statusQuaestionis
language text culture

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"[…] nostram solam ex tot linguis perfectam […]". Paul Greaves' *Grammatica Anglicana* (1594) between Latin Influences and Patriotism

Abstract

This essay will focus on Paul Greaves' *Grammatica Anglicana* (1594), the first English grammar of Ramist inspiration and, more generally, one of the first grammars ever written to be dedicated to the English language. By the time Greaves published his *Grammatica*, England had established its role as a major power on the international stage. It little surprises, therefore, that it was in those same years that academic reflections on the English language began to be produced. This essay will focus on Greaves' Prefatory Epistle and his considerations on the morphology of Early Modern English, so as to highlight how the mediation of the Latin tradition often constituted an important filter, highlighting imitative and/or emulative mechanisms, with effects of marked syncretism.

This article is part of a research carried out within the 2017 PRIN Project *Classical Receptions in Early Modern English Drama* (Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, University of Verona; PI: Prof. Silvia Bigliazzi).

By the time Paul Greaves[1] published his *Grammatica Anglicana* in 1594, England had established its role as a major power on the international stage.

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[1] The exact date of Paul Greaves' birth is unknown. According to some documents preserved at Cambridge University, he matriculated as a 'sizar' (i.e., an undergraduate receiving financial help from his college) in June 1588 and was placed in one Mr. Gray's care. Following the completion of his B.A. between 1591-1592, Greaves continued his education thanks to a fellowship, received an M.A. in 1595, and was authorized to join the faculty of his own college. Archival evidence suggests that he may have preached at Bourn between 1596-1597. After this date, Greaves' whereabouts remain a mystery. He is known to have resigned his fellowship on 12 September 1598, and was formally expelled from his college on 23 November by Vice-Chancellor John Jegon, because of unclear episodes of violation of Cambridge standards and mores. University registers also report that around 1600 Greaves got the sum of five pounds to pay off his obligations. One last piece of evidence mentions one "Mr. Greaves", who lectured at St. Andrews University every Monday at 7am between 1614-1616. See Peile 1910 and Enkvist 1958.

After decades of religious and political uncertainties, towards the end of Elizabeth I's glorious reign, the nation had finally managed to reach a level of – albeit temporary – stability, and at the same time proved its great potentialities in all fields: from politics and warfare to economy and literature. It little surprises, therefore, that it was around this time that the first grammars devoted to the English language began to be produced. In fact, Greaves' *Grammatica Anglicana* was the second grammar ever written to concentrate on English, after William Bullokar's *Brief Grammar of English* (1586), which had been the first to focus on English and use it as meta-language.[2] However, Greaves' *Grammatica* was the first, at least in its author's intentions, to focus "praecipue" ("especially") on how much English "a latina differt" ("differs from Latin").[3] In an age when the term 'grammar' was still firmly associated only with classical languages, in other words, Greaves' work stands out for what he himself defined as the "inscriptionis novitate" ("novelty of my book") and, at the same time, testifies to the recently gained prestige of the vernacular it analyses. By discussing Greaves' Prefatory Epistle and his considerations on the morphology of Early Modern English, this essay will highlight the undeniable patriotic spur which emerges from *Grammatica*, and at the same time it will put forward evidence of how the mediation of the Latin tradition did nonetheless constitute an important filter for this early grammarian, revealing imitative and/or emulative mechanisms, with effects of marked (if sometimes confusing) syncretism.

1. *Grammatising English*

The prestige gained by English in the early modern age was the result of a thriving cultural climate, which had revealed the great potential of the language. Even though authoring grammars of vernaculars was and would still be perceived as quite an unusual activity for at least another century, especially because of the persistent anxiety felt towards the prestigious models provided by classical languages, in that period personalities as diverse as John Hart, Thomas Tomkis, Alexander Hume, and Alexander Gill, besides the forementioned Bullokar and Greaves, started to put grammars of their native language together (Percival 1975; Law 2003, 210-57; Butler 2010). Peter Burke aptly summarised this tendency as follows:

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[2] Following William Lily's influential *Grammar of Latin* closely, Bullokar's *Brief Grammar* is particularly famous for his peculiar use of a "reformed spelling system" of his own invention. See Algeo 1985, 192-4.

[3] All references are from Greaves 1594 and all translations from Latin are mine.

> [F]rom the middle of the fifteenth century onwards, more people were becoming conscious of varieties of language and some people were becoming more sharply aware of these matters than before [...] Interest in the history of languages and in linguistic diversity becomes more visible around the year 1500, including the discussion of some ideas that in a more formal dress we would now describe as forming part of 'sociolinguistics'. (2004, 16-7)

