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OBSERVATIONS ON *GENUS NOMINUM* IN THE ROMAN GRAMMARIANS*

JAANA VAAHTERA

In the historical system of Greek and Latin every noun is of masculine, feminine or neuter gender. These denominations, as is well known, derive from Greek philosophers. Aristotle, following Protagoras, divided nouns into ἄρρενα, θήλεα and σκεύη (the latter alternatively μεταξύ), and also noted the necessity of agreement.[1] The τέχνη attributed to Dionysius Thrax presents the division into ἀρσενικόν, θηλυκόν and οὐδέτερον, and, besides these, into κοινόν and ἐπίκοινον gender (GG I/1 24,17–25,2). This is essentially the gender system that was employed by the Roman grammarians as well.

In Greek as well as in Latin the gender of a substantive is revealed only through the phenomenon of agreement. The fact that the gender cannot be inferred from the form or meaning of the substantive poses some demands on the discussion of gender in grammar. While the Greek grammarians used the article to establish the gender of a noun, the Latin grammarians resorted to pronoun agreement. The forms *hic*, *haec*, and *hoc* thus performed the function of ὁ, ἡ, τό.[2] Since gender manifests itself most visibly in the

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[1] See e.g. D.J. Taylor, "Classical Linguistics: An Overview", in: Concise History of the Language Sciences, Cambridge 1995, 94.

[2] Romans writing on language frequently note that there is no article in Latin (e.g. Quint. inst. 1,4,19). The term *articulus*, used for the Greek ἄρθρον, was, however, used of the Latin pronouns as well (thus e.g. Varro ling. 8,45). The grammarians may, in defining gender with the help of the pronoun, refer to it with expressions like *pronomen vel articulus* (Don. gramm. IV 375,14; cf. *ibid.* 372,27: *Latini articulum non adnumerant* [the citations of Donatus follow the edition of L. Holtz, Donat et la tradition de l'enseignement grammatical, 1981]), or *articulum sive articulare pronomen* (Prisc. gramm. II 141,10; see. *ibid.* 54,12 ff. for a discussion of article and pronoun).

agreement of adjectives and pronouns with substantives, and since adjectives are not recognized as a separate part of speech in ancient grammar,[3] it is most interesting to see how the grammarians accounted for the gender variation of adjectives. In order to do this, we must examine the treatment of the gender of nouns, *nomina*,[4] since both adjectives and substantives belong to this part of speech. The first question is thus how the gender system of Roman grammar accounted for gender variation in nouns; we can then ask how different types of adjectives were included in the system.[5]

Both the various gender types of Latin words and the fact that adjectives did not constitute a distinct part of speech posed considerable challenges for the treatment of gender in Roman grammar, assuming that the

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[3] It can, indeed, be argued that adjectives are not a part of speech in Latin, since, for instance, there are so many substantivized adjectives and since adjectives and substantives may, in Latin, carry out the same syntactic functions. Thus the difference between adjectives and substantives might not seem significant. These problems are proposed and studied by C. Kircher-Durand ("L'adjectif en latin: aspects flexionnels, syntaxiques, énonciatifs et lexicaux", in: Aspects of Latin. Papers from the Seventh International Colloquium on Latin Linguistics, Innsbruck 1993, 221–229). Kircher-Durand comes to the conclusion that adjectives are a part of speech: what is specific to adjectives is their "caractére non-autonome", because adjectives need the support received through their relational character, i.e., their characteristic of providing information on the object denoted by a substantive (Kircher-Durand 228–229).

[4] Terminological problems arise in a study like this. The Latin *nomen* includes both 'substantive *nomen*' and 'adjective *nomen*' and, consequently, 'noun' is used here as referring to both classes. In the present study it is, however, often necessary for me to make a distinction between these classes, and therefore I use the terms 'substantive' and 'adjective'. Whenever I do this, it is to be noticed that I do not imply the recognition of these classes in the source text, but use them as modern terms to explicate the argument. There is no equivalent for 'substantive' in Roman grammar; adjectives are sometimes separated from other nouns and on these rare occasions the Latin word *adiectivum* is used (see below p. 235 on adjectives). The *nomina* were divided into *nomina propria* and *appellativa*. This division is not without its problems: *nomina propria* include what we consider adjectives as well as substantives; and, more significantly, there is no equivalent to *nomina appellativa* in English since 'common noun' normally refers to substantives only. There is also another reason for not using 'common noun' for *appellativum*: the word 'common' appears in the study frequently, in connection with common gender. To preserve both the ancient and modern distinctions as clear as possible, I use 'appellative' for *appellativum*.

[5] The present paper is part of a more extensive study that, on the one hand, examines the treatment of gender in the Latin grammarians as a property of nouns, and the different aspects of gender considered important here, and, on the other hand, seeks to understand the functions that gender has in the treatment of the other properties of nouns.

aim was to create as comprehensive a system as possible. There were, however, other factors also affecting the conception of gender in grammar: factors related to the tradition of grammar and to the view of the relation between language and the world. From the very beginning of linguistic thought, there seems to have been a keen interest in proper nouns and more generally in words denoting human beings, or at least beings with sex. Thus, gender was interesting first and foremost in its relation to biological sex. In order to bring out the relevance of the grammatical tradition, I will discuss the *genus nominum* in its entirety, and examine questions related to gender variation in their proper context within the treatment of *genus* in ancient grammar. Donatus' *Ars maior* was the model and basis for generations of grammarians, and Priscian with his *Institutiones grammaticae* was the great authority of the later Middle Ages. In the following, I will concentrate on these two central figures, drawing additional material from some other grammarians.

