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Sanctius and Permanent Themes in the History of Linguistics

TOIVO VILJAMAA

1. Introduction

In the beginning of the seventies Aldo Scaglione (1970: 23—32) could not do more than establish the fact that in the historiography of linguistics the efforts of the Renaissance grammarians have been generally either misunderstood or neglected. In a similar way even in 1976 G. A. Padley (1976: ix and 1) remarks that there is a “scandalous gap” in the history of linguistics between medieval grammarians and the eighteenth century. Indeed, Padley’s book fills the gap very well. And he is not the only one to do it. After 1970 and especially to begin with 1975 relatively numerous longer or shorter studies concerning Renaissance Latin grammars have been published (see the list of References). The interest in Renaissance humanists was evidently caused by Noam Chomsky’s works from the sixties (particularly *Cartesian Linguistics*, 1966) and by the critical reactions that they evoked in the linguists. The question of the roots of transformational grammar stimulated interest not only in the seventeenth-century Port-Royal grammarians but also in their antecedents. In this connection the Spanish grammarian Franciscus Sanctius (1523-1601) naturally became the central object of interest, since the Port-Royal grammarians expressly mention him as their source. Sanctius’ *Minerva seu de causis linguae Latinae* was published in 1587.¹

¹ There was a preliminary version of *Minerva* from about 1562; cf. Bрева-Claramonte 1975: 51—53 and Percival 1975b: 258. In quotations of *Minerva* I shall use the 1714 edition (Amsterdam: Apud Janssonio-Waesbergios) by the renowned Dutch philologist Jac. Perizonius.

Because to my knowledge the questions raised up by the above mentioned studies are less known to classical philologists I shall discuss some of them here. The tradition of grammar is one of the most vital parts of the classical heritage; consequently the impact and import of the Graeco-Roman tradition is the central issue in studies concerning Renaissance grammars. My discussion of the matter also forms a kind of review of Manuel Bрева-Claramonte's *Sanctius' Theory of Language* (1983), which is the most extensive of the recent studies on Renaissance Latin grammars.²

2. Methodological remarks

In starting his study Bрева has been strongly influenced by an article of Robin Lakoff (Lakoff 1969), in which Lakoff also takes a stand in regard to Chomsky's views about the history of linguistics. In accordance with the questions raised up by Lakoff Bрева has taken for himself three tasks to perform, to trace Sanctius' antecedents in Graeco-Roman, Medieval and Renaissance tradition, to provide in English a synopsis of Sanctius' *Minerva*, and thirdly to outline Sanctius' grammatical theory.

Firstly I have some remarks upon the synopsis. It is almost imperative for serious studies in the linguistic history that they are based on original sources, in this case, on sources which are written in Greek or Latin. Translations may be useful for quick understanding but in single details they often are misleading and in any case unsatisfactory. Paraphraseis and synopseis may be worse because they are results of subjective choice and often tendential. Thus one can question the usefulness of Bрева's synopsis of *Minerva*. The attentive reader who compares the synopsis with the original Latin text will soon notice that

² Manuel Bрева-Claramonte, *Sanctius' Theory of Language. A Contribution to the History of Renaissance Linguistics*, Amsterdam 1983. — The book is a revised version of the doctoral dissertation from 1975. Bрева has considered the relevant literature appeared after 1975 but in endnotes and in the list of references only; on the actual text, and accordingly, on the revision of the earlier version these new studies, which are numerous indeed, have had little or no effect at all.

Breva's own opinion about Sanctius' doctrine of an underlying or logical level of language has had a considerable influence both on the choice of the parts that are surveyed and on the whole content of the synopsis. Thus the synopsis is a kind of an interpretative translation with the purpose of uncovering a certain theory from the text. This can be seen at the very beginning: Sanctius says (Minerva I, 1, p. 2) *Itaque nisi te totum inquisitioni tradideris, nisi artis tuae, quam tractas, causas rationesque probe fueris perscrutatus, crede te alienis oculis videre, alienisque auribus audire*. Breva surveys the passage in the following way (p. 97): "Unless one investigates thoroughly the original forms (causes) and the logic (rationes) of one's subject, Sanctius holds, one sees with someone else's eyes and hears with someone else's ears." Breva applies Sanctius' words *causae* and *rationes* to language (cf. endnotes 63—64) in order to show that they contain a certain theory according to which language originates in nature and is logical in its original form. However, there is no question about the logic of language in Sanctius' words but he advocates examining of language on the basis of judgement and reason; that is, *causae* and *rationes* refer to the study of language (*ars*), not to language itself.³

