all probability, then, Ps.-Vorsor did not accurately transmit material supplied by his sources. Perhaps this inaccuracy is due to the fact that he was unable to balance a traditional exposition of the *Donatus minor* with an explanation derived from modistic theory. But what indeed was Ps.-Vorsor's intention? The title of Ps.-Vorsor's work handed down to us in the early printed editions – *Octo partium orationis resolutio luculentissima* – is, I suppose, programmatic. A *resolutio* or the *modus resolutorius* is directed to the *priora* according to nature: the *posterius* is resolved into the *prius*, the composite into the simple, etc.⁵⁷ His intention was not to furnish a commentary but a *resolutio*; he

cat rem suam sine qualitate et talis res non potest extra animam, sed solum per intrinsecum. Sic ergo patet quod pronomen significat substantiam habentem qualitatem sicut nomen, sed differunt, quia nomen significat substantiam cum qualitate determinata, sed pronomen significat substantiam non per modum qualitatis determinate, sed significat substantiam mere, ut dictum est, et iste est modus significandi generalis pronominis.”

54. Ms. Berlin, Theol. Q 26, f. 129r: “Sciendum secundo quod significat per modum distinguibilis: est modus significandi formalis et specificus pronominis, per quem pronomen habet esse et reponi sub tali specie partis et distinguere ab aliis.”

55. Ms. Berlin, Theol. Q 26, f. 129r: “sicut in nomine modus determinate apprehensionis est modus formalis et specificus eius, ita modus indeterminate apprehensionis est modus formalis et specificus, qui alio nomine uocatur modus distinguibilis.” A similar position is found in the commentary on Johannes Josse's text that has been preserved in ms. Paris, BnF lat. 16671.

56. See above, n. 39.

57. Cf. Maierù 1972: 395 n.5.

tried to reveal the causes and principles that underlie the grammatical facts found in Donatus. By claiming that Ps.-Versor composed a *resolutio* of Donatus, the printers implicitly placed this way of dealing with grammar among the speculative sciences, for in the late medieval theory of science, the term-complex consisting of *resolvere*, *resolutio*, *resolutorius* indicated that the discipline in question was a speculative science.⁵⁸

Ps.-Versor's commentary is not a profound text, but it becomes clear that, for a good understanding of it and of late fifteenth-century modistic linguistics in general, we do not have a sufficient number of edited texts available to us. The material at our disposal does not allow us to outline the linguistic framework within which this commentary must be situated. It is, therefore, evident that we are not able to appreciate all the details of this text. On the other hand, we have to admit that even a cursory glance unmistakably reveals that Ps.-Versor's explanation or *resolutio* more than once looks like a piece of bungling.

Now the question arises: was this commentary really composed by John Versor? In each of the printed editions, Versor's name is mentioned twice: the text begins with "Iohannis Versoris octo partium orationis explanatio accomodatissima" and at the end, in the colophon, we find "per magistrum Iohannem Versorem edita" or similar phrases. On the other hand, I have not found any close resemblance between this text and Versor's questions on the *ars vetus* or his commentary on Peter of Spain's *Summulae logicales*. Of course, we have to bear in mind that the latter works were intended for a different level of teaching and belonged to a different discipline. A discussion possibly demonstrating both his logical and grammatical thinking occurs in his treatment of the preposition *in-*. He argues that some adjectives signify a thing the opposite of which does not have a corresponding adjective. Such an opposite is signified by the *privation* of the other form, with the result that nouns have been imposed on some forms through the privation of the opposite, e.g.: 'happy' and 'unhappy'. These "privative" adjectives or nouns signify a privation *quo ad nos*; however, considered in terms of the sig-

58. Versor, *Qq. super Artem veterem, De pred. Porph.*, f. vi-a: "Preterea ultima pars logice ad quam omnes finaliter ordinantur, resolutoria est. Resolvere autem ad intellectum speculativum pertinet, quia modus procedendi intellectus speculativi est per modum resolutionis, practici vero per modum compositionis."

nified *res*, such a form is not a privation but a positive form.⁵⁹ In the discussion of the *nomen infinitum* in his questions on the *De interpretatione* of the *Ars vetus*, John Versor also touches on the difference between the *nomen infinitum* and the *nomen privativum*. In his view, investigating the former is the logician's task, whereas it is the grammarian's charge to investigate the latter. Moreover, he stresses that, for the grammarian, the *nomen privativum* is a positive signification of a substance along with its qualities.⁶⁰ Although at first glance this might

59. Ps.-Versor, *Resolutio*, K5r-v: "Quod illa prepositio 'in' additur nominibus adiectiuus uel secundum rem uel secundum modum. Non tamen additur omnibus adiectiuus, sed quibusdam non. Nam istis adiectiuus 'albus', 'niger' non potest addi 'in-'. Non enim dicitur 'inalbus', 'inniger', quia quedam adiectiua sunt entia completa et positua et res alique in natura, habentia contraria positua et completa in natura, et talibus adiectiuus non est addenda hec prepositio 'in', sicut contrarium huius quod est albus, significatur positue secundum rem et uocem per hanc uocem que est 'niger' ratione cuius non dicimus 'inalbus'. Alia sunt adiectiua, quorum opposita siue contraria non habent nomina quo ad nos, sed significantur per priuationem suorum oppositorum, quia nomina imponuntur secundum quod res innotescunt. Et quia una forma innotescit per priuationem alterius forme, ideo aliquibus formis sunt nomina imposita per priuationem, et huiusmodi nomina sunt 'iniustus', 'infelix' etceteris (!), quibus additur illa prepositio 'in'. Et significant priuationem quo ad nos, licet a parte rei illa forma sit positua. Et sic patet quid sit prepositio, et quem ordinem habeat inter partes orationis et quibus preponatur tam per appositionem quam per compositionem."

60. Versor, *Qq. super Artem veterem, De interpr.*, f. lxiii-v: "Dubitatur quomodo differunt nomen priuatiuum apud grammaticum et nomen infinitum apud logicum. Dicitur quod differunt quia nomen priuatiuum apud grammaticum significat substantiam cum qualitate positue, sed nomen infinitum apud logicum significat infinitam substantiam, que non est aliquid in rerum natura, sed est aliquid commune ad ens in rerum natura et ens in apprehensione et pro qualitate habet priuationem qualitatis. Vt tamen magis uideatur differentia inter [f. lxiii-r] terminum priuatiuum et terminum infinitum, aduertendum est quod licet omne nomen significet per modum habitus cuiusdam, et omnis habitus priuari possit. Quia tamen habitus proprie loquendo dicit illud quod est accidens in substantia et priuatio ponit potentiam ad receptionem huiusmodi habitus, ideo non proprie priuatur nisi terminus accidentalis, ut dicimus 'impium', 'iniustum', quia in istis accidentalibus forma realiter distinguitur ab eo cuius est forma, et ideo bene potest remoueri forma et remanere illud cuius est forma cum potentia ad ipsam formam recipiendam. Ideo proprie non priuatur nisi in accidentalibus. Sed in terminis substantialibus forma seu qualitas non differt realiter ab eo cuius est forma. Ideo remota qualitate remouetur etiam illud cuius est, scilicet substantia nominis. Et ideo tales termini substantialis non priuantur, ut non dicimus 'inhomo', 'inanimal'. Ex quo patet quomodo differunt negatio negans et negatio priuans et negatio infinitans, quia negatio negans nihil ponit et nihil relinquit nec secum patitur aliquid re uel ratione; negatio autem infinitans licet nichil ponit, relinquit tamen substantiam infinitam et secum compatitur omnia alia a participantibus formam negatam; negatio uero priuans ponit determinatum subiectum cum potentia respondendi in habitum. Et sic analogice dicitur negatio de istis tribus."

seem to suggest a doctrinal correspondence between Johannes Versor and Ps.-Versor in this respect, it must be borne in mind that, in all probability, we are dealing here with a view that was widely held in the fifteenth century. Accordingly, this minor agreement does not afford serious support for the traditional claim that Johannes Versor was the author of this commentary.⁶¹

When we consider the transmission of Ps.-Versor's commentary, the suspicion that Versor is not the actual author of the text is strengthened. We find seven printings before 1500 (Hain, 16057-16093); these appeared in Heidelberg, Strasbourg, Cologne, and Leipzig between 1489 and 1498. The latest edition is particularly interesting, since it insists that this work is not just important for young students, but also for students preparing for the baccalaureus examination.⁶² Clearly, at that time it must also have served as an undergraduate university textbook.