Before looking into *genus*, it is reasonable to specify the role of adjectives in Roman grammar. Adjectives were generally discussed within the first property of noun, *qualitas*, as a subtype of appellatives. The discussion centred about the special nature of these nouns. Thus, Donatus speaks about appellatives that are *mediae significationis et adiecta nominibus*,[6] or *epitheta* (gramm. IV 374,2 ff.).[7] For Priscian, *adiectiva*[8] are also types of appellatives, but he discusses them in the treatment of the *species nominum*.[9] *Adiectiva*

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[6] The expression *mediae significationis* refers to the dependent nature of the meaning of these words; they do not mean anything alone, but only together with another word. For example Charisius and Diomedes (198,15 ff. B = gramm. I 156,14 ff.; gramm. I 323,2 ff.) use the expression *mediae potestatis*. According to Diomedes, *quaedam mediae potestatis quae adiecta nominibus significationem a coniunctis sumunt, ut magnus fortis.*

[7] The examples are *magnus* and *parvus*, and the character of these nouns is illustrated by the further examples '*magnus vir*', '*fortis exercitus*'. Donatus continues by listing different meaning based categories of *epitheta*. All his examples are in masculine gender, or in the form common to masculine and feminine.

[8] Donatus does not employ the terms *adiectivus* and *adiectivum* used by many other grammarians, although the expression *adiecta nominibus* comes close to these.

[9] This difference is due to the fact that the properties of nouns acknowledged by Priscian are different from those of Donatus. Priscian followed the Greek system of properties of nouns (see J. Vaahtera, Derivation. Greek and Roman Views on Word Formation, Turku 1998, 60, n. 226, 78–79): he explicitly declares Apollonius Dyscolus, and Apollonius' son Herodianus, as his models in the treatment of nouns (see gramm. II 61,18). Don. gramm. IV 373,3: *nomini accidunt sex, qualitas conparatio, genus, numerus, figura, casus*; Prisc.

are described by Priscian (gramm. II 58,19 ff.) as appellatives that derive from a special quality or quantity and are common to many. He explains the term itself as due to the fact that *adiectiva* are added to other appellatives that denote a substance, or also to proper nouns, to express their quality or quantity. This quality or quantity can be increased or decreased without destroying the substance, like *bonum animal*, *magnus homo*, *sapiens grammaticus*, *magnus Homerus*. Both grammarians define the *adiecta / adiectiva* through the fact that they are attached to other words. Neither grammarian presents the gender variation of adjectives connected to agreement as a defining characteristic of *adiectiva*.[10]

Donatus recognizes four genders: *masculinum, femininum, neutrum* and *commune* (gramm. IV 375,13 ff.).[11] According to Donatus, a word is of masculine gender when the pronoun *hic* precedes its nominative singular form (gramm. IV 375,14 ff.): *masculinum est, cui numero singulari casu nominativo pronomen vel articulus praeponitur hic, ut hic magister*.[12]

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gramm. II 57,8: *Accidunt igitur nomini quinque: species, genus, numerus figura, casus.* The property of *species* means the division into primary words and derivatives. Priscian, lacking the property of *qualitas* of nouns under which Donatus makes the division into proper nouns and appellatives, has to discuss proper nouns and appellatives, and their types (also called *species*), under the property of *species*. Thus, under the property of *species* we find *species* of lower level, like the four *species* of proper nouns. Donatus, on the other hand, presents the primary words and derivatives as just two types of appellatives.

[10] On the shortcomings of Priscian's definition, see Kircher-Durand 222 and C. Kircher, "La formation des noms en latin d'après Priscien *Institutions grammaticales*, livres II, III et IV", Ktema 13 (1988), 197.

[11] Not all the grammarians agree on the number of genders and the definition of the terms. Probus, for instance, acknowledges five genders, distinguishing *masculinum femininum neutrum commune omne* (gramm. IV 52,5 ff.). *Commune* and *omne* concern both nominative and oblique forms and their possible genders. Thus e.g. *magnorum* is an example of common gender between masculine and neuter. The gender of e.g. *gracilis* is *omne*, since it is said *gracilis pueri* et *gracilis puellae* et *gracilis mancipii* (*ibid.* 52,34 ff.). Probus remarks (ibid. 53,2 ff.) that *gracilis* is not only [*generis*] *omnis* but also [*generis*] *communis*, since in the nominative it is of common gender. A more normal division into *commune* and *omne* (e.g. Don. in *ars minor*, gramm. IV 355,14 ff.; Pomp. V 160,27 ff.) restricts *commune* to words with masculine and feminine gender, like *hic et haec sacerdos*, and *omne* to words of three genders, like *felix*. Charisius', Diomedes' and Consentius' systems (gramm. I 153,8 ff.; 301,4 ff.; V 344,16 ff.) are similar to that of Donatus in *ars maior* (Donatus, does, in fact, mention the term *omne* here too, see p. 238 below).

[12] In his treatment of the pronouns themselves, Donatus discusses their gender very briefly, stating simply that pronouns have almost all the genders that are found in nouns. His

Donatus defines feminine, neuter and common gender in a similar manner. The examples are *haec Musa* for feminine, *hoc scamnum* for neuter and *hic et haec sacerdos* for common gender. Diomedes and Consentius define the genders in the manner of Donatus, using the forms of pronouns as criteria (gramm. I 301,4 ff.; V 344,16 ff.). Priscian names the masculine and feminine without examples, but introduces the common and the neuter gender both with examples and with a statement of the respective pronoun forms. According to Donatus, both masculine and feminine are principal genders, or the only true genders, while the other two are derived from these (gramm. IV 375,19–21). For Priscian (gramm. II 141,4 ff.), too, masculine and feminine are the only genuine genders, for the reason that *genus* is said of those beings that can generate.[13]

Priscian (gramm. II 141,6 ff.) elaborates the difference between neuter and common gender by saying that the difference of these genders lies not in nature, but rather in the quality of the word (*vocis magis qualitate quam natura dinoscuntur*). This statement is followed by the remark that a *commune* has sometimes the meaning of a masculine, sometimes that of a feminine, while a word of neuter gender, as to the quality of the word, is neither masculine nor feminine. This is why a word of common gender takes the masculine or feminine pronoun (*commune articulum sive articulare pronomen tam masculini quam feminini generis assumit*), like '*hic sacerdos*' et '*haec sacerdos*', while there is a separate form for the neuter, like *hoc regnum*. Priscian obviously means that words of neuter gender cannot be separated from those of common gender on the basis of nature: a neuter word may denote male and female beings, as can a word of common gender. A word of common gender is masculine or feminine according to the denotation. A neuter word has the distinctive quality of being of neither gender, visible in the agreement as a distinct pronominal form.