Another issue is the problem how the research into the history of linguistics is to be carried out. The historiographer must choose out of several procedures: he can choose a purely descriptive method, or attempt to form a conception of the discipline and then to follow its development in past times; he can also have a notion about the modern discipline and try to find out its sources in past theories (cf. Scaglione 1970: 11—12 and Koerner 1974). In recent methodological discussions it has been emphasized that the historiography of linguistics must be theory-oriented (cf. Robins 1974: 11—12): it plays a significant role in discovering and recognizing those permanent themes that have in the past determined the thinking and undoubtedly also have relevance to modern theories. The latter way of searching for basic facts or tenets in the past linguistic thinking is also typical of Breva's approach. The methodological starting point is then well established and has many advantages. But the notion of the most important themes must be based on proper knowledge and on correct interpretation of the past material. This means that the philolog-

³ More examples of the inexactitude of the synopsis are given in the following chapters.

ical competence is necessary. Furthermore, there are several controversial issues both in philological and in linguistic surveys of the grammatical tradition that may be hindering the correct analysis if they are taken as permanent tenets of the past thinking; one is for example the controversy of analogy and anomaly, another the controversy of nature and convention. Thus the student of the past development of grammatical thinking must be very careful in deciding what themes really were significant. Bрева has made the choice that the question about the origin and development of words, the question whether words exist in nature or are results of convention, might be the most significant theme in ancient, Medieval and Renaissance grammatical writings. Is it true? In the following I shall present some other themes that seem to be more powerful and more relevant in the light of both Sanctius' work and ancient grammatical writings, such as Varro's and Quintilian's. These themes are: (a) the definition of grammatical rules with reference to the goal of grammar (*finis grammaticae*), (b) the conception of grammar as a science by itself, as an independent branch of learning (*ars grammatica*), and (c) the search for the basis of the grammatical regularity.

3. The goal of grammar

In part I of Bрева's book there is firstly a sketch of Sanctius' life and a brief outline of grammatical tradition in Spain and Portugal before Sanctius. In general Bрева is right in making it clear that the models of Sanctius' theory are not traceable to some Iberian grammars. However, the Spanish grammarian Nebrija's influence ought not to be underestimated. Nebrija was the founder of humanistic studies in Spain and as a Humanist he also emphasized the pedagogical aspect of grammar. In fact, Sanctius says in his Preface that he sees himself as a successor of Nebrija in expurgating the teaching of Latin from scholastic barbarity. This meant a reinstatement of classical learning. It is a weakness of Bрева's book that he while dwelling on Sanctius' philosophy does not pay any attention to Minerva's important didactic and pedagogical ideas.

The consideration of didactic purposes would have been fruitful in explaining Sanctius' grammar and its rules and in answering why he so

strongly relies on Varro's and Quintilian's authority. Varro had said (ling. 9, 4) that "it is one thing to say that regularities exist in words and another thing to say that we ought to follow the regularities", and in similar tone Quintilian (1, 6, 27) that "it is one thing to speak Latin, another to speak grammatically" (cf. *Minerva* IV, 2, p. 535). Sanctius maintained that Latin cannot be learned through practice. His favorite thesis was: "Those who chatter in Latin, corrupt Latinity".⁴