Until recently, no manuscripts of this text were known, but it now appears that ff. 71^r-120^r of the ms. Wrocław, University Library, IV.Q.77 contains this commentary.⁶³ Its incipit reads:

CIRCA INITIUM DONATI PARISENSIS incipit editio prima. Per hoc quod dicitur editio prima denotatur quod Donatus alium librum composuit qui est maius et uocatur alphabetum....

On f. 120^r the commentary ends:

affectus in anima. Hec de partibus orationis secundum expositionem Donati a magistro Ganfredo (or: Gaufredo) dicta sunt 1473.

Thus, we now have at our disposal a manuscript of this commentary that is earlier than the printed editions. Moreover, the commentary is not attributed to John Versor in the manuscript, but to an otherwise unknown master Gan/ufredus or Geoffrey. Another highly remarkable feature is the fact that this commentary is called "Parisiensis". Was

61. See e.g. Thurot 1869: 488-490; Weiler 1962: 44; Gabriel 1969: 104; Bos 2002: 51; Bos refers to a grammatical tract on the parts of speech as well as to a commentary on Donatus, but these appear to be one and the same text.

62. Hain 1838, no. 16063: "Commentum valde perutile magistri Ioannis Versoris super Donatum minorem cum pulcris notabilibus atque argumentis summe bonis, per quorum cognitionem nedum iuuenes scholares verum etiam baccalauriandi in optimum argumentandi et respondendi modum deuenire possunt facillime [!]." It is the Henricus Quentel edition of 1498.

63. It is no. 312.29.3 in the *Census* of Bursill-Hall 1981.

master Geoffrey only the “reading” master at a local university, who used for his lectures a Parisian text (the “Parisian Donatus”), which was compiled by a real Parisian master, e.g. John Versor? Or was this Geoffrey also a Parisian master? A thorough examination of the manuscripts containing late medieval commentaries on the *Donatus minor* might bring other copies to light.

4. William Zenders of Weert’s Minor Commentary on the *Doctrinale*

The last quarter of the fifteenth century saw a real explosion of commentaries on Alexander de Villa Dei’s *Doctrinale*. Despite the fact that they all appeared in early printed editions, however, the majority of them remain unstudied.⁶⁴ As mentioned above, I will limit myself to discussing the minor commentary on the *Doctrinale* by William Zenders. This master is said to have been a native of Weert, a town belonging to the medieval diocese of Liège, now situated in the south of the Netherlands. We know that a William Zenders or Sengers of Weert obtained the degrees of Bachelor of Arts at Louvain in 1429 and Master of Arts at Cologne in 1432.⁶⁵ It is very difficult, however, to reconcile this biographical information with the time of composition of the minor commentary. I shall return to this question below.⁶⁶ At least six works are attributed to William, four of which have been transmitted in early printed editions, while two others have yet to be found:⁶⁷

64. Unfortunately, the *Census* of medieval Latin grammatical texts compiled by the late Bursill-Hall was limited to grammatical *manuscripts*. This has undoubtedly contributed to the fact that those texts only available in – often numerous – late fifteenth-century printings, such as Gerhard of Zutphen’s famous and voluminous *Glosa notabilis* on the *Doctrinale*, are hardly ever studied nowadays.

65. At the end of his *Lilium grammatice*, William nicely expresses the two poles of his life (for the *Lilium*, I have used a microfilm of the incunabulum found at Staatsbibliothek in München; see *GW*, Bd. X, no. 12072 printed by Michael Greyff in Reutlingen about 1490), as he illustrates the special usages of the locative, accusative, and ablative cases of the proper nouns of towns:

studeo Colonie fui Lovanii
 uado Coloniam pergo Lovanium
 venio Colonia redeo Lovanio.

66. Below, at and around n. 76.

67. For a survey of the works attributed to William Zenders, see Worstbrock 1999. Worstbrock suggests that William’s training took place at Louvain or Paris.

- a commentary on the *Doctrinale*, which he called the *opus minus*⁶⁸
- the *Parvum bonum grammaticae*, which is said to be a collection of excerpts from his minor *Doctrinale* commentary⁶⁹
- the so-called *Lilium grammaticae*,⁷⁰ which is, in all probability, the *Elegantie*, to which he regularly refers in his commentary on the *Doctrinale*
- Worstbrock attributes to him the authorship of the popular *Exercitium puerorum grammaticale*⁷¹
- a large commentary on the *Doctrinale*, called by him the *opus maius*,

68. See below, n. 74.

69. Cf. art. cit., n. 67 above.

70. The *GW*, Bd. X, 542-549, lists 17 editions (nos. 12073-12090). Bursill-Hall 1981 mentions three manuscripts of the *Lilium*:

New York, UL Columbia, Plimpton 137, f. 1-16^v s. xv [Bursill-Hall, 183.8]

Praha, UL, 1951 (X.F.25), f. 1-129^v s. xv [Bursill-Hall, 225.45]

Wien, ÖN, CVP 4783, f. 78^r-158^r s. xv [Bursill-Hall, 299.86].

I have not had the opportunity to inspect the manuscripts. For a reference to the *Elegantie*, see e.g. (Eijj-v): “Et dicitur ‘nudiusquartus’ non ultra secundum aliquos. Sunt tamen plerique docti dicentes ‘nudiusquintus’, ‘-sextus’ etc. De istis ad longum uideatur in elegantiiis dictionum opusculi nostri et in Laurentio Vallensi.” In the *Lilium* we meet, in the section on the construction of the adverbs, a reference to this question, indeed: “Da temporis, ut hodie heri nunc nuper cras aliquando olim tunc cum dum iam semper mane modo. Adduntur nudiustertius nudiusquartus dudum iamdudum pridem iampridem pridie perhendie postridie et similia.” For the *Lilium* and the *Exercitium*, see also Jensen 1997: 74-77.

In the *Lilium* William adduces the same modern authors to whom he refers in his commentary on the *Doctrinale* to prove an atypical construction of the relative. The following deviant constructions are called by him “elegantēs”: “Que si ponantur sic sunt elegantēs:

Quem audistis non est meus

Quem queritis Ihesum non est hic

Quam statuo urbem est vestra.

Et si arguatur sive relativum preponatur sive postponatur, semper antecedens, quod est suppositum, disconvenit cum apposito in rectitudine casus, dico quod illa disconvenientia suppositi et appositi excusatur propter talem positionem relativi ante suum antecedens, et fit multum elegans propter autoritatem et communem usum loquendi omnium poetarum et oratorum non solum antiquorum, sed etiam recentium virorum doctissimorum, scilicet Leonardi Aretini, Gasperini, pape Pii, Poggii, Laurencii Vallensis et aliorum plurimorum.”

71. This text was attributed to William Zenders only in a late printing (Cologne 1505); Worstbrock’s main arguments for the attribution are the formal and the literal correspondences between this work and the minor commentary.

to which the *opus minus* would be an introduction;⁷² unfortunately, I have not yet identified this text in the manuscripts

- a commentary on Peter of Spain's *Tractatus*, at least on Bk. VII, which he himself says he commented on according to the *via nominalium*.⁷³

The minor commentary was printed several times: two printings are known of the commentary on the first part of the *Doctrinale*, and nine on the second part.⁷⁴ In the commentary on the first part of the *Doctrinale*, the so-called *etymologia*, William has the concerns of a traditional secondary school teacher and he provides his readership with a work

72. E.g. on p. 1^v: “opus minus secunde partis Alexandri introductorium ad opus maius eiusdem perutile”; p. 54^r: “Arguitur: Accidens non potest esse sine subiecto, ergo nec actus uerbi potest esse sine supposito. Consequentia tenet, quia actus uerbi est accidens et suppositum est subiectum eius. Dico: Licet secundum rem accidens non est sine subiecto et actus sine supposito, tamen accidens bene potest intelligi et significari sine subiecto, sicut patet de abstractis, que intelliguntur et significantur sine subiecto. Etiam dicit Porphirius [cf. *Isag.*, tr. Boeth., ed. Minio-Pauello, 13.1, 2]: ‘Coruus potest intelligi albus, Ethiops nitens candore’. Ergo actus uerbi potest intelligi et significari sine supposito. De ista materia plura alia uideantur in opere maiori”; and in the colophon we read (f. 122 / U vi-r): “Finitur dei gratia opus minus secunde partis Alexandri pro pueris clare breuiterque instruendis per Guilhelum Zenders de Werdt collectum. Et que illic breuitatis gratia, ne pueris fastidium ex prolixitate generetur, emissa sunt, in opere maiori cum plurimis elegantis et questionibus scitu dignis in scholis disputandis argumentis et replicis annexis (!), ut in logica Petri Hispani fecimus, colliguntur et absoluuntur feliciter.”