After discussing the primacy of masculine and feminine gender over the others, Donatus briefly remarks that there is also a *trium generum*

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examples are *quis* of masculine, *quae* of feminine, *quod* of neuter, *qualis* and *talis* of common gender, *ego* and *tu* of common gender with three genders (gramm. IV 380,10–12). The corresponding examples in Priscian are *hic*, *haec*, *hoc*, *nostras* and *vestras* and *ego* and *tu* (gramm. II 586,4 ff.). Priscian discusses the gender of pronouns in considerable detail.

[13] Priscian says (gramm. II 141,5–6): *genera enim dicuntur a generando proprie quae generare possunt.* Varro seems to have given a similar explanation (explan. in Don. gramm. IV 492,37 ff.): *Varro dicit genera dicta a generando. quidquid enim gignit aut gignitur, hoc potest genus dici et genus facere.*

commune, also called *omne*, like *hic et haec et hoc felix* (gramm. IV 375,21 ff.). Donatus introduces next (gramm. IV 375,22 ff.) the kind of *commune* that includes in the meaning of one word form both the male and the female denotation (*sub una significatione marem ac feminam conprehendit*). This is called *epicoenon* or *promiscuum*, like *passer* and *aquila* (gramm. IV 375,22 ff.).[14] It is noteworthy that Donatus' exposition of the four genders does not include adjectives of two or three forms: only adjectives of one form have a place in the system. I will return to this problem later in the course of the present paper.

According to Priscian, words that are *epicoena, id est promiscua* (gramm. II 141,14 ff.) have only one word form and only one pronoun form, either masculine or feminine, but denote animals of both sexes (*vel masculina sunt vel feminina, quae una voce et uno articulo utriusque naturae animalia solent significare*). Then follows a remark on words of dubious gender: these are words that the ancient writers used in the gender they chose, without being obliged by any authority, like *hic finis* or *haec finis*. This remark on words of *dubium genus* does not strictly concern the *epicoena*, since with words like *finis* we move away from the world of natural sex: epicene words denote objects with sex, animals, as Priscian's definition of epicene gender shows. The nouns of dubious gender denoting inanimate objects are obviously brought up here as a case analogous with that of the nouns of epicene gender, in the sense that epicene nouns are also found in both genders in the authors, although the gender should, in principle, be fixed by authority (*'hic finis' et 'haec finis', 'cortex', 'silex', 'margo'. similiter 'grus', 'bubo', 'damma', 'panthera' in utroque genere promiscue sunt prolata*). Thus Priscian considers the *epicoena* as potentially of variable gender, and therefore similar to *dubia*, while Donatus does not refer to any

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[14] Some grammarians connected the difference between *commune* and *epicoenon* with the visibility of the sex. Servius explains the difference between *commune* and *epicoenon* in the following manner (gramm. IV 408,9–11): *commune est, ubi visu secernimus sexum, ut canis; epicoenon est e contrario, ubi visu non secernimus sexum, ut piscis*. He explains (*ibid.* 408,11–15) that the *articulus*, in the case of common gender, is related to the sex of the thing denoted while in the case of *epicoenon* it is based on authority. See Varro ling. 9,56 for on explanation grounded on practical reasons (for this passage of Varro, see e.g. W. Ax, "Pragmatic arguments in morphology. Varro's defence of analogy in book 9 of *De lingua Latina*", in: Ancient Grammar: Content and Context, Paris 1996, 109 ff.).

uncertainty in the gender of an *epicoenon*, although he calls it also *promiscuum*.[15]

After the epicene words, Priscian introduces words that have a common form not only for masculine and feminine but also for neuter gender and are called *adiectiva*, like '*hic*' et '*haec*' et '*hoc felix*',[16] '*sapiens*' (gramm. II 141,19). There is an obvious similarity between Donatus and Priscian: both treat the *communia trium generum* separately from those with two genders. Yet, there is a conspicuous difference between the two: Priscian states that *communia trium generum* are *adiectiva*.

Some words on the manner the Roman grammarians discuss gender may be in order here. First of all, a habit that does not attract any attention in the inattentive reader because of its familiarity: Donatus always deals with the masculine before the feminine. When he cites adjectives of three forms, the order is masculine, feminine, neuter. When he explains the gender of nouns ending in *-a* (gramm. IV 376,10 ff.) he mentions first the masculine ones, like *Agrippa*, then the feminine ones, like *Marcia*. Next come those of common gender like *advena*, and last the neuter ones like *toreuma*.[17] The fact that there are more feminines than masculines among the words in *-a* does not affect the order of treatment, nor is it mentioned. Why is common gender treated before the neuter gender although in the initial introduction of the genders it is placed after the neuter? Probably because it concerns masculine and feminine words, i.e., words of principal or proper genders.

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[15] Priscian uses the term *promiscuum* again when discussing nouns that end in *-a*, among which some *promiscua* are masculine in the old authors (instead of feminine), like *talpa* and *damma* in Virgil, although Horace uses *damma* as feminine (gramm. II 144,11 ff.). He does not use the term elsewhere. He employs *epicoenon* almost as sparingly: in the section on gender it does not appear elsewhere, but he uses it in his treatment of diminutive (gramm. II 104,19), where he says that *lepus* is masculine or epicene. Of participles (gramm. II 555,25–26) he says that nature prevents them from being *commune duum generum et epicoenum*. The other two instances of the term are in connection with *mus* (gramm. III 445,31) and with names of animals like *aquila* (gramm. III 473,15).