The method criticized by Sanctius was a kind of construing Latin: the Latin of ancient authors was divided into phrases and idioms, into authoritative patterns according to which new Latin sentences were to be performed. But this was an abusive method in Sanctius' opinion: *Haec tam multa invitus congessi contra morosos quosdam, qui, quum in Grammatica rationem explodant, testimonia tantum Doctorum efflagitant* (*Minerva* I, 1, p. 6). The Port-Royal grammarian Lancelot, who closely follows Sanctius (cf. Viljamaa 1976: 17—18), describes this corrupted method more explicitly:⁵ "The second mistake some are guilty of, is that to remedy the abovementioned evil, they apply a cure as bad as the disease. For in order to enable boys to write not only according to the rules of grammar, but to the purity of style, it has been the practice to make them read books of phraseologies and idioms" (*New Method*, p. xii). Sanctius follows his ancient masters Cicero and Quintilian in advocating the stand that one cannot learn to speak correct Latin from grammar but by exercising style and imitating good authors (see *Minerva* III, 2 and *Breva*, p. 141). He holds that "grammarians are the custodians, not the creators, of the Latin Language" (*Minerva* I, 2, p. 9; *Breva*, p. 99). He rejects for instance a phrase like *ego amo Deum* as not being Latin.⁶ In his words *Neque sexcentorum Grammaticorum auctoritas mihi persuadebit, ut Vapulo a praeceptore, Exulo a Praetore, & Ego amo Deum, & alia huiusmodi,*

⁴ De Latina lingua comparanda, Objectio prima; in the edition of *Minerva* used here, p. 829. Also in this connection Sanctius refers to Quintilian's statement about the difference between Latinity and grammaticality.

⁵ Claude Lancelot, *Nouvelle Methode . . .* (3rd ed., 1654). I have used the English translation *A New Method of Learning with Facility the Latin Tongue* (London 1758: J.Nourse).

⁶ *Minerva* I,2, pp.9—10, not included in *Breva's* Synopsis.

Latine dicantur, however, the emphasis is not laid on the given examples but on the words *Neque sexcentorum Grammaticorum auctoritas*.⁷

Sanctius' attitude in regard to previous grammatical authorities is critical and uncompromising. He probably owes it to J. C. Scaliger, who appears to approve no other authorities but his own judgement and Aristotle.⁸ The attitude is also typical of many Renaissance grammarians who pursued a pedagogical renovation and censured previous grammars for including too many rules and for dealing with minutiae of language; they also appealed to Quintilian, who had admonished the grammarian to concentrate upon the essential.

The dichotomy of Latinity and grammaticality is crucial for understanding Sanctius' main tenets, especially what he says in first chapters of his *Minerva*. Unfortunately it seems that Brevia does not understand correctly Sanctius' ideas, since he interprets Sanctius for instance in the following way: "Sanctius seems to imply that, since grammar rules are made from the laws of nature, such rules represent nature and have no exceptions, except for a few corruptions" (endnote 67); but the matter at issue is the corrupted way of teaching or learning; in the passage to which Brevia's endnote refers (*Minerva* I, 2) there is no talk about natural laws but Sanctius criticizes the corrupted *consuetudo* of the bad teachers and grammarians who prefer their own rules to the rules that can be drawn out of usage: *auctoritas* (i.e. the grammarian's authority) *vero ab usu sumpsit incrementum; nam si ab usu recedat, auctoritas nulla est* (*Minerva* I, 1, p. 8).⁹

Brevia comments on *Minerva* for instance p. 202: "language although a science", and p. 204: "There are virtually no irregularities in language". His misconception of Sanctius' ideas is evidently a result of his desire to find in Sanctius' exposition a logical basis for language, i.e. a result of moving the logic of grammar to the logic of language. But this is not what

⁷ The matter in question is the grammarian's authority, not the Latin authors themselves. Brevia seems to confuse these in concluding that Sanctius does not base his grammar on usage (cf. e.g. p.206).

⁸ Julius Cesar Scaliger, *De causis linguae Latinae libri XIII* (Lyons 1540: Seb. Gryphius). For Sanctius and Scaliger, see Percival 1975a.

⁹ Sanctius seems to follow Quintilian (1, 5, 63—64): *auctoritatem consuetudo superavit*.

Sanctius means. In fact he warns not to commit the error of giving attributes of rational study of language to language itself: language may be irregular, grammar not. He recognizes, contrary to what Breva implies, that there are irregularities in Latin language: anomaly is *inaequalitas* apparent in Latin (cf. *Minerva* IV,1, p. 528; *Breva*, p. 167.).