73. Zenders, *Com. min.*, Ur-1 (p. 117^r): “De isto uideatur in regulis suppositionum quas posuimus in fine septimi tractatus petri hispani secundum uiam nominalium.” and Uiiii-r (p. 120^r): “De isto uideatur in *Paruis Logicalibus* puto in vij tractatu Petri Hispani potest textum, ubi nos posuimus regulas secundum uiam nominalium de suppositione materiali, quam Petrus Hispanus non ponit de quo multum admiror, quoniam per ipsam fere innumerabiles saluantur propositiones.”

74. See *GW*, Bd. I, no. 1167 (Gouda, c. 1490) and 1168 (Deventer, Richard Paffraet 1499); pt. 2: 1169 (Gouda, 1488), 1470 (Köln, J. Koelhoff sr. ca 1490), 1171 (Deventer, R. Paffraet, 1494), 1172 (Deventer, Jacob van Breda, c. 1497), 1173 (Deventer, Jacob van Breda, 1497), 1174 (Deventer, R. Paffraet, 3-1-1499), 1175 (Deventer, R. Paffraet, Sept. 1499), 1176 (Köln, H. Quentell, 1500) – I have used the copy of this edition, which is preserved in the Royal Library at The Hague –, and 1177 (Strasbourg, J. Güniger (?), c. 1500 (?)). To my knowledge, no manuscripts of this commentary have survived.

specifically intended to be a reference work for teachers.⁷⁵ The second part, the commentary on Alexander's section concerning syntax, is the more important for our purposes. An internal reference tells us that William completed this part of the minor commentary in 1486,⁷⁶ which is in fact two years before it appeared in print. If William Zenders, the author of the commentary, is the same as William Zenders who incepted as a master of arts in 1432 at Cologne, he must have composed his work on Alexander at the age of seventy-five at the earliest. Such an elderly author, while possible, hardly seems likely; we are in any event left with a puzzle.

4.1 William Zenders' Position in Fifteenth-Century Linguistics

Even a cursory inspection shows that William's commentary stands at the crossroads of several late medieval linguistic approaches. We meet in the work several traditional medieval grammarians, including Peter Helias, John of Garland, Michael of Marbais, Ianus Balbi of Genoa, and, very frequently, the so-called *Florista*, i.e. Ludolphus de Lucho.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the *Modiste*, the *reales* and *antiqui*, and the *nomi-*

75. In the prologue to the first part, William insists on the duty of the magistrates and the dignitaries. They are responsible for the schools, and have to ensure that the leaders of the schools, i.e. the *rectores scholarum*, take care of the instruction of their pupils in the various disciplines and in good spiritual manners as well. The young people, well educated in both of these domains, are indispensable for the governance of the town, and a good instruction in these is necessary for a well founded public and private life [Aij-r]: "Ad omnes scholarum rectores, ut iuvenes uirtutibus et optimis moribus instituantur exhortatio. Quid diuinius et pro re publica beatius quam prima uirtutum fundamenta iacere in ueris sine quibus nulla perfecte gubernatur politia nullaque in priuato aut publico probata ducitur uita. Plurimum igitur rei publice interest iuuentutem in ciuitatibus moratam habere diuinisque uirtutibus decoratam possidere. Non enim parum refert pueros sic aut sic a iuuentute assuesci, immo multum, ut ait Philosophus. Et id quidem ut recte fiat, debet uille magistratus aut scholasticus hoc munus scholarum rectoribus diligenter committere, ut sollicitam in pueros curam gerant, ne minus optimis moribus quam scientiis crescant."

76. Zenders, *Comm. min.*, N ii-v: "Quando hec facta sunt? Respondetur: 'Anno millesimo quadringentesimo octogesimo sexto'". This date is supported by a reference to John of Horn, who was bishop of Liège from 1484 until his death on December 18, 1505.

77. For these grammarians, see: Gibson 1996 and Rosier 1998 (Peter Helias); Rosier 1996 (John of Garland); Percival 1996 and Rosier-Catach 2000 (Ludolphus de Lucho). For Michael of Marbais, see Michael de Marbasio, *Summa de modis significandi*, ed. Kelly 1995.

nales and *moderni* are all mentioned. On the other hand, we encounter several Italian humanists in William's commentary. He mentions, *inter alios*, Leonardo Bruni, Poggio Bracciolini, pope Pius (II, i.e. Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini, who was pope from August 19, 1458 until August 15, 1464), Guarino Veronese, Agostino Dati, Giovanni Tortelli (whose *De orthographia* is referred to explicitly), and Lorenzo Valla, whom William admired above all.⁷⁸ He calls them the "Italian teachers" and talks about them with great respect.⁷⁹

William's view on the position of grammar in the system of the sciences is medieval to the core. He uses the well-known distinction between *grammatica positiva*, which is not a true science since it depends on human will, and *grammatica regularis*, i.e. syntax, which meets the requirements of a science, since it is about true and necessary

78. For the humanist grammarians see: Di Cesare 1996a (Leonardo Bruni); Kajanto 1987 (Poggio Bracciolini); Di Cesare 1996b and Colombat 1998a (Guarino Veronese); Gensini 1996 and Colombat 1998c (Lorenzo Valla). For Agostino Dati and the influence of his grammatical writings, see Black 2001: 359-65. For Tortelli, see Regoliosi 1966; Rinaldi 1973; and Onorato 1997 (for T.'s *De orthographia*, esp. p. 1379, n. 67).

It is interesting to note that William presents a strikingly similar list of humanists in his discussion of the discordance between the relative and its antecedent in the *Lilium*, as he does in the *Doctrinale* commentary (see above, n. 70), *Com.min.*, A v-v:

"Regula oratorum de congrua et eleganti discordia suppositi et appositi.

Queritur que est illa oratorum regula de congrua discordia suppositi et appositi a doctissimis pro elegantia usurpata. Dico: Ista: Quandocumque relatiuum cum suo uerbo antecedenti preponitur, tunc illud antecedens perpulcre in casu cum relatiuo concordat, licet in rectitudine cum suo apposito discordet. Exempla sunt:

[p. 6r-Avi-r]

Scriptura	Quem ego decollauit Ioannem surrexit a mortuis
Therentius	Populo ut placerent quas fecisset fabulas
Ouidius	Cecidere manu quas legerat herbas
Tullius	Eos quos protulit Scipiones et Metellos ante fuerunt opiniones magne et glorie

Quintilianus Timeo ne quos porreximus cibos uenena fiant.

Quomodo probas hanc regulam esse congruam et contineri sub grammatica preceptiva? Dico: auctoritate doctissimorum non solum priscorum poetarum et oratorum, verum etiam peritissimorum virorum, qui recenter in evo nostro claruerunt, ut sunt Leonardus Aretinus, Poggius, Laurentius Florentius, Papa Pius, Guarinus, Augustinus Dacus et complures alii, qui nobis hanc regulam pro precepto tradidere."

79. Zenders, *Com.min.*, E ij-r: "Italici preceptores unica regula dicta contenti sunt et per eam tantum faciunt quantum nostri per regulas quadraginta. Ergo unica regula sufficit. Consequens tenet, quia fatuus is censendus esset, qui Romam profecturus quadraginta dierum iter ageret, quando uno dumtaxat die iter suum complere posset."

things that cannot be otherwise.⁸⁰ Although a systematic discussion of the modes of signifying is lacking in William's commentary, it cannot be questioned that, for him, the notion central to explaining the deeper syntactic structure is the mode of signifying. The modes of signifying are the intrinsic efficient causes of construction and government and, therefore, the true and adequate principles of the subject of syntax (the *constructibile*), and the basic causes of grammatical government.⁸¹ The importance of the mode of signifying in grammar is restated in the discussion of the agreement in government between the present participle and its verb. Some people, William says, argue that this agreement is due to the fact that the participle and its verb have the same meaning. However, this reasoning appears to be nonsensical, for, if correct, it would mean that *nudus* and *nuditas*, *albus* and *albedo*, the concrete and its corresponding abstract noun, would also have the same government, since they have the same meaning, i.e. the same *significatum*. But it is common knowledge that concrete nouns often govern different cases than the corresponding abstract nouns. The real reason is that the participle and its verb have the same accidental mode of signifying: the mode of transition. The abstract noun, on the other hand, does not have the same accidental mode of signifying as its concrete counterpart; the abstract noun signifies by means of the mode of abstracting from the subject, the concrete noun by means of the mode of inhering in the subject.⁸² This, William emphasises, is an argument against those who

80. Zenders, *Com.min.*, Q i-v: "Licet grammatica positiva, que est de impositione uocabulorum dependeat a uoluntate primorum grammaticorum, non tamen grammatica regularis, que consistit in regimine et constructione partium ad inuicem. ...