[16] Priscian gives later in the section on gender a rule concerning these adjectives (gramm. II 165,8–10): *adiectiva vero omnia in x desinentia, sive e sive quacumque vocali alia antecedente, communia sunt trium generum, ut 'hic' et 'haec' et 'hoc simplex', 'artifex'*. He refers to this rule still later (*ibid*. 166,2–5), when he gives the examples '*hic*' et '*haec*' et '*hoc pernix*', '*felix*', and another time, as a summary before starting to discuss other appellatives (*ibid*. 166,19 ff.).

[17] Priscian follows the same order of genders in gramm. II 143,4 ff.

Donatus does not reveal how he sees the formation of genders in words admitting gender variation. For instance, he simply states that *mobilia* ... *duo genera faciunt* (see below p. 242 ff.). There is no reference to the primacy of either gender in the expression. In fact, as we saw above, Donatus states that masculine and feminine are the principal or only genders, and continues that neuter and common gender are derived from both of these (gramm. IV 375,20–21: *nam neutrum et commune de utroque nascuntur*). Priscian, however, reveals that, in his mind, the masculine "makes" the feminine and the neuter (e.g. *'caupo' quoque 'caupona' facit and 'auctor' ... 'auctrix' facit femininum, sicut omnia verbalia in 'or' desinentia*)[18]. In a similar fashion, the masculine *facit* feminine or neuter forms in, for instance, Cledonius, one of Donatus' commentators (see below p. 254); in the *scholia* of Dionysius Thrax (schol. in D. T. I/3 144,2 ff.), it is stated that masculines ending in -ος, εἰς α ποιοῦσι τὸ θηλυκόν, οἷον Βυζάντιος Βυζαντία. Gender variation was thus comparable to word formation; the verb facere is often used of the process of derivation from a primary form.[19] In the case of gender, masculine was the primary form and feminine and neuter derivational forms.

Donatus' presentation of four genders is followed by a discussion of words of variable or uncertain gender, organised into groups (gramm. IV 375,24 ff.). The first group consists of words in which form and gender do not correspond. They are, for instance, *sono masculina, intellectu feminina*, like *Eunuchus comoedia, Orestes tragoedia, Centaurus navis*. Some of the cases mentioned by Donatus are marginal from the point of view of current language, like a *comoedia* named after a male character, or the comic name of a lady, *Glycerium*, used with feminine attributes but declined like a neuter both in Greek and in Latin. Others are more common, like the feminine word, *aquila*, used as a proper noun for a man. All these cases involve a contradiction between gender and sex, besides that between gender and form. The rest of the examples are words in which there is a contradiction between gender and form, like in *poema* and *schema* and in *pelagus*, coupled by

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[18] Prisc. gramm. II 146,12; 154,22–23. See Vaahtera 83–84 for an enlighthening example concerning patronymics.

[19] E.g. the formation of diminutive, Prisc. gramm. II 111,9–10: *similiter in 'illum' vel 'ellum' faciunt diminutiva in 'lum' vel in 'rum' desinentia.*

Donatus with a Latin neuter ending in -*us*, *vulgus*. This list is based on the presumption that, for instance, words ending in -*a* are normally feminines (thus *poema* and *schema* are *sono feminina, intellectu neutra*). This presumption is in contradiction with Donatus' presentation of the possible genders of words ending in -*a*, since there, as we saw above, he in no way emphasizes the feminine gender. Priscian's treatment of gender does not include a comparable word group, although many of the words mentioned by Donatus are discussed by him, too.[20]

Donatus lists also words that change gender from singular to plural (e.g. *balneum*, gramm. IV 375,29–31), and words with variable gender (gramm. IV 375,31 ff.). Of these, *cortex, silex, radix*,[21] *finis, stirps, penus, pampinus, dies* waver between masculine and feminine, while *frenum, clipeus, vulgus*,[22] and *specus* are examples of words of either masculine or neuter gender.[23] Donatus declares that there is uncertainty between feminine and neuter in words like *buxus, pirus, prunus, malus*, but the words for the fruit are often said to be neuter and the names for the trees themselves feminine. In Priscian's account we find words that change gender when the meaning changes (gramm. II 142,9 ff.): '*haec pirus hoc pirum*', '*haec malus hoc malum*', '*haec arbutus hoc arbutum*', '*haec myrtus hoc myrtum*', '*haec prunus hoc prunum*'. This, according to him, normally happens in the names

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[20] *Glycerium* appears in the treatment of the gender of words ending in -*um* (gramm. II 148,13 ff.; also 142,23 ff.). Priscian accounts for neuters in -*a*, e.g. *poema*, explaining their Greek origin, and for those in -*us*, i.e. *pelagus* and *vulgus*, in the treatments of words ending in -*a* and -*us* (gramm. II 145,1 ff.; 163,8–10). Priscian does not problematize the proper nouns like *Aquila* by referring to their feminine form, but simply states the existence of masculine proper nouns in -*a* in Latin, finding for them a correspondence in those in -ας in Greek (gramm. II 143,5 ff.).

[21] As we saw above, Priscian mentioned the words *finis, cortex, silex*, and *margo* as words of variable gender in connection with epicene words.

[22] The word *vulgus* was cited before by Donatus as an example of a word looking like a masculine but being a neuter.

[23] Donatus does not give any examples of the uses of these words, but in other grammarians the examples of variable gender are often from poetry. For example, the Virgilian use of *cortex* and *finis* both in masculine and feminine was commented on by many grammarians (see ThLL s.v.v. *cortex* & *finis*). In the poets' usage the unusual gender of the word is, in Renehan's mind, almost always a deliberate poetic variant (R. Renehan, "On gender switching as a literary device in Latin poetry", in: Style and Tradition. Studies in Honor of Wendell Clausen, Stuttgart und Leipzig 1998, 215). Thus, variants were taken seriously by the grammarians as well.

of trees; the trees themselves usually have feminine names while the name of the fruit is of neuter gender, as is the wood, like *haec buxus* of the tree and *hoc buxum* of the wood. Priscian thus presents almost the same group of words as Donatus and the same rule for gender determination, but makes it clear from the beginning that the meaning changes together with gender.