This unprecedented production in England was justified by numerous cultural factors. First, the wave of patriotism sweeping across a nation which, as mentioned above, had started to compete successfully with the other continental powers in every field, and thus needed to prove the dignity of its own language as well (Russo 2020, 28-9). In this regard, in his *Elementarie* (1582), one of the first supporters of the dignity of English, Richard Mulcaster, mentioned not only the "manifold use, for which the speech serveth," but also "the authority of the people which speak it" (80). Second, the spread of the Reformation too must be mentioned, with its promotion of vernaculars, in a way which aimed at breaking, to put it in Ute Dons' words, with the "tradition that all clerical matters should be exclusively dealt with in Latin" (2004, 5). These factors greatly contributed to the development of a pervasive 'translation movement,' that rapidly expanded from the classics to all other written productions in foreign languages, and was obviously encouraged by the concomitant widening of the readership (Barber 1976, 47; Russo 2020, 28; Marsico 2020a, 69). Last but not least, there was also what can be defined a 'pedagogical' reason: the spreading of the Humanist principle 'teach the unknown by the known' did indeed make it clear that, in order to learn Latin (the language of the literati) well, pupils should first be acquainted with the rules and structures of their own language. The convergence of these factors not only made the production of English grammars unavoidable, but it also resulted in a slow and unstoppable movement of standardization, in which, always according to Dons, English was particularly favoured, "because of its less complicated grammar, its richer lexicon, its linguistic economy resulting from its monosyllabic character, and its euphonious pronunciation" (2004, 6).[4]

Of course, it was not only the English language that experienced this process of standardization during the early modern age. Known as 'grammatisation', this was a far-reaching phenomenon, which involved all the European vernaculars, although at different moments, and indicates, as Clementina Marsico summarised, "the large-scale writing of grammars based on a single linguistic tradition, the Greek-Latin tradition" (2020b, 124). The reason why these grammars show such tight connections with the classical ones, despite the apparently opposite effort to get free from their influence, is twofold. On the one hand, as has been explained, the term 'grammar' was then almost univocally associated with Ancient Greek and especially Latin, which had become the European *lingua franca* and thus an inescapable point of reference for any authors who wished their works were read abroad (Dons 2004, 6 and Marsico 2020a, 65-6). On the other hand, "to show the prestige of the vernacular," Marsico pointed out, "it was fundamental to show it was governed by clear rules" (2020b, 124). This too meant going back to Latin, whose grammar was firmly systematised, and therefore allowed the early grammarians to take it as their "blue-print", both in terms of "framework" and "meta-language" (Marsico 2020b, 135). It should not surprise, in other words, that these early grammars were often written in Latin – this was what allowed their authors to demonstrate the prestige of the vernaculars to a wider readership.

Such a system, based as it was on a tight comparison with Latin, posed several problems. "[F]orcing the vernacular[s] into the straitjacket of Latin grammar", so as to put forward evidence of their similarities, Marsico explained, proved far from an easy task, especially when it came to dealing with "specific innovations of the vernaculars" (2020b, 135), from articles to the loss of case endings, just to name a couple. Despite all the difficulties that it produced and the accusations of "slavish imitation" that were often levelled at the early grammarians, however, this approach was also inescapable (Algeo 1985, 191). Not only was Latin the only model that these authors had, but it was the only one which allowed them to reach their – and their readers' – main aims: namely, learning the rules that governed the vernacular, and consequently improving their knowledge of Latin. It would take a couple of centuries for grammarians to emancipate themselves from the ‘anxiety of influence’ posed by Latin, and thus realize the necessity to describe the qualities of the vernaculars without comparing them to another linguistic system; an emancipation, as Burke noted, not unrelated (among others) to the spreading of the phenomenon of linguistic exchange at European level:

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[4] Started in the mid-16th century, this movement of standardization would culminate in the eighteenth century with Dr Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). See also Crystal 2005, 365-414 and Horobin 2016, 33-83.

> Th[e] process of linguistic exchange, as well as expressing the increasing cultural unification of Europe, contributed to its ‘Europeanization’, or at least offered some compensation for the gradual decline of communication in Latin. The participation of the elites of different European countries in a common culture that extended from music to warfare was marked by the creation of what the nineteenth-century Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi called ‘europeisms’ (*europeismi*). (2004, 111)

Showing that English was not inferior to Latin, that it possessed clear rules which could be taught to foreigners and native speakers alike, and that it was fit for expressing complex thought were precisely the aims of Paul Greaves’ *Grammatica Anglicana*. Having set the objective to illustrate the rules of the language to the native speakers so that they could improve their Latin and at the same time to provide help for Latin-speaking foreigners who wanted to learn English, Greaves authored a grammar book – “quantumvis brevi et succincta methodo conscriptum” (“however short and written according to a concise method”) – that did indeed suit all the above-mentioned needs, thus proving to be a perfect example of the fruitful (if at times puzzling) fusion between patriotic spur and classical influence, which animated all early modern linguistic discourses.

2. *A Patriotic Prefatory Epistle*

As is often the case with early modern grammars, the Prefatory Epistle is a privileged space, where authors express not only their rhetorical skills, but also their opinions and motivations (Padley 1985, 58). In this regard, a growing number of studies has showed how the “study of the grammars’ paratext can [indeed] shed more light on the development of the grammatical tradition” (Dons 2004, 176-7). Paratexts also illuminate, as Eleanor Shevlin underscored, "not just individual works, but reading processes, authorial composition, publishing practices, marketing trends, and generic transformations as well" (1999, 43-4). In this sense, Greaves' Prefatory Epistle to his *Grammatica Anglicana* is no exception. While not providing any information on possible patrons or his other works, Greaves does indeed follow the typical structure of prefatory epistle writing, and he aligns with what Padley defined as a "sense of a discourse community of grammar writers" (1985, 58).