Omnis scientia est uerorum necessariorum et impossibiliter aliter se habentium, ut dicit Philosophus *Primo Posteriorum*. Grammatica regularis est scientia; ergo grammatica est uerorum necessariorum et impossibiliter aliter se habentium."

81. Zenders, *Com.min.*, A iii-r: "<Regimen> grammaticale est quo una dictio regit aliam dictionem per modum significandi."

82. Zenders, *Com.min.*, R i-v: "Quero secundo que est ratio quod participium habet idem regimen et eandem constructionem sui uerbi. Dicunt ad hoc quidam quia participium habet idem significatum cum suo uerbo, ergo habet idem regimen.

Contra. Si illa ratio est bona, ergo concreta, ut *albus*, *nudus* habent idem regimen cum suis abstractis, et econtrario abstracta cum suis concretis, quod est falsum. Consequentia tenet quia concretum et abstractum idem significant, licet concreta bene aliud connotent. Sed falsitas probatur, quia concretorum multa regunt datiuum, multa accusatiuum, multa ablatiuum: 'Petrus est albus pedem' uel 'pede', et tamen *albedo* non regit accusatiuum uel ablatiuum. Dicitur ergo quod est alia ratio, scilicet quia participium habet eundem modum significandi accidentalem cum suo uerbo, ut sicut

refuse to accept the modes of signifying.⁸³ We learn two important things from this discussion. First, it appears that, for William, the modes of abstracting from the subject and of inhering in the subject, along with the mode of transition, are accidental modes, which are in fact responsible for syntactical phenomena. In traditional modistic theory, this is the task of the *modi respectivi*, which are also called accidental modes and which include such elements as case, comparison, gender, etc. In fact, signifying by means of the mode of transition is the mode of signifying of the accusative case. It is interesting to note that, for William, the nominal modes of abstracting and of inhering exert a direct influence on the cases of the words governed and are, therefore, accidental modes, notwithstanding the fact that these modes are essential modes according to traditional modistic theory.⁸⁴ Moreover, it appears from this discussion that William is in favour of the modes of signifying, and defends them against those scholars who deny their existence. These are clearly not the humanist grammarians, but rather those grammarians who reduce the mutual relations of the parts of speech in a phrase or sentence to the level of the significates, in fact to the domain of the logicians.

Another place in which William shows himself to be no dyed-in-the-wool theoretical opponent of modistic doctrine – that is, of what we nowadays would call “general linguistics” – is his discussion of grammatical construction. He starts by supplying us with two definitions. The first one reads as follows: grammatical construction is the mutual composition of several words. This definition is theoretically neutral

uerba actiua significant actum per modum transeuntis in alterum qui requirit accusatiuum terminantem actum transeuntem, ita et participium actiue significationis habet eundem modum significandi per modum transeuntis in alterum. Item. Abstracta non regunt eundem casum cum suis concretis, quia licet habeant idem significatum, non tamen eundem modum significandi eoquod concreta ut *albus*, *nudus* significant albedinem et nuditatem per modum inherens subiecto, et abstracta ut *albedo*, *nuditas* significant easdem qualitates per modum abstractionis a subiecto.”

83. Zenders, *Com.min.*, R i-v: “Istud est contra illos qui negant modos significandi.”

84. Cf. Thomas of Erfurt, *Grammatica speculativa*, pp. 156-58. Thomas accepts the *modus per se stantis* (nomen ergo substantivum significat per modum determinati secundum essentiam, ut: *albedo*, *lapis*, etc) and the *modus adiacentis* (nomen ergo adiectivum significat per modum inhaerentis alteri secundum esse, ut: *albus*, *lapi-deus*, etc.) as *modi significandi essentiales subalterni minus generales*.

and resembles that given by master Marcilius: grammatical construction is the mutual union of constructibles.⁸⁵ The other definition is called “the definition of construction according to Thomas”: the construction is a combination of constructibles, made up of the modes of signifying, created by the intellect and devised for the purpose of expressing a concept of the mind.⁸⁶ William believes that this “Thomas” is none other than Saint Thomas Aquinas and, therefore, considers him to be an important authority. In reality, however, this is the definition of grammatical construction found in Thomas of Erfurt’s *Grammatica speculativa*. William comprehensively analyses the definition, and on the whole agrees with Thomas’ own explanation, but he makes one slight addition, which is of paramount importance. He insists that the modes of signifying are the causes of both government and construction. Next, he raises an interesting objection against the modes and their causal function. Many grammarians, William says, argue that the modes of signifying are not the causes of government and construction. These scholars deny that modes of signifying exist at all, insisting that the only cause of government and construction is the will of the teachers and of the writers whose consensus it is that a given word governs a certain case, and that such a word is construed transitively or intransitively. There can be no doubt that this is the way a realist of the *via antiqua* would present the nominalist view. This nominalist view is rejected by William with the argument that it lacks the support of both authority and reason. The objection may be valid insofar as positive grammar is concerned, because positive grammar only involves the imposition of the words themselves; but the objection does not hold when considering syntax, which is concerned with the government and the mutual construction of the parts of speech. Saint Thomas Aquinas and Michael of Marbais are cited here as authorities for this view, but the rational argument is of greater importance to us. Syntax is a true science: it is about necessary things that cannot be otherwise, as we have seen. The wills of authors and scholars, on the other hand, as well as their consensus are not necessary, for they are contingent and changeable.

William adds another proof of the existence of the modes of signifying. He points out that government and construction are *passiones* of

85. Cf. Kneepkens 1992: 164: “Constructio naturalis [= grammaticalis] est constructibilium unio adinuicem.”

86. Cf. Thomas of Erfurt, *Grammatica speculativa*, p. 278.

the parts of speech when united in a phrase. This is an authentic modistic point of view.⁸⁷ Moreover, that government and construction are necessarily a part of the subject of grammar, can be demonstratively proved by means of the true adequate principle of that subject, which is the mode of signifying. Since this type of demonstration is necessary and not contingent, government and construction are dependent on the modes of signifying and not on the will of the teachers or poets. This argumentation is, of course, only valid in a modistic context.⁸⁸

87. See Thomas of Erfurt, *Grammatica speculativa*, p. 272: “et hoc nihil aliud est quam applicare eos [sc. modos significandi] ad constructionem, congruitatem, et perfectionem, ostendendo qui modi significandi, quarum constructionum, congruitatum, perfectionum, sunt principia. De his ergo tribus passionibus determinemus.”

88. Zenders, *Com. min.*, p. 91v / Q i-v: “Queritur quid est constructio grammaticalis secundum Thomam. Dico: est constructibilium unio ex modis significandi per intellectum causata ad exprimendum mentis conceptum finaliter inuenta. Ista definitio est causalis, quia datur per quattuor genera causarum. Per hoc enim quod dicitur ‘constructibilium’, tangitur causa materialis, quia ex constructibilibus tanquam ex materia fit constructio. Per hoc quod dicitur ‘unio’, tangitur causa formalis, quia in rebus unibilibus unio capitur pro forma. Per hoc quod dicitur ‘ex modis significandi’, tangitur causa efficiens intrinseca et ‘per intellectum’ causa efficiens extrinseca. Nam modi significandi partium orationis sunt cause regiminis et constructionis. Per hoc quod dicitur ‘ad exprimendum mentis conceptum’, tangitur causa finalis. Nam sicut finis logice est discernere uerum a falso, ita finis grammaticae est exprimere mentis nostre conceptum congrue aut figurate cum lepore.