The interesting division into *genera nominum fixa* and *mobilia* (gramm. IV 376,1 ff.) is introduced by Donatus after the list of uncertain cases between genders. According to him, a word has fixed gender when it cannot be changed into another gender (*in alterum genus flecti non possunt*), as is the case with *mater, soror, pater, frater*. Mobile gender concerns either proper nouns with two genders (*mobilia autem aut propria sunt et duo genera faciunt*), like *Gaius Gaia, Marcius Marcia*, or appellatives with three genders (*aut appellativa sunt et tria faciunt*), like *bonus bona bonum; malus mala malum*.[24] Here we see again the important role of proper nouns in the treatment of *nomina*. There is a tendency to discuss grammatical phenomena concerning nouns first in the case of proper nouns, then in the case of appellatives, when this is possible.[25] Since there is also a tendency in the grammarians to consider only anthroponyms as proper nouns,[26] the form *Marcium* is not accounted for.

Marcium cannot be a proper noun, and therefore it has to be the neuter of an appellative, *Marcius, Marcia, Marcium*. And, indeed, Priscian's conception of similar formations confirms this interpretation. He states in the section on *patronymica* (gramm. II 63,6 ff.) that in the case of almost all the species of nouns there are appellatives and proper nouns of the same form: *ut*

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[24] Besides Donatus, the claim that mobile proper nouns have two forms, and mobile appellatives three, is found in Probus (gramm. IV 211,3 ff.), Consentius (gramm. V 346,18 ff.) and Pompeius (gramm. V 164,1 ff.). Consentius' examples of mobile gender are adjectives of three forms (gramm. V 346,14 ff.), but he adds (*ibid.* 346,18 ff.): *in quo hanc observationem debemus advertere, quod, si propria sint nomina, duo genera faciunt, ut Tullius Tullia; si vero appellativa, tria genera faciunt.*

[25] Besides these, we also find a strong tendency to use proper nouns as grammatical examples. To give an example, the masculine and feminine genders are, in the *scholia* on Dionysius Thrax (schol. in D. T. I/3 362,3 ff.), represented by Αἴας and Μοῦσα. Donatus uses *Cato* as his example in the beginning of the discussion of nominal case (gramm. IV 15 ff.). When introducing the genders he gives the word *magister* as the example of masculine, while the example of feminine is *Musa* (see p. 236-237 above).

[26] See Kircher 195 on Priscian.

'magnus' adiectivum et proprium, 'Iulianus' possessivum et proprium, 'Heraclides' patronymicum et proprium. In his treatment of *possessiva*, he cites *Martius, Martia, Martium* as an example of a *possessivum* with mobile gender (gramm. II 69,3–4) while *sacrarium, donarium* and *armarium* are *possessiva* with fixed gender.[27] Although this could seem only too obvious, it is noteworthy that grammarians, with the exception of Priscian, nowhere speak about neuter forms like *Marcium* in connection with mobile gender. On the other hand, neuter gender is generally easily forgotten: according to Cledonius (gramm. V 41,5 ff.), *mobilia sunt quae in alterum genus transeunt et de masculinis faciunt feminina, malus mala malum.* He does not mention neuter gender, but the neuter form *malum* is included in the example.

Donatus states that certain words have a gender between fixed and mobile, like *draco dracaena, leo leaena, gallus gallina, rex regina* (gramm. IV 376,5 ff.). He does not bother to clarify this, but the later grammarians do. Consentius explains (gramm. V 346,21 ff.) what is meant by genders that are not *in totum fixa* nor *in totum mobilia: transeunt quidem in aliud genus, sed alia quadam inclinatione, quam ut servent formam illius generis a quo transeunt.* The gender that is the starting point (*a quo transeunt*) is obviously always assumed to be the masculine, even when this is not said explicitly. Cledonius' examples of words not totally fixed or mobile, but partly fixed (gramm. V 41,6 ff.), are the familiar *draco dracaena, leo leaena.* He adds: *non facit draca.* These nouns, according to him, cannot have fixed gender, since feminines are formed from them, although not in a direct manner (*recte*). And their gender is not mobile, since there is no *rega* from *rex* or *galla* from *gallus*, in the way there is *docta* from *doctus*. Priscian does not explicitly place words like this into the system of gender, although he in connection with words ending in -*a* remarks that some of these words make a feminine in -*a* (gramm. II 146,9 ff.), like *leno lena.* He informs that *caupo* makes *caupona*, which means both the *taberna* and the *mulier*,[28] and adds that the following words are formed in imitation of Greek: *'leo leaena' vel 'lea', 'draco dracaena', 'strabo straba'.*[29] It is perhaps noteworthy that

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[27] See p. 246 for Priscian's conception of proper names.

[28] A similar statement is found in the treatment of the nominative and genitive cases, Prisc. gramm. II 209,6 ff.

[29] Priscian mentions them in gramm. II 209,6 ff. as well, and *leo leaena* is an example of a denominative in -*na*, gramm. II 120,18. The cases of the Greek models λέων, λέαινα and

Apollonius had no term for this kind of words, although he mentions the case of δράκων δράκαινα.[30] Apollonius' treatment of the gender of nouns has not been preserved, and what we know of it is mostly based on the *scholia* of Dionysius Thrax.[31]

The fact that proper nouns of mobile gender are said to have two genders, and appellatives three, has some consequences: substantives with gender variation are left outside the mobile gender. How would Donatus have defined the gender of words like *filius* and *filia*? Donatus' system does not, strictly speaking, allow *filius* and *filia* among the words of mobile gender, since there are only the two alternatives: proper nouns with two genders, or appellatives with three.[32] This would leave us with fixed gender: *filius* and

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δράκων, δράκαινα are clear: for *strabo*, the Greek model is στράβων, while *straba* is rather the feminine form of the adjective *strabus*, formed after the Greek adjective στραβός, ἡ, όν. In the *Partitiones* (gramm. III 478,29 ff.), Priscian declares that *regina* is *nec in totum fixum nec in totum mobile*.