What then means rationality and regularity of grammar? It is typical of ancient thought and also typical of Sanctius, who follows his ancient masters, to think teleologically, considering the goal of one's subject. Grammar is a tool for certain use, for learning how to speak and write correctly. Its goal (*finis*) is *congruens oratio* (*Minerva* I, 2, p. 13—14). Grammar is the foundation of language learning (. . . , *quae omnium aliarum fundamentum est*; *Minerva*, Preface; cf. *Quint.* 1, 4, 1—5). Thus it must be reasoned and as simple as possible so that those foundations are learned with ease and with the minimum of trouble. Compare Varro, *ling.* 8, 3: *Declinatio inducta in sermones non solum Latinos, sed omnium hominum utili et necessaria de causa*; and 8, 6: *ad quam* (i.e. the grammatical treatment) *opus est paucis praeceptis quae sunt brevia*.

4. Grammar is an independent branch of learning (*ars*)

Breva surveys the Graeco-Roman tradition of grammar as well as the writings of Sanctius' immediate predecessors, Linacre, Scaliger and Ramus, confronting them to Sanctius' grammar and to the theory that can be abstracted from it. Thus he is forced to state continually how some grammarian either agrees with or differs from Sanctius. In those places where *Breva* seeks for similarities or dissimilarities in theory it is mostly the question about the meaning of Sanctius' "logical" level of language, i.e. what is the meaning of the "deep or underlying structure" that possibly can be detected from Sanctius' text (cf. e.g. *Breva*, p. 238).

It seems that this main question can be divided into two parts. Firstly there is the problem of the origin of language and of its development and the question about the naturalness of language. But these questions are not important, as we shall see. They are less relevant to grammar than the question about the independence of grammatical science. The second part

concerns the regularity of language, especially the questions about the meaning and the basis of the grammatical regularity.

In interpreting Sanctius and tracing back his antecedents Brevia believes to have uncovered a new aspect in the history of linguistics (see, e.g. pp. 3, 25, 93, 203, and 236). This new aspect is that Sanctius analyses language as developmental process, not from a static standpoint. In Brevia's opinion, Sanctius' basic doctrine is formed by a theory about a past primeval stage of language (a historico-logical level) when perfect correlation between language and nature existed; this opinion could be traced back to Plato.

Before going into the treatment of the notion of *ars* I shall discuss the meaning of the development of language in history which Brevia labels a new aspect in the historiography of linguistics and sees a dynamic process in it. As for the interpretations of Plato, the concept that language was natural in its very inception and was later corrupted in its historical development, this can be hardly entitled as a new aspect. Brevia himself refers to several scholars who have interpreted Plato in a similar way. But it is a totally different matter if this can be said to represent the dynamic process of language production as conceived by the ancients. I take the passage of Varro (ling. 8, 1) interpreted by Brevia at page 29: *Cum oratio natura tripartita esset, . . . , cuius prima pars, quemadmodum vocabula rebus essent imposita, secunda, quo pacto de his declinata in discrimina ierint, tertia, ut ea inter se ratione coniuncta sententiam efferant, . . .* Brevia sees in Varro's tripartite division of language an explication of the origin and the history of language. This is, however, a misconception. Varro simply presents a tripartite division of speech (*oratio*) and at the same time a division of linguistic study.

The three parts, *vocabula (impositio)*, *declinatio* and *syntax*, are not sequential or in a historically hierarchical order but simply elements of speech that interact themselves. In other words, without morphology there is no speech, no syntax, and without words there is no declension. If there is something more in Varro's definition, at the most we can assume that the parts establish an order in the dynamic process of language production (cf. Taylor 1974: 12). But to say it again, there is in Varro's presentation no word about the history or origin of language. Imposition does not include inflexion as maintained by Brevia (pp. 29—31), but in

Varro's view, it is a dynamic process which starts from primeval words and creates new ones through *declinatio voluntaria*, so for instance in the case when different names (*Albani, Albenses*; Varro, ling. 8, 35) are derived from identical names there is an effect of will in the choice of the suffix, and on the other hand, when different names are derived from different sources (*Artemas, Ion, Ephesius*; Varro, ling. 8, 21) there is a voluntary choice of the referent. The example given by Sanctius is in principle similar with those in Varro which illustrate the role of human will in the dynamic process of language creation (Minerva I, 1, p. 4—5: Latin *fenestra*, Spanish *ventana* and Portuguese *janella*).