Arguitur. Dicunt plerique grammatici quod modi significandi non sint cause regiminis et constructionis, immo sola uoluntas doctorum et autorum consentientium talem dictionem regere talem casum et talem dictionem transituue uel intransituue construi est causa regiminis et constructionis, ut ipsi dicunt.

Ad hoc respondetur negando dicta illorum, que nec autoritate nec ratione sunt fundata. Et dico: Licet grammatica posituua, que est de impositione uocabulorum dependeat a uoluntate primorum grammaticorum, non tamen grammatica regularis, que consistit in regimine et constructione partium ad inuicem.

Contra illos arguitur sic. Sanctus Thomas et Michael de Marbosio et alii peritissimi grammatici dicunt modos significandi esse causas regiminis et constructionis; ergo modi significandi sunt eorum causa. Consequentia tenet ab autoritate affirmatiua. Ratione sic. Omnis scientia est uerorum necessariorum et impossibiliter aliter se habentium, ut dicit Philosophus *Primo Posteriorum*. Grammatica regularis est scientia; ergo grammatica est uerorum necessariorum et impossibiliter aliter se habentium. Sed consensus aut uoluntas primorum grammaticorum non fuit nec est necessaria, sed contingens et mutabilis et possibiliter aliter se habere; ergo grammatica in qua passionibus sunt regimen et constructio, non dependet a consensu et uoluntate doctorum et autorum.

Alia ratio. Regimen et constructio, que sunt passionibus partium orationis adinuicem unitarum uel unibilium demonstrantur inesse necessario subiecto grammaticae per

Does this imply that William was a proponent of modism? It is not easy to give an unambiguous, definitive answer. It seems as if William, as a grammarian, suffers from schizophrenia. On the one hand, as we have seen, he admires the Italian grammarians and urges his readers to imitate them: *imitari* is the very term that he uses. On the other hand, he is extremely critical of the modists and their theory. He argues that modistic doctrine is far too difficult for young pupils learning Latin: it confuses the young and dampens their enthusiasm rather than teaching them anything. This is especially the case, since, if we are to believe the modists, relationships of grammatical government are based on the modes of signifying of the parts of speech, which in turn are based on the modes of being of things, and they are the *chasse gardée* of the metaphysician.⁸⁹ Thus, modistic theory clearly exposes beginning students to ideas for which they are quite unprepared. The remark William makes immediately after the discussion of the role played by the modes of signifying in government and construction is even more striking. After stressing the importance of the modes, he rather coolly states that he would advise anyone actually wanting to learn grammar to ignore

uerum et adequatum principium subiecti, quod est modus significandi. Sed omnis talis demonstratio est necessaria et non contingens; ergo regimen et constructio depende<n>t a modis significandi et non a uoluntate."

89. Zenders, *Com.min.*, B ii-v: "Querunt aliqui que sit illa uis et causa per quam uerbum personale regit casum ante se. Et respondent fere omnes quod sit modus significandi dicibilis de altero tanquam de principio actus, ut uolunt Modiste. Sed ista res est multum difficilis et curiositas damnabilis, immo inutilis penitus. Ideo placet aliis dicere quod omnis uis regiminis et causa originem sumit ab autoritate priscorum grammaticorum, quibus placuit uerbum personale debere regere nominatiuum ante se sub conuenientia trium. Ideo sufficit pueris sic dicere in generali: Omnis nominatiuus a parte ante regitur ex ui persone prout per personam intelligimus conuenientiam trium, et omnis nominatiuus a parte post regitur ex ui nature, et omnis genitiuus ex ui possessionis, omnis datiuus ex ui acquisitionis, omnis accusatiuus a parte post ex ui transitionis, et omnis ablatiuus regitur ex ui nature dictionis regentis ablatiuum."

Id., E ii-r: "Si arguatur unica regula dicta nimis est generalis et confusa, dico quod nihil distinctius, nihil clarius dici potest quam quod omnia substantiua mundi regant genitiuum nihil excipiendo. Sed hoc factum argumentum est magis contra Alexandrum ponentem magnam regularum magnitudinem. Sed ubicumque est multitudo, ibi est confusio.

Si dicatur regula generalis non exprimit speciales uires regiminis genitiui, dico quod uires speciales obliquorum perturbant magis et obtundunt ingenia puerorum quam edoceant. Etiam uires regiminum speciales nimium pueris sunt difficiles, quoniam si Modistis credimus, fundantur in modis significandi partium orationis, et modi significandi in modis essendi rerum, qui sunt metaphisice considerationis."

them. Again, William explicitly tells his readers that the modes of signifying are difficult and obscure; from this he concludes that knowledge of them is unnecessary.⁹⁰ We may conclude that William had what the Germans call a *Zwienatur*: a strange, but in that period not unusual, combination of scholastic philosophical thought and humanistic love for elegant Latin style.⁹¹

4.2 William Zenders, *the via antiqua and the via moderna*

As I noted in the introduction to this essay, the linguistic universe was rather complex at the end of the fifteenth century. It is possible to identify three lines of linguistic thought: modistic grammar, nominalist or ultra-mentalist grammar, and humanist grammar. Furthermore, we have seen that the position that William Zenders holds is not clear in every detail. He is very enthusiastic about the Italian humanist grammarians and appears to have felt seriously dissatisfied with the modistic approach. On the other hand, he accepts the mode of signifying as a basic notion that is necessary for the explanation of grammar. This brings us to the question of his position in the so-called *Wegestreit*. If he does not completely reject the modes of signifying, is it possible to discover traces of a positive attitude towards the *via antiqua*? On two occasions in the minor commentary William sets the *reales* or *antiqui* in opposition to the *nominales* or *moderni*. The first occasion comes in the discussion of the vocative and its potential to supply the subject of the verb in an imperative sentence; the second instance occurs in William's treatment of the doctrine of the impersonal verb.

4.2.1 *The conceptio personarum and the Vocative Case*

We have already seen that William rejects the modistic theory of grammatical government or, at least, considers it superfluous for teaching Latin to schoolboys. In addition, however, it appears that he found it impossible to accept the modists' argument that every subject term must

90. Zenders, *Com.min.*, E ii-r: "Verum tamen licet modi significandi sint cause regiminis et constructionis, non tamen consulo grammaticam scire cupientibus illis modis significandi operam dare, ut eos sciant, quoniam difficiles sunt et obscuri et scitu minus necessarii. Sed, ut ait Tullius, cavendum est hoc vicium ne nimis magnum studium in res obscuras, difficiles et non necessarias conferamus, quales sunt modi significandi."

91. Cf. Haller 1927: vol. 1, 21, who talks about Johann Heynlin *alias* Johannes de Lapide (von Stein).

signify by means of the mode of the principle: *per modum principii*, which is exclusively applicable to the nominative case. A result of this piece of modistic doctrine was that, for the modists, a noun in the vocative case could not be the subject term of an imperative sentence.⁹² It appears that the *reales* and the *nominales* also disagreed on this point; the main battlefield was the doctrine of the *syllipsis* or *conceptio*.

Conceptio is one of the figures of construction; it explains the deviant character of a set of constructions that do not quite agree with general grammatical rules. About 1200, Petrus Hispanus (non-papa) defines *conceptio* as the combination of several phrases by means of one verb. He distinguishes between conception in person, gender, and number.⁹³ Although they are often used in ordinary language, sylleptic constructions are subject to strict rules. One of these rules is that a word in the second person may be construed with a word in the third person in order to supply the subject term to a verb in the second person plural: 'You and Peter run' ('Tu et Petrus curritis'). In this sentence, a verb in the second person plural is construed with a compound subject consisting of a pronoun of the second person singular and a proper noun of the third person singular. Both components of the subject are in the nominative case, but the pronoun is "responsible" for the second person of the verb, and the pronoun and the proper noun taken together represent a plural subject term in the sentence and are responsible for the verb being in the plural. Although this construction is not formed according

92. Zenders, *Com.min.*, Ciii-v: "Queritur terciò utrum uocatiuus posset reddere suppositum uerbo. Dico non. Probatum quod secundum Modistas omne suppositum debet significare per modum principii ut quod est alterum. Sed uocatiuus non significat per modum principii ut quod est alterum, quia hoc soli nominatiuo conuenit. Secunda ratio, quia si uocatiuus redderet suppositum, tunc regeretur a uerbo. Sed hoc est falsum, quoniam uocatiuus semper ponitur absolute; quod probo autoritate Greciste 'Tu semper quantum debes absoluere casum' [*Graecism.* XXVII, 36]. Secundo autoritate Floriste 'Accipias quantum tu quemlibet esse solutum / Et non dicatur quod ab ulla parte regatur'.