[30] Apollonius mentions these words when explaining that nouns ending in -ων are either of common gender, like ὁ σώφρων ἡ σώφρων, or there is another form in -να, like Λάκων Λάκαινα, δράκων δράκαινα (GG II/142,20 ff.).

[31] Dionysius himself defines the genders in no way and gives examples only of κοινόν and ἐπίκοινον, citing the substantives without article (ἵππος, κύων; χελιδών, ἀετός: GG I/1 25,1–2). The definition with the help of the article is found in his *scholia*, as well as examples of all the genders (schol. in D. T. I/3 362,3 ff.). Lallot pays attention to how the *scholia* do not speak about κοινόν and ἐπίκοινον genders, but about κοινόν and ἐπίκοινον nouns only (J. Lallot, La grammaire de Denys le Thrace, Paris 1989, notes, 130). The fragments of Apollonius' treament of the gender of nouns are gathered by Schneider in GG II/3 59 ff. Apollonius' system of gender is explained by Schneider in detail in his commentary on Apollonius' *scripta minora*, GG II/1 fasc. 2, 23–25. It is perhaps useful to give a summary of the system here (for passages of Apollonius, see Schneider). Apollonius distinguished the following gender types in words: words that have one termination and one gender (= μονογενῆ), like ὁ τόνος, those that have one termination for three genders (= μοναδικά), like πέντε etc., and those that have one form for two genders (= κοινά), like in the case of ὁ ἡ ἵππος or ἡ χελιδών. What is common to all these is that there is only one termination, whether the word changes gender (i.e. the article changes) or not, i.e., the words are ἀπαρέμφατοι γένους διὰ φωνῆς. Another group of words consists of those that do change their form together with gender: these are γένους παρεμφαντικά. They may either have two or three terminations for three genders (= τριγενῆ), like εὐσεβής and καλός (although sometimes those that have two terminations for three genders are called κοινά), or two terminations for two genders, like Λάκων Λάκαινα, δράκων-δράκαινα. For the last group, Apollonius has no term, as was mentioned above.

[32] Diomedes (gramm. I 328,25 ff.) records a system of fixed and mobile gender that

filia would then be interpreted as two distinct words. They cannot be counted among words like *gallus* and *gallina*, since there the essential criterion is the considerable difference between the word forms. Yet, Donatus and his followers themselves reveal that although they claim three forms and genders for appellatives and two forms and genders for proper nouns in the mobile gender, they would place *filius* and *filia* into the mobile gender. This fact underlies the very concept of words between mobile and fixed gender. Pompeius (gramm. V 163,2 ff.) reasons that *frater* is of fixed gender, since there is no *fratra* and that *draco*, for instance (*ibid.* 164,5 ff.), cannot be of mobile gender since from it is formed *dracaena*, not *draca*. Consequently, if the feminine were *draca*, the gender would be mobile!

Priscian makes some distinctions within the *mobilia* (gramm. II 141,19 ff.) that are not found in Donatus. There are words that are *tam natura quam voce mobilia, ut 'natus nata', 'filius filia'*, while others are *natura et significatione mobilia, non etiam voce, ut 'pater mater', 'frater soror', 'patruus amita', 'avunculus matertera'*. Still others are *voce, non etiam naturae significatione mobilia, ut 'lucifer lucifera', 'frugifer frugifera'* – whether we speak of sun or moon or land or earth, there is no distinction in natural gender in the things themselves, only in the word form (*vox*), Priscian explains. Thus we have the possibilities of mobile sex and form, mobile sex alone, and mobile form alone. Some words are *quasi mobilia* (gramm. II 142,6 ff.). This, according to Priscian, is the case when feminines are derived from themselves, not from masculines, like *'Helenus Helena', 'Danaus Danaa', 'liber libra', 'fiber fibra'*. The fact that the feminine words are not derived from the cited masculine words is due to their having a meaning of their own, a meaning distant from that of the masculine words, he declares.

Priscian explicitly places the words *filius* and *filia*, and others like them, among the words of mobile gender. The fact that also words of different stems like *pater* and *mater* are mobile is explained by what Priscian says in another context. In a section dedicated to the *tempora* of verbs, Priscian explains verb forms in which there is a *cognatio temporum* despite the unlike forms (e.g. *'sum eram ero'*), through an analogy with nouns (gramm. II 418,3 ff.): *nec mirum, cum in aliis quoque partibus orationis hoc*

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significantly differs from that of Donatus. His mobile nouns are *bonus, bona, bonum* and *amicus, amica, amicum*, while the word pairs *Marcius, Marcia; Gaius, Gaia, draco, dracaena, leo leaena, gallus gallina, rex regina* represent words that are *nec in totum fixa nec in totum mobilia*.

inveniatur, ut cognata significatio in diversis inveniatur vocibus, ut puta in nominibus 'pater' masculinum est, eius femininum 'mater'. There follow other examples, among which are all those mentioned in the passage above after *pater* and *mater*. Priscian continues (gramm. II 418,9 ff.) by stating that *diversa significatio* is often found in similar words, and cites the words *'liber libra', 'fiber fibra', 'Helenus Helena', 'Tullius Tullia'* as examples. He explains that proper nouns are not *naturaliter mobilia, sed ex sese nascuntur*. Therefore the feminines (*Helena, Tullia*) are not formed from the masculines, but are *a se orta*, although they have a form similar to that of mobile nouns.

