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The cover image is the so-called “Aarhus Mask”, a depiction on a runestone found in the district of Hasle in Aarhus. It has been dated to the period 970-1020.

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## The Inheritance of Classical Knowledge in Old Icelandic Grammatical Literature

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The present paper is intended as a kind of completion of a previous study of mine (1998) on the same subject. On that occasion I focused on the presence of references, both explicit and implicit, to authors – i.e. grammarians, poets, philosophers, theologians etc. – from the classical and early post-classical period in the four so-called Old Icelandic grammatical treatises (henceforth abbreviated OIGTs as a whole and FiGT, SeGT, ThGT, and FoGT singularly), deliberately leaving out of consideration the technical, viz. grammatical and rhetorical, vocabulary they resort to. Now, on the contrary, I will concern myself only with the latter aspect, in an attempt to fill the lacuna, albeit in a very elemental way.\*

Each of these works naturally employs a more or less extensive and articulated terminological apparatus, by which the various concepts of grammar and literary rhetoric are presented and discussed. The relevant question is: how much does the linguistic analysis carried out in these writings have in common with the much more renowned and well-established classical grammatical tradition, and how much does it differ from it? And, consequently, to what extent does the technical vocabulary appear to be influenced by this prestigious and authoritative model?

With the possible exception of SeGT, all of the OIGTs are deeply rooted in medieval Latin scholarship. No wonder, then, that much of the material dealt with in these writings is directly drawn from medieval Latin grammarians, who in turn were largely dependent on ancient grammarians, both Latin and Greek. Obviously enough, Greek influence appears, as a rule, to be mediated by Latin tradition, a fact which may in part account for certain mistakes and inconsistencies occurring in the treatises, such as the misspelling of some technical terms and, most notably, the misinterpretation of their meaning. This applies especially to ThGT and FoGT, which are the most intimately connected with classical tradition.

When technical vocabulary is considered, a sharp distinction must be made among the four Icelandic treatises. While FiGT and SeGT – two orthographic and, so to speak, ‘elementary’ works – show a terminological apparatus which is for the most part independent from that of classical tradition, ThGT (especially its second part, devoted to literary rhetoric) and FoGT are characterized by the presence of a considerable number of Latinisms and Graecisms, obviously due to the more advanced and sophisticated level of their subject matter.

A handful of examples out of dozens occurring in the four treatises will serve to provide a general idea of the structure and variety of their technical vocabulary and its varying degree of dependence on Latin and Greek models. The following progression is observable in terms of adherence to the classical terminological apparatus (in decreasing order):

(1) Some Latin or Greek terms are simply explained and described in Icelandic, with no attempt whatsoever to render them in the vernacular. They are therefore taken into the Icelandic text as pure loanwords (*barbarismus, soloecismus, metaplasmus, diaeresis, metathesis, cacemphaton, macrologia, tautologia, zeugma, synecdoche, sarcasmos* (ThGT); *prosopopoeia, emphasis, parabola, euphonia, climax, anthropopathos* (FoGT) etc.) or slightly adapted to Icelandic (*títull, vers* (FiGT); *sincópa* (in addition to the pure Greek-Latin form *syncope*), *trópr* (in addition to the Latin *tropus*) (ThGT); *apostropha, icona* (FoGT) etc.). This is the usual method in ThGT and FoGT, while only two such instances are found in FiGT and none in SeGT. Sometimes, comparable but seldom fully equivalent terms belonging to skaldic technical vocabulary are mentioned in connection with rhetorical figures. The most conspicuous instance of this is represented by *metaphora*, which the author of ThGT essentially equates with the skaldic *kenning* and some of its subtypes.

(2) Other terms, after being briefly defined, are promptly rendered with their Icelandic equivalent(s), if they exist, or ‘translated’ into Icelandic by means of one of the possible adaptation processes (mainly by structural and/or semantic calque): *diphthongus/diphthoggos*: ‘tvíhljóðr’, *schema lexeos*: ‘skrúð máls eða ræðu’, *periphrasis* ‘umkringingarmál’, *aenigma*: ‘gáta’ etc.

(3) Still other terms, although clearly derived from Latin as lexical or semantic loans, are directly mentioned in their current Icelandic form, without any reference to their Latin models. This category includes most of the terms denoting basic grammatical concepts, such as ‘vowel’ (*raddarstafr*), ‘consonant’ (*samhljóðandi*), ‘pronoun’ (*fornafn*), ‘adverb’ (*viðrorð*), ‘case’ (*fall*), ‘gender’ (*kyn*) and the like.

(4) Finally, mention should be made of those grammatical terms which, despite having a semantic equivalent in Latin tradition, are not patterned on Latin models or have no Latin counterpart at all, e.g. *samstafa/samstofun* ‘syllable’, *hljóðsgrein* ‘accent’, *málsgrein* ‘sentence’, *limingr/limingarstafr* ‘ligature’, *lausaklofi* ‘vowel di-graph’. Instances of this kind imply a substantial independence from the Latin model and clearly point to the parallel presence of an autochthonous, pre-Latinate grammatical tradition.

Some essential conclusions will be proposed in the oral presentation of the paper.

\*Relevant bibliographical references will be given in the oral presentation of the paper.