Contra. Vocatiuus regitur ab aduerbio uocandi 'o', ut 'o Petre, salue'. Dico quod bene construitur cum aduerbio uocandi 'o', sed non regitur ab eo. Ita bene construitur cum uerbo secunde persone, sed non regitur ab illo. Ista materia magis est curiosa quam necessaria. Quibus tamen opere precium est scire ad longum, uideant in opere maiori."

93. Cf. Petrus Hispanus (non-papa), '*Absoluta cuiuslibet*', 51-53: "Silempsis est diuersarum clausularum per unum uerbum conglutinata conceptio. ... Conceptio alia est in personis, alia in generibus, alia in numeris consideratur. ... 'ego et tu legimus' ... 'iste homo et hec mulier sunt albi' ... 'hic illius arma, hic currus fuit'."

to the strict rules of grammar, it was accepted as congruous, albeit figurative, and its grammaticality was derived from the rule mentioned above. Problems, however, arise as soon as it is asked whether a word in the vocative case, which is always a word in the second person, might make a *conceptio* with a word in the third person. The sentence used to illustrate the problem was the invocation: ‘*O Sacer Dionisi cum sociis tuis, orate pro nobis*’. Alexander de Villa Dei tried to solve this difficulty by saying that the *conceptio* of persons is not brought about by a word in the vocative case “si vocativus desit”.⁹⁴ This, in fact, created a new problem, for what does “si vocativus desit” mean here? William Zenders’ text shows that the *moderni*, on the one hand, and the *antiqui* or *reales*, on the other, fundamentally disagreed over how to interpret Alexander’s words, the disagreement hinging on the interpretation of the word ‘si’. The *moderni* interpret ‘si’ to mean the conditional conjunction ‘if’, and the phrase would be rendered as “if the vocative is absent”. In contrast, the *antiqui* attributed a causal meaning to the ‘si’, resulting in “because the vocative fails [sc. to supply the *suppositum*]”.⁹⁵ This had the following results. According to the *moderni*, it is not possible to have *conceptio* in a sentence if the *concipiens*, being a word in the vocative case, is missing. The *antiqui* or *reales*, on the other hand, will accept no *conceptio* whatsoever by means of a word in the vocative case.

In contrast to the *antiqui*, then, the *moderni* do accept that a word in the vocative case can be the subject term of a sentence. Consequently, they have only to solve the problem of the word conceived in the oblique case. Since the *moderni* viewed any expressed vocative as a *concipiens*, the *conceptio* in the example sentence given above is a *conceptio explicita*. Furthermore, the *conceptio* takes place by means of the

94. Alexander de Villa Dei, *Doctrinale*, 1107-1108: “si quintus desit: tu, Petre, tuique rogate; / cumque tuis sociis, orate, sacer Dionysi.”

95. Zenders, *Com. minus*, Ciii-r: “Hic remouet autor dubium. Supra dictum est quod secunda persona concipit terciam. Et quia omnis uocatiuus est secunde persone, dubitaret quis an per uocatiuum possit fieri conceptio personarum. Hoc dubium soluit multum obscure dicens: Conceptio personarum non fit per uocatiuum, si uocatiuus desit. Hoc potest exponi dupliciter. Vno modo ‘si’ exponitur condicionaliter. Tunc sensus est: Conceptio personarum non fit per uocatiuum, si uocatiuus desit, idest non ponatur in oratione. Ita exponunt moderni. Alio modo exponitur ‘si’ causaliter. Et tunc sensus est: Conceptio non fit per uocatiuum, si, idest quia, uocatiuus desit a reditione suppositi. Et ita exponunt antiqui reales.”

preposition ‘cum’ and an ablative phrase: this causes a *conceptio indirecta*.⁹⁶ Although William does not mention it, the reason for the solution that the *moderni* adduce must be sought in the predominance of mental language in their view. They convert the preposition and the noun phrase in the oblique case into a conjunction and a nominative case in mental language. The representation of it in spoken language is completely “ad placitum” and according to the “ad placitum” rules of the individual languages. The master Marcilius of the Erfurt *Doctrinale* commentary employs the term ‘usus’ to describe this process.⁹⁷ To the *moderni*, this phenomenon of spoken language is, therefore, entirely “ad placitum”. Master Marcilius reminds us: “in mental language a *figura constructionis* does not exist.” The *figurae constructionis* belong to spoken and written language.⁹⁸ How the *Nominales* actually explained the difference between the nominative case and the vocative case at the level of mental language is not clear in every detail. Further research has to be done on this matter, but we can at least observe that the nominative case and the vocative case were rather similar for them,

96. Zenders, *Com.min.*, Ciii-r: “Queritur an ista sit congrua: ‘O, sacer Dionisi cum sociis tuis, orate’. Ad hoc dico primo secundum uiam modernorum, qui tenent uocatiuum posse reddere suppositum, quod non est simpliciter congrua, sed figuratiue per conceptionem explicitam indirectam. Et hoc declarant sic: Nam ibi est illa secunda persona ‘sacer Dionisi’ et concipit terciam personam, scilicet ‘sociis tuis’ ad uerbum pluralis numeri secunde persone, scilicet ‘orate’, quod conformat se cum persona concipiente et non concepta.”

97. Magister Marcilius, Q. IX, art. 2, Erfurt, CA 4^o, 70 A, f. 115^{rb}: “ut hic ‘ego cum Petro gaudemus’ usu ‘cum’ pro ‘et’, ‘Petro’ pro ‘Petrus’ positum dicis.” Master Marcilius, who does not use the terms *conceptio directa / indirecta*, speaks of *conceptio explicita* and *implicita* in those case where William uses the terms ‘directa’ and ‘indirecta’; cf. id., Q. IX, f. 115^{rb}: “Tercium dubium. Quotuplex est concepcio personarum? Ad quod respondetur secundum communem modum quod duplex est, puta explicita, implicita. Explicita, ubi persona concipiens et concepta explicite sub eodem casu exprimuntur, ut ‘ego et tu damus’; implicate, ubi sub diuersis casibus exprimuntur, licet sub eodem casu exprimantur implicate, ut hic ‘ego cum Petro gaudemus’, ubi ‘cum’ pro ‘et’ et ‘Petro’ pro ‘Petrus’ positum dicis.”

98. Magister Marcilius, Q. VI, art. 2, Erfurt, CA 4^o, 70 A, f. 108^{va}: “Secunda suppositio: nulla oratio mentalis est figura constructionis. Probat: omnis oratio mentalis est conceptus naturaliter representantes. Patet satis tercio *De anima*. Vel ergo illi conceptus representant intelligibilem sensum uel non. Si sic, oratio est tota congrua. Si non, tunc representant inintelligibilem sensum, et per consequens ipsa est incongrua. Ex isto sequitur corollarie quod omnis figura constructionis est oratio uocalis uel scripta. Patet corollarium de se.”

both being “casus recti”. Moreover, in nominalist or rather ultra-mentalistic writings, the vocative is accepted as the proper case of the *suppositum* of a verb in the imperative mood.⁹⁹

A more serious difficulty arose for the *reales*. On their theory they could not accept a noun in the vocative case as a subject term. For them, a noun in the vocative does not have the mode of signifying the principle, which nevertheless is required for a word to signify the *suppositum*.¹⁰⁰ Some of them¹⁰¹ proposed the acceptance of a *conceptio implicita* and *indirecta*,¹⁰² but this solution was rejected by Zenders as well as by other grammarians, since it would result in incongruous sen-

99. Magister Marcilius, Q. XXVIII, art. 2, dub., Erfurt, CA 4^o, 70 A, f. 152^{vb}: “Alio modo ut significat rem prout illi aliquid imperatur, et ita uidetur michi quod capitur, quando reddit suppositum uerbo imperatiui modi, ut dicendo ‘Petre lege’.

... Et pro isto dubio incidentaliter solet dubitari utrum ista est congrua ‘Petre esto bonus’. Et communis gramatica dicit quod sic. Sed quidam dicunt quod ista non est congrua, nisi subintelligatur ille nominatiuus ‘tu’, quia alias esset hic Latinitas contra illam regulam ‘horum consimiles debet coniungere casus / copula personam dum pertineant ad eandem’ [*Doctr.* 1079-80]. Alii dicunt quod ipsa [sc. ‘Petre esto bonus’] est congrua sicut iacet [*i.e. sine subintellectione huius uocatiui ‘tu’*], et quod uocatiuus casus et nominatiuus casus sunt similes casus, quia ambo uocantur recti et ualde uicinum modum significandi habent, et propter hoc gramatica in pluribus nominatiuo et uocatiuo tradidit similem terminacionem.”