For Donatus, the whole idea of fixed and mobile gender is clearly connected with form, or, more specifically, with gender variation visible in form. For Priscian, there is no restriction to form. Therefore, Priscian's presentation of mobile and fixed nouns seems somewhat unpractical. Besides, he gives no examples of adjectives of three forms, which were presented as examples of mobile gender in Donatus. However, his use of these terms elsewhere in his works is quite reasonable. He employs mobile gender frequently to refer to gender variation in the noun or nouns which he discusses in connection with various other grammatical phenomena.[33] In the *Institutiones grammaticae*, the reference to mobile gender usually replaces the statement that the noun is an *adiectivum*, although there is at least one exception: in the section on *casus* (gramm. II 563,20), Priscian speaks of *adiectiva* as either *mobilia* or ending in two consonants. In *Partitiones*, he comments on both *medius* and *adversus* (gramm. III 481,6–7; 514,1–2) that they are *adiectiva* and *mobilia*, and states that all *adiectiva* ending in *-us* are *mobilia* (gramm. III 481,10). It is remarkable that the other grammarians do not seem to have any use for the concept of mobile gender outside the presentation of *genus nominum*. This is the case for Donatus, Diomedes, Cledonius, and Consentius. Pompeius speaks about the *mobilitas* of nouns in his discussion of analogy (gramm. V 198,6ff. 26ff.). He says that both the gender of the words compared, and their *mobilitas*, have to be considered. Thus, both *doctus* and *aptus* are masculine and mobile, both *lupus* and *lepus* are masculine, but they differ in *mobilitas*: *lupus facit lupa, lepus non facit lepa*. The kind of use Priscian makes of *mobile* in connection with gender is

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[33] E.g. gramm. II 69,3–4 on which see p. 243 above; the occurrences of mobile gender in gramm. II 86,15 and 94,26 and 556,26 all contain a specific statement of the endings *-us, -a, -um*.

found only in writers like Cassiodorus, who states, for instance, that the feminine and neuter forms of mobile nouns follow the *scriptura* of the masculine form, like *flavus flava flavum*, *albus alba album* (gramm. VII 192,5 ff.).

What is the role of fixed and mobile genders? They are clearly on the same level as common gender, since all words of common, fixed or mobile gender are also either masculines, feminines, or neuters. And all masculines, feminines, and neuters are of either common, fixed, or mobile gender.[34] All nouns of fixed gender are of masculine, feminine, or neuter gender, although examples of neuter words are not given by Donatus. Priscian, however, mentions neuter words of fixed gender, like *sacrarium*, as we saw above.[35] A masculine may be of fixed gender, like *pater*, or mobile, like *malus*, from which are formed both *mala* and *malum*, or like the proper noun *Tullius*, from which is formed *Tullia*. A feminine may likewise be of fixed gender, and also of mobile gender, although the grammarians would rather say that *bonus* is mobile than that *bona* is mobile.[36] The fact that the neuter gender is almost absent from the discussion of fixed and mobile gender most likely has to do with the fact that although there are neuters of fixed gender, and neuter forms in the mobile gender, the attention of the grammarians is in this context directed rather to the genders and words that have a relation to sex, as is the case with words of common gender. More generally, the grammarians seem in all contexts to be more interested in the categories of masculine and feminine than in that of neuter.

Donatus ends his discussion of *genus* by dealing with word-final vowels in relation to gender (gramm. IV 376,10 ff.). Priscian, too, explains gender according to various terminations of nouns (gramm. II 142,17 ff.).[37] Unlike

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[34] Apollonius' μονογενῆ correspond to *fixa*, γένους παρεμφαντικά to *mobilia* and the τριγενῆ especially to *mobilia* with three forms (the last correspondence is mentioned by Priscian, gramm. II 156,10; III 472,19). See n. 31 above.

[35] Priscian, too, talks only about masculine and feminine nouns when presenting the fixed gender, but elsewhere in his grammar he also cites neuter words of fixed gender: besides *sacrarium*, also e.g. *fas* and *iter* (in the section on participles, gramm. II 564,1 ff).

[36] In the medieval *Ars anonyma Bernensis* (VIII 95,22 ff.) it is stated that nouns of the first declension may be *mobilia*, like *opaca*, *nuda*, *aurea*, etc.

[37] Schneider (GG II/3 60,12 ff.) is certain that Apollonius treated the endings of different genders as well, since there are remarks on these dispersed in the preserved books.

Donatus, Priscian takes into account consonants as well as vowels and, furthermore, word final units consisting of two letters. His presentation reveals interestingly how he conceived the formation of genders and also how he saw the gender determination, often motivated on other than purely formal grounds. The motivation of gender is most often based on natural sex, but also, for instance, on analogy with Greek words. These matters cannot be discussed within the present study, but one question should still remain answered, namely that concerning the gender of adjectives with two forms.

As we have seen above, for Donatus *felix* is of common gender, *malus* is of mobile gender (and masculine) – what about *suavis*? We find the information that words like *facilis* and *agilis* are of common gender in the *Explanationes* on Donatus attributed to Sergius (gramm. IV 544,26 ff.). Here the context is that of *casus*: *non minus etiam haec forma in communibus nominibus is litteris finitis est, in quibus nominativus genitivus vocativus sociantur, ut facilis agilis, dativus et ablativus huic facili et ab hoc facili.* Here, however, there is no reference to the forms *facile* and *agile*. Donatus' contemporary Charisius states in his treatment of the third declension (30,1–3 B = gramm. I 29,20–22) that words ending -*is* are masculines and feminines. He gives first the examples *hic ignis ignis, haec puppis puppis*, and then continues: *communia utriusque generis, hic et haec suavis, hic et haec facilis.* He speaks here only about the form in -*is* and only about "both genders", masculine and feminine. We do not find the neuter form of the adjectives under the words of third declension in -*e* either (28,1–2 B = gramm. I 28,3–4), since here Charisius simply states that these words are of neuter gender, exemplified by *hoc sedile sedilis, hoc praesepe praesepis*.