Sanctius seems to follow Plato in asserting that the relation between word and referent is rather natural than conventional: *audi Platonem ipsum, qui nomina & verba natura constare affirmat, qui sermonem esse a natura, non ab arte, contendit* (Minerva I, 1, p. 2). What does this mean? What is the meaning of *natura* and *ars* in this connection? If they are interpreted, as Breva does, that Sanctius maintains Plato's doctrine about language genesis and its development through history and explains language phenomena according to some natural laws that are represented at a historico-logical level, then we shall find difficulties in explaining for instance Sanctius' following statements: *Interjectionem non esse partem orationis sic ostendo: Quod naturale est, idem est apud omnes: sed gemitus et signa laetitiae idem sunt apud omnes: sunt igitur naturales. Si vero naturales, non sunt partes orationis* (Minerva I, 2, p. 16—17); *An nomina significant natura, an fortuito, magna quaestio est, et tota physica, nihil ad grammaticos* (Minerva I, 5, p. 32).¹⁰

In fact, Sanctius as a grammarian is not interested in the origin of words and not much in their historical development. The question of the origin of language is an etymological one, and etymology is not the grammarian's task to perform. In this also Sanctius' model is Varro: "The grammarian . . . , according to Varro, does not investigate the semantic value of words but their usage" (see Breva, p. 117). Naturally, however, Sanctius has the opinion familiar from ancient philosophy that language phenomena as well as their origin can be investigated rationally, because

¹⁰ Breva's survey of the passage is misleading (p. 104): ". . . ; although grammarians are not concerned with the whole physical world".

man is a rational animal. Evidently he borrows from Scaliger the definition of *ratio* as a human power that helps man both to create and analyse language.¹¹ The main point that unites these two grammarians is the effort to establish grammar scientifically, the point which also joins them to scholastic tradition, and ultimately, to the Graeco-Roman tradition. In the same way as Cicero (e.g. off. 1, 11—12) and Varro (ling. 9, 23—36) Sanctius defends the justification of rational study by appealing to nature, thus using physical explications. Rational study is possible and also natural, but one must not mix the study with the object of study. Therefore, if we want to find philosophy in Sanctius' work, it will be the old debate between the rationalists and empiristics. The permanent topic that is apparent is the controversy between study and praxis (*ars* versus *historia*, *techne* versus *empeiria*), to use modern terms, theory versus data.

Sanctius wants to emphasize the scientific nature of grammar: *Cum artem dico, disciplinam intellego; est enim Disciplina scientia acquisita in discente* (Minerva I, 2, p. 14). Here he follows the tradition of the Roman *ars grammatica*. Varro (ling. 8, 5—6) says: *Duo igitur omnino verborum principia, impositio et declinatio . . . Ad illud genus, quod prius, historia opus est: nisi discendo enim aliter id non pervenit ad nos; ad reliquum genus, quod posterius, ars: ad quam opus est paucis praeceptis quae sunt brevia*. For him, as for Sanctius *ars* means grammatical treatment (cf. Taylor 1974: 37—38). The same definition is in Quintilian (1, 4, 2 and 1, 9, 1) and it is also typical of Renaissance grammars (see Padley 1976: 8—11). Although Sanctius censures Quintilian (Minerva I, 1, p. 11) for dividing grammar into *methodice* and *historice*, in principle he agrees with Quintilian; the only difference is that the task of the schoolmaster was understood differently in his time.

Particularly in the light of the passage cited above from Varro we can understand why it is possible for Sanctius to say that words are not *ab arte* — since they suppose a historical treatment, not a grammatical one —, and on the other hand that grammar is an *ars* — a discipline which searches for rules and regularities.

¹¹ Cf. Padley 1976: 75; Robins 1974: 16. Brevia's comparison between Scaliger and Sanctius (p. 72) is erroneous.