See also the definition of the case upheld by the *Moderni* according to Erhard Knab in his commentary on Donatus, BAV, ms. Pal. lat. 1589, f. 231^{vb}-32^{ra}: “Moderni autem diffinientes casum similiter dicunt: [232ra] est dictio significans recte uel oblique. Nominatiuus et uocatiuus secundum eos significant recte, obliqui autem oblique.

Recte autem significare est significare non per modum cuius, cui, quem uel a quo. Vel sic: est significare aliquid, aliqua uel aliquo modo eo modo quo recte res nominatur aut uocatur non superaddito modo ut cuius, cui, quem uel a quo.” For this Heidelberg master, cf. Kaczmarek 2000.

100. We find this view also attributed to the *Modistae* by Erhard Knab, ms. Pal. lat. 1589, f. 231^{vb}: “propter quod uocatiuus dicitur proprius casus excitationis, et quia sic significat, dicunt Modiste quod non reddit suppositum uerbo.”
101. Zenders, *Com. min.*, Ciii-r: “Sed secundum antiquos et reales, qui tenent quod uocatiuus non possit reddere suppositum, dicunt aliqui quod ibi est conceptio personarum implicita et indirecta. Qua re implicita? Quia persona concipiens, scilicet ‘tu’ intelligitur. Quare indirecta? Quia persona concepta ponitur in obliquo.”
102. In a *conceptio explicita* the *dictio concipiens* is expressed, in a *conceptio implicita* the *concupiens* is not expressed. In a *conceptio directa* the two parts, i.e. the *concupiens* and the *conceptum* are connected with the conjunction ‘et’; the *conceptio indirecta* consists of a noun in the nominative or vocative case (the *dictio concipiens*) and a noun or pronoun in the ablative case (the *dictio concepta*) with the preposition ‘cum’.

tences like ‘O Petre cum Paulo disputamus’, or ‘O Petre et Paulus currite’. A special difficulty resulted from the fact that, in the latter sentence, the conjunction connects words of different cases. The result is that the *reales* did not accept the *conceptio* of persons by means of a word in the vocative.¹⁰³ We must be aware, however, that William does not accept the latter sentence either, since he holds that not every second-person noun is capable of causing a *conceptio*.¹⁰⁴

The decisive question is, however, whether a noun in the vocative case can act as subject term of a personal verb. William adduces the opinion of the *modistae* who, as we have already seen, answered negatively: the vocative case does not signify by means of the mode of principle, necessary for the *suppositum* (see above at n. 92). Moreover, if a word in the vocative case did supply the *suppositum*, then it would be governed by the verb; but according to the *Graecismus* the vocative case must always be used in an “absolute way”: “Tu semper quantum debes absolvere casum” (*Graecismus*, ed. Wrobel, XXVII, 36). A view similar to that of the *Graecismus* was held by the *Florista* (i.e., Ludolphus de Lucho): “Accipias quantum tu quemlibet esse solutum / Et non

103. Zenders, *Com. min.*, Ciii-r: “Contra. In uerbo secunde persone pluralis numeri non potest intelligi nominatiuus secunde persone singularis numeri, quia hec est incongrua: ‘tu orate’. Ad hoc respondent: Licet in uerbo pluralis numeri secunde persone non potest intelligi nominatiuus secunde persone singularis numeri per se et sine addito, tamen bene cum alio nominatiuo uel ablatiio siue (?) coniuncto, quia duo singularia copulata per ‘et’ uel per ‘cum’ equipollent uni plurali. Et ideo licet inepte dicatur ‘tu orate’, tamen apte dicitur ‘tu et socii tui orate’ uel ‘tu cum sociis tuis orate’.”

“Replicatur. Si per conceptionem implicitam et indirectam hec esset congrua ‘O sacer Dionisi cum sociis tuis orate’, ergo eadem ratione liceret dicere per conceptionem implicitam ‘O Petre cum Paulo disputamus’, ita et hic ‘Cum Paulo disputamus uel disputatis’. Ideo quidam dicunt quod non est ibi conceptio implicita.

Queritur secundo an conceptio personarum possit fieri per uocatiuum. Dicunt reales non. Probatur duabus rationibus. Prima ratio est: Si per uocatiuum fieret conceptio personarum, tunc aut esset persona concipiens uel concepta. Sed neutrum est dicendum. Probatur: quia omnis persona concipiens et persona concepta debent reddere *suppositum* uerbo, sed uocatiuus non potest reddere *sup/p.* 15v=Cii-v]/positum, quia semper ponitur absolute, ut patebit; ergo per uocatiuum non potest fieri conceptio. Secunda ratio quare per uocatiuum non fiet conceptio, quia si sic, coniunctio copularet inter diuersos casus, ut ‘O Petre et Paulus currite’.”

104. Zenders, *Com. min.*, Ciii-v: “Contra. Omnis secunda persona potest concipere terciam, sed uocatiuus est secunde persone. Igitur dico quod maior solum est uera de secunda persona potente reddere *suppositum* et non de omni secunda persona.”

dicatur quod ab ulla parte regatur".¹⁰⁵ Another explanation proposed was that the vocative is governed by the vocative adverb 'o'. Both answers, however, leave the question of the subject term and the position of the vocative case unresolved. William tries to escape from this aporia; he agrees with the *modistae* that the verb does not govern the vocative case, and he also rejects the claim that the vocative adverb governs the vocative case. The solution he adheres to involves the introduction of a novelty in this discussion, viz. the distinction between *regere* and *construere*: neither the vocative adverb nor the personal verb *governs* the noun in the vocative case, but it is *construed* with the adverb and the verb. There is, consequently, no government but only construction. For a detailed discussion of this knotty problem, he refers us to his *opus maius*.¹⁰⁶ A similar discussion is found in his *Lilium grammaticae*, although William does not mention the *moderni* and the *antiqui* by name in this latter text.¹⁰⁷

105. Zenders, *Com. min.*, Ciii-v: "Queritur tercio utrum uocatiuus posset reddere suppositum uerbo. Dico non. Probatur quod secundum Modistas omne suppositum debet significare per modum principii ut quod est alterum. Sed uocatiuus non significat per modum principii ut quod est alterum, quia hoc soli nominatio conuenit.

Secunda ratio, quia si uocatiuus redderet suppositum, tunc regeretur a uerbo. Sed hoc est falsum, quoniam uocatiuus semper ponitur absolute; quod probo autoritate Greciste 'Tu semper quantum debes absoluere casum'. Secundo autoritate Floriste 'Accipias quantum tu quemlibet esse solum / Et non dicatur quod ab ulla parte regatur.'"

106. Zenders, *Com. min.*, Ciii-v: "Contra. Vocatiuus regitur ab aduerbio uocandi 'o', ut 'o Petre, salue'. Dico quod bene construitur cum aduerbio uocandi 'o', sed non regitur ab eo. Ita bene construitur cum uerbo secunde persone, sed non regitur ab illo. Ista materia magis est curiosa quam necessaria. Quibus tamen opere precium est scire ad longum, uideant in opere maiori."

107. Zenders, *Lilium*, B 1-r: "Regula de uocatiuo casu. 'O Petre, lege, stude, ora', 'Pamphile, salue, uale', 'Salue, sancta parens', 'Auete, uos fideles anime', 'O charissimi, uigilate', 'O amici, iuate'.

Sunt congrue? Dico quod sic, quoniam omnis uocatiuus uult construi explicite uel implicite cum aduerbio uocandi 'o' ante se et cum uerbo imperatiui modi post se sub conuenientia numeri et persone. Et est hic; ergo etc. et ergo incongrue dicitur 'Petre, studete', 'Iohannes, orate', quia disconueniunt in numero. Et si queratur an uocatiuus regatur ab 'o' uel a uerbo secunde persone, dico quod de hac questione grammatici litigant et adhuc lis pendet sub iudice; non mea refert si regatur uel non, quia hoc curiosus est. Sufficit mihi quod uocatiuus cum illis construatur.