Priscian does not consider adjectives of two forms either when stating the principles of the gender system. However, he reveals where these adjectives should be placed when presenting the gender of words with specific endings, as well as in some other parts of his grammar. As regards nouns ending in -*is* (gramm. II 159,16 ff.), he declares that, in case they are *adiectiva vel derivativa appellativa*, they are of common gender. If they pertain properly to human beings only, they do not make a neuter gender, like '*hic*' *et* '*haec civis*', '*hic*' *et* '*haec hostis*' ... '*hic*' *et* '*haec Samnis*' ('*aedilis*', *quia dignitatis est ad viros pertinentis, masculini generis est).* However, if the noun pertains to both human beings and other things (*sin tam ad homines quam ad alias res dici possunt*), it makes a neuter form in -*e*: '*hic*' *et* '*haec suavis*' *et* '*hoc suave*', '*hic*' *et* '*haec dulcis*' *et* '*hoc dulce*',

'*hic*' *et* '*haec regalis*' *et* '*hoc regale*', '*hic*' *et* '*haec amabilis*' *et* '*hoc amabile*'.

The adjective *suavis, suave* is thus of common gender. We may object that the idea of common gender is that there is one form for two or several genders. Of course, Priscian would not have said that *suave* is of common gender, but he does explicitly say that *adiectiva* like this are of common gender. Thus, third declension *adiectiva* ending in *-er*, when not used with a feminine form in *-is*, are of common gender, and the neuter ends always in *-e*, as in the case of *acer, alacer, saluber, celeber* (gramm. II 151,22 ff.). Similar statements are to be found in other parts of his grammar as well. In his treatment of the comparative, Priscian states that the plural of *plus*, '*hi*' *et* '*hae plures*' *et* '*haec plura*', is of common gender (gramm. II 89,5–6). In the treatment of the comparative in the third declension (gramm. II 89,9 ff.), Priscian says that these words are either *communia* and end in *-is*, and in the neuter in *-e*; or they end in *-er* in the masculine, and make the feminine in *-is* and the neuter in *-e*; or they are *communia trium generum* and end in *-er, -es, -ns, -rs, -x*. And, in the end (gramm. II 89,21 ff.), Priscian clarifies that all the comparatives ending in *-or* are of common gender and make the neuter form changing the *-or* into *-us*.

On the other hand, Priscian undoubtedly found it awkward to claim that a word with two distinct forms is of common gender. Thus, when discussing derivatives in *-aris*, a subgroup of derivatives in *-is*, Priscian explains first (gramm. II 132,24 ff.) how, or according to which rules, the ending is connected to the genitive of the primary word, and gives examples of the derivational process, these being of the type '*populus, populi popularis*'. After these, he abruptly asserts (gramm. II 133,6–7): *sic etiam neutra in* '*are*' *finita*: '*velum veli velare*'. Priscian does not speak explicitly about adjectives in this passage. He simply adds the remark on derivatives ending in *-e* after the list of derivatives ending in *-aris*. It is noteworthy that the example is not e.g. *populare*. The neuter *velare* is here explained as formed from the genitive of *velum*, in the manner of the forms in *-aris*. Yet, in an earlier passage (gramm. II 121,7 ff.) Priscian had stated that derivatives in *-e* often derive from words of common gender ending in *-is*: *pleraque a communibus in* '*is*' *terminantibus nascuntur*. In the passage on derivatives in *-aris* it is left for the reader to know that *velare* is related to a form of common gender, *velaris*. In the case of derivatives ending in *-ensis* (gramm.

II 133,9 ff.), Priscian does not mention that the derivatives are adjectives with two forms (i.e., of common gender): there is no reference to gender at all and the neuter in -*ense* is not mentioned. The reason why Priscian does not always make the connection between the two forms in these adjectives is undoubtedly the fact that these adjectives do not fit well into the gender system. The first form is clearly of common gender, and since the second form cannot very well be given an autonomous status, the whole adjective has to be called of common gender, although Priscian rather avoided this statement.

<div align="center">*   *   *</div>

Since there was no obligation to discuss gender systematically both in the case of substantives and in that of adjectives, the latter appear in the gender system only insofar as their type fits well into the system, as is the case of adjectives with one form. Adjectives with two forms are left out of consideration in Donatus, while Charisius provides the information that *facilis* is of common gender but says nothing of *facile*. The lack of interest in the neuter gender and in the neuter forms of nouns with gender variation made omissions like this easy. Adjectives of three forms appear in the division of genders into fixed and mobile, but the grammarians do not use the concept of mobile gender elsewhere in their discussion of nouns. Gender variation is, on the whole, poorly accounted for. Substantives receive the main attention in discussions of gender, and thus common gender is accepted as one of the standard four genders and appears repeatedly in grammars. Priscian, however, makes frequent use of the *genus mobile*, since he takes gender variation into consideration in his discussion of nouns, and *genus mobile* offers a tool to discuss it. He does not use the term *adiectivum* in all the instances where it might be useful, but in many of these cases the concept of mobile gender provides the information that nouns with gender variation are in question.

The case of substantives like *filius, filia* should not, as such, be problematic at all, since they fit well into the mobile gender concept. Yet, Donatus starts from proper nouns in his discussion of mobile gender, and states that they have two genders while appellatives have three genders. Consequently, neuter forms like *Marcium* are absent from the treatments of gender. As we saw above, this impractical rule was inadvertently overlooked

by the very same grammarians when they discussed nouns not totally fixed nor mobile. Priscian has no trace of these problems, and he firmly places *filius* and *filia* in the mobile gender. He also makes it clear, although not in his treatment of gender, that there are on the one hand proper nouns like *Martius Martia*, and on the other hand appellatives like *Martius Martia Martium*.

University of Turku