5. Regularity in grammar

To prove his point that Latin ought not to be learned according to the authoritative rules made by grammarians Sanctius refers to the principles of Roman legislation (Minerva I, 2, p. 10): *Regula est, quae rem, quae est, breviter enarrat; non ut ex regula jus sumatur, sed ut ex jure, quod est, regula fiat. Quare extirpanda est consuetudo, quae legem habet reclamantem, quae potius corruptela vocanda est.* Correct interpretation of the passage is most fundamental for correct understanding of Sanctius' whole theory of grammar. Breva (p. 99) summarizes in the following way: "a rule is that which briefly explains a phenomenon in detail; not so that the law is taken from the rule but the rule is derived from the law. We, in fact, must discard the custom which has a rule expressing disapproval (what today is labeled 'exception') and which more aptly ought to be designated a minor corruption" (cf. also p. 215 and endnote 66). The summary is a telling example of the fact that proper analysis has to be based on the original. Sanctius does not say "in detail" but something that is opposite, naturally because grammar cannot be a description of all language phenomena but it is an abbreviation of them, so to say. Rules of grammar are useful and necessary for learning purposes.

Contrary to what Breva believes, Sanctius has the opinion that a grammatical rule (*regula*) must be based on usage, i.e. the rules of grammar describe an accepted norm (*jus*) and on the other hand, those customs that are against the norm are labeled a corrupted usage. The point is that the norm is founded on the common usage of the people, not on individual writers' style, as stated by Varro (e.g. ling. 8, 22; 9, 5—6).

In fact Sanctius' definition of grammatical rules and regularity is the old one and, as it seems, he closely follows Varro and Quintilian. Furthermore the definition is connected with the pedagogical purposes of grammar. Varro says (ling. 9, 3): *quod est nata ex quadam consuetudine analogia*; and (ling. 9, 9): *Nam vocabula ac verba quae declinamus similiter, ea in consuetudine esse videmus et ad eam conferimus et, si quid est erratum, non sine ea corrigimus*; and Quintilian more expressively (1, 6, 16): *Analogia non ratione nititur sed exemplo; nec lex est loquendi, sed observatio, ut ipsam analogiam nulla res alia fecerit quam consuetudo.* Sanctius himself refers to Varro in regard to this matter (Minerva I, 7; p.

43): *quoniam, inquit, Grammaticae propositum non est singularum vocum significationes explicare, sed usum.*

Breva finds in Varro “two types of analogy”(p. 32) and concludes that Varro’s theory is “an explanation of how language originates in history and how it has developed to the present status” (p. 28). In his opinion, Varro presents a theory according to which words were made first conventional by the human will, and then regularized by the nature. He bases his analysis on Varro, ling. 10, 53 and 61: *Qui initia faciet analogiae impositiones, ab his obliquas figuras declinare debet; qui naturam, contra; qui ab utraque, reliquas declinationes ab eiusmodi transitibus* (53). *Quare si quis principium analogiae potius posuerit in naturalibus casibus quam in impositiis, non multa inconcinna in consuetudine occurent et a natura libido humana corrigetur, non a libidine natura* (61).

There is a total misunderstanding of Varro in Breva’s analysis. He confuses the terms “nature” and “imposition” and accordingly does not understand Varro’s definition of the “natural” and “voluntary” declension. Indeed, there are two “natures” in description of human speech: one is the nature of things, another the nature of language. Of course, the ancients could also say that in a former historical stage language was more natural as men lived more natural life, but that “nature” is not meant by Varro in the passages quoted above. Breva’s error is caused, as I said before, by his desire to explain language as a result of a historical process. However, in those passages of Varro there is no question of the development of language at all. The matter that Varro deals with is whether regularity (i.e. grammatical rules) can be found by starting from nominative forms (imposition) or from oblique forms (nature) or from both.¹² There are three choices which indeed are not choices of an explanation of the history of Latin. In chapter 61 Varro does not opt for

¹² In Minerva I,3, pp. 28—29, Sanctius quotes Quintilian 1,5,65: *Simplices voces prima positione, id est, natura sua constant.* Breva (p. 102) explains: “Quintilian indicates that at their very inception (prima positio) words are made according to their own nature.” Also here the synopsis follows the wrong lead, because Quintilian’s *prima positio* means the same as “imposition”, i.e., it refers to principal forms of words, e.g. to the nominative in the case of nouns.

the first solution, as Breva believes (p. 300), that “inflectional regularity will derive from the imposed forms”, but he prefers just the opposite, i.e. that the natural inflection is the best starting-point to determine grammatical regularities.