Quibus tamen placet, dicant quod uocatiuus semper ponitur absolute et pro illo habent duos autores, primo Grecismum dicentem 'Tu semper quantum debes absoluere casum'. Secundo habent pro autore Floristam, qui ait 'Accipias quantum tu quemlibet esse solum / et non dicatur quod ab ulla parte regatur'."

4.2.2 *The antiqui and the moderni and the Impersonal Verb*

William Zenders tells us that the *moderni* and the *antiqui* also hold different views on the doctrine of the impersonal verb.¹⁰⁸ The *moderni* interpreted the term ‘impersonal’ to mean “very personal”, whereas the *antiqui* stuck to the traditional view and took *in-* to be privative. To them ‘impersonal’ meant “personless”.¹⁰⁹

Here again two completely different underlying conceptions of language are in play. The *moderni* argue that an impersonal verb contains all three persons, but in a confused way. The person or *personalitas* (the term used by William) is determined by the added word; for instance, the impersonal verb ‘placet’ is determined by the dative cases ‘mihi, tibi, sibi or Petro’. This approach is an obvious one for the *moderni*, since, as we have seen, they entirely subordinated spoken to mental language. In their view, the strange and deviant “mihi placet” construction of spoken language is a particular and “ad placitum” rendering of a “normal” personal construction at the level of mental language. Against this view, William objects that everything grasped by our mind can be expressed in a grammatically correct way: if that were not so, grammar would be imperfect. It is possible to conceive of the act of a verb without an acting subject; therefore, a verb can be expressed without a subject term.¹¹⁰

108. Zenders, *Com. min.*, J vi-r: “Queritur et hoc pro curiosis utrum uerbum impersonale posset regere casum uel suppositum ante se. Dico non. Probatur primo quia suppositum et appositum uolunt conuenire in numero persona et rectitudine. Sed uerbum impersonale non habet numerum neque personam, ut patet ex definitione, quia impersonale est cui non inest personalis proprietas ex comparatione actus uerbalis ad substantiam extra a parte ante. Etiam impersonale dicitur ab ‘in’ quod est ‘non’ quasi non habens personam.”

109. Zenders, *Com. min.*, J vi-r: “Ad hoc moderni respondent dicentes quod impersonale dicitur ab ‘in’ quod est ‘ualde’ et ‘personale’ quasi ualde personale, quia impersonale est omnium personarum confuse, et determinatur eius personalitas per adiunctum, ut ‘mihi placet’, ‘tibi placet’, ‘Petro placet’. In primo ‘placet’ est prime persone, in secundo secunde, in tercio tercie persone.”

110. This an old modistic position. We meet it, e.g., in Radulphus Brito’s *Quaestiones s. Priscianum minorem*, Q. 66: “Utrum uerba impersonalia activae vocis sint possibilia ... Dico duo ad quaestionem: Primo quod possibile est habere uerba impersonalia activae vocis. Secundo quod ex suppositione ista uerba sunt necessaria ... Secundum declaratur quia si supponamus quod quidquid est possibile mente concipi habet per uocem exprimi et significari, necesse est nos habere ista uerba impersonalia activae vocis, quia contingit mente concipere aliqua quae significant in ratione fieri disposi-

Here we see the direct correspondence between the level of concepts and the level of spoken language's grammar – not, however, the grammar of any particular spoken language, but rather of the principles common to all spoken language. Therefore, impersonal verbs were, according to William, invented to express the act of the verb without the subject.¹¹¹ That the grammar of speech must be perfect was not a claim held by the ultra-mentalist or nominalist grammarians of the late fourteenth and fifteenth century. They argued that mental language could exist even without spoken and written language.

Before we leave William, I have to stress that in his commentary we see the influence of the modists, the *reales* or *antiqui*, the *nominales* or *moderni*, and the Italian humanist grammarians. Nevertheless, William presents his text as a quite traditional, medieval commentary on Alexander de Villa Dei's *Doctrinale*, one intended for the instruction of the *minus proveci*. It is extremely interesting, therefore, to read this text, which is at its core based on the principles of speculative grammar, i.e. the modes of signifying, but which is also heavily laden with references to humanist grammar. William sharply criticises the large number of kinds or forces of government; he claims that the forty or so associated with the genitive should not be taught to schoolboys. It is obvious that they are superfluous for instruction in the Latin language, since the

tionem vel habilitatem alicuius ad actum sine dependentia ad aliud ex parte ante sub modo loquendi indeterminato. Adhuc ergo si illud contingit intelligi, contingit per vocem exprimi et significari."

111. Zenders, *Com. min.*, J vi-r: "Ideo datur alia ratio et magis fortis. Verbum impersonale est finaliter ad hoc inuentum ut actus uerbi exprimatur sine supposito sicut personale est inuentum ut actus uerbi exprimatur cum supposito. Si ergo uerbum impersonale regeret suppositum ante se, hoc est contra finem uerborum impersonalium, et iam impersonale fieret personale. Siquis neget uerbum impersonale esse inuentum ad hoc, ut actus uerbi exprimatur sine supposito, hoc sic probatur. Nam quicquid contingit in mente nostra concipi, hoc contingit grammaticaliter exprimi. Alias grammatica esset imperfecta. Sed contingit actum uerbi intelligi sine supposito, ergo et exprimi sine supposito; sed hoc fit per uerbum impersonale: ergo impersonalia sunt inuenta finaliter, ut actus uerbi exprimatur sine supposito."

See also A iiiii-r: "Dico: Omne uerbum personale finiti modi tam actiuum quam neutrale regit explicite uel implicite rectum, idest nominatiuum ante se sub conuenientia numeri, persone et rectitudinis uel regit aliquid positum loco nominatiui, ut 'ego scribo', 'tu scribis', 'ille scribit', 'nos scribimus', 'uos scribitis'. Quare dicis primo 'uerbum personale'? Dico propter excludere uerbum impersonale. Nam hoc nullum casum regit ante se, ut 'placet mihi studere'."

Italian teachers employ only one rule. Given this, why should anyone introduce more? Quite often, no less a figure and a work than Lorenzo Valla and his *Elegantiae* are quoted with great approval, and the same holds true for Joannes Tortellius' *De orthographia*.

5. Final Remarks

First, I hope to have shown that research on fifteenth-century grammar is important, perhaps not so much for our knowledge of the linguistic theory itself as for our insight into the main aims, concerns, and sources of the linguistics of this period of transition. Perhaps the late medieval grammarians did not make startling theoretical innovations in the field of speculative grammar, but they did consider linguistics to be important for the education of the intellectual elite, and focused on issues deemed indispensable for creating their own theoretical approach.

Ps.-Versor gives us a specimen of a late fifteenth-century use of the *Donatus minor* to teach the principles of grammar at a basic but not entirely elementary level. Unlike William Zenders' commentary, his *Resolutio* does not show any acquaintance or affinity with the humanist approach to grammar. Does this suggest that humanist grammar arrived later at the University of Paris than it did at German universities?

The discovery of this commentary in the Wrocław manuscript invites further research. It is indeed interesting that this text, attributed in the manuscript to a certain master Ga(u)nfredus, is called there "the Parisian Donatus". Could this be the reason why it was printed under the name of John Versor?

Ps.-Versor's text draws our attention to the widespread late medieval tradition of commentaries on Johannes Josse of Marville's didactic poem about modistic grammar. Despite the text's failings when seen from the modern linguist's point of view, the linguistic training of young students in arts faculties was entrusted to a tradition based on it. Why Ps.-Versor's *Resolutio* was named "Parisian" needs further investigation.

William Zenders clearly demonstrates his familiarity with the three main currents of linguistic thought in his time, and he appears to be able to combine them in his teaching program. Unfortunately, we do not, at present, have his *opus maius* or his commentary on Peter of Spain's *Tractatus*, but discoveries – like that of the Ps.-Versor manuscript – leave us hope for the future. Moreover, William's explanation, "secun-

dum viam nominalium”, of Peter of Spain’s chapter seven on supposition deserves our attention,¹¹² for he did not always adhere to the views stated in his sources.

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112. Zenders, *Com.min.*, J vi-r: “De isto uideatur in paruis logicalibus, puto in vii tractatu Petri Hyspani post textum ubi nos posuimus regulas secundum uiam nominalium de suppositione materiali quam Petrus Hispanus non ponit, de qua multum admiror, quoniam per ipsam fere innumerabiles saluantur propositiones.”

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