The theme that grammatical rules must be based on usage might be called permanent one. It was just Varro and Quintilian who were models for Renaissance grammarians in this matter. Sanctius’ immediate predecessor seems to be Peter Ramus,¹³ who closely follows Varro in establishing that grammar is based on the common usage of the people.

6. Conclusion

Ratio and *usus* are the principles on which grammar is founded. Sanctius asserts this with emphasis in the first chapters of *Minerva*. They correspond to two of the above discussed themes, which often are misunderstood and conceived as conflicting each other. Thus others, as Breva does, emphasize the rational part of grammar and easily commit the error of thinking that the logic of grammar presupposes a logic of language. Others, particularly 17th and 18th century commentators of *Minerva*, Perizonus for example, emphasize that grammar is based on usage and heedless of Sanctius’ warnings commit the error of loading their grammars and commentaries with numerous examples so that simple rational rules are obscured and the learning of grammar is made tiresome work to perform. These two principles are not different in rank though they represent two different aspects of linguistic inquiry. They are best understood in the light of the first theme, in regard to the goal of grammar.

For pedagogical reasons grammar must be as simple as possible; and for reasons of the independence of the grammatical science only linguistic explanations can be included in grammar. Both conditions give Sanctius’ grammar a certain character of generality and universality.

Finally, the distinction of grammar and speech is important. In Renaissance grammars the main part is devoted to syntax. This phenomenon is consistent with the Sanctian conception of the goal of the

¹³ Peter Ramus, *Scholae grammaticae* (Paris 1559: Wechel). See Padley 1976: 84.

grammar: *Oratio sive syntaxis est finis grammaticae*. In accordance with the concepts of “grammaticality” and “Latinity” Renaissance grammarians divided syntax into simple and figurative. The former comprises the basic rules of grammar and the latter explains how we come from those rules to the real linguistic expressions. As in the simple grammar also in the figurative syntax Sanctius strives for simplicity. He accepts only four figures, *adiectio*, *detractio* (ellipsis), *immutatio* and *transmutatio*, those which were the accepted categories of linguistic change in the Graeco-Roman grammatical tradition.

The arrangement of syntax is a real innovation in Renaissance grammars. Sanctius took his theory of figurative syntax from Thomas Linacre,¹⁴ who defines two types of construction, “regular” and “figurative”. To be sure, the basic notions of the theory are familiar in the grammatical tradition from the ancient times on. It is particularly Priscian to whom Linacre and Sanctius are indebted. The main model, however, seems to be Quintilian, who says that almost everything is figurative in speech (9, 3, 1) and separates two types of speech (*genus grammaticum* and *genus rhetoricum*).¹⁵ Thus in their figurative syntax Renaissance grammarians made a section of ancient rethoric an integral part of the theory of syntax.

The existence of the simple and figurative syntax allows us to use such terms as “deep (underlying) structure” and “surface structure”. It also gives a justification to the “historical aspect” of language so often underlined by Breva: simple grammatical forms are more easily found in early texts thanks to their simplicity and thanks to the fact that language is in constant change. The most important part of the figurative syntax is the theory of ellipsis. It is built on two foundations according to Sanctius (Minerva IV, 2, pp. 534—535; cf. Breva, pp. 210 and 240): *veneranda antiquitas*, which serves for discovering and testing the rules, and *grammaticae ratio*, which fills the requirements of the general rules of grammar, for example, every sentence must be composed of a noun and a

¹⁴ Thomas Linacre, *De emendata structura Latini sermonis libri sex* (London 1524: R. Pynson). Cf. Percival 1976: 243—244.

¹⁵ Cf. Viljamaa 1984.

verb. In the theory of ellipsis the constituents of the sentence are arranged according to the general principle of creating new sentences (Minerva I, 2, p. 15): *excutiamus, ex quibus haec oratio possit constitui, ita ut nihil fit, quod per orationem non possimus enunciare. Sunt autem haec tria, nomen, verbum, particula.*

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