First, as mentioned at the beginning, Greaves underscores the "novitate" ("originality") of his endeavour, which he hopes will stir his readership's interest ("ad legendum etiam facilius invitari poteris"; "[it] can encourage you to read it even more willingly"). If "many distinguished and illustrious writers" ("tot egregis et illustris scriptores") have "dedicat[ed] themselves to the work of rhetoric", he explains, the study of "grammar" has been fairly neglected ("rhetoricae quam Grammaticae, operam dedisse existimentur"). That is the main cause which has urged him to dedicate his efforts to the rules and functioning of the English language. He then makes the inevitable *professio modestiae*, underscoring the conciseness of his method and the brevity of his discussion, as well as the apparently "trifling" nature of his "subject" ("argumenti leviusculam").

Again, following the Prefatory Epistle writing tradition, Greaves goes on to celebrate England's well-known fame and the "divine […] gifts" ("munera […] divina") that Nature had hitherto poured unto the English people "like abundant and friendly rain" ("multo et amico imbri"). "[U]niquely as regards the embellishment of the language", he admits, "we seem to have been poorly and meagrely gifted" ("unico sermonis ornamento parce nimis, et tenuiter donati videamur"). In other words, Greaves argues, it seems as if the otherwise benevolent Mother Nature "had degenerated into a step-mother" ("in novercam primo degenerasset") when it came to language. Fortunately, he maintains, the English do not have to compete with classical Greek or Latin. Aligning himself with the widespread idea of the superiority of classical languages over vernaculars, he does indeed celebrate the "purity and elegance" ("puritate et elegantia") of those languages, and acknowledges that Greeks and Romans are rightly celebrated for "the merit" of their "rhetorical skills" ("huius facultatis laude"). In so doing, then, Greaves apparently shows to be more conservative than some of his contemporaries, such as the forementioned Mulcaster, just to name one, who had famously contested this "sense of inferiority" felt towards the classical languages, and advocated instead that "English was not any with behind the subtle Greek [...] or the stately Latin" (1582, 80).

Different is the comparison with the vernaculars of the other European peoples ("Gallis, Italis, Germanis, Hispanis, caeterisque gentibus"; "the French, the Italians, the Germans, the Spanish, or the other peoples"), whose not-always-positive features are listed by Greaves so as to show that English has nothing to envy. In so doing, he clearly places himself and his *Grammatica* within what Burke called the early modern "linguistic competition", characterized by "the struggle for the centre" and "attempts to marginalize rivals" (2004, 70). Greaves writes:

> Si Gallus verborum facilitatem, et mimicam prolationis elegantiam requirat, ipsas suaviorum deas mulierculas et puellulas nostrae regionis aures animosque hominum, ipsa Sirenum suavitate permulcentes consulturus eat.
> Si Italus suam in verbis gravitatem, et modestiam iactet, non linguam solum, sed ipsum ortum, et genus ab illis, nos traxisse glorietur, qui usque ad hodiernum diem, ut corporum habitu, et moribus, nihil paene discrepantes, sic linguae sono illis persimiles habemur.
> Si Germanus vim verborum et vehementiam obijciat, quid quaeso non persuadeat Anglus, cuius singula verba tot fere argumenta.
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> [If the French require fluency and a theatrical elegance of pronunciation, they should come and see the young women and girls of our region – goddesses of kisses – enchanting men's ears and souls with the same charm of the Sirens.
> If the Italians boast dignity and modesty of expression, they brag that we got from them not only our language, but also our origin and ancestry, and right to this day we are not at all different in terms of appearance and customs, as we are considered most similar to them for the sound of the language.
> If the Germans bring to the table the significance and vehemence of expression, I wonder what the English may not persuade them to do, given that each word of their language has the strength of just as many arguments.]

In keeping with the patriotic sentiment that was sweeping England at the time, in other words, Greaves states clearly that English can show the same "fluency" as French – and he does not miss the chance to define French pronunciation "theatrical" –, as well as Italian's same "dignity and modesty of expression", due, he surprisingly writes, to the similarities "in terms of appearance and customs" between the two peoples; not to mention the "significance and vehemence of expression" that English shares with German. Among the major European languages of the time, only Spanish, despite being originally mentioned, is not discussed by the author. In the post-Armada context, however, this is hardly surprising. Not even a word evidently deserved to be spent on the language of England's arch-enemy, whose pride had been justly smashed in 1588, at least in the eyes of the English. While playing with widespread commonplaces about the European 'Others' often quoted in the discourses on the construction of national identity (MacEachern 1996, 25-7), this long list of linguistic features gives an idea of what had to be Greaves' opinion on the English language, which here actually appears to be not that far from Mulcaster's. Quite the contrary. Greaves does not hesitate to conclude his reasoning by patently stating that "our language only is perfect among all others", as "it has kept what is excellent in all areas for itself" ("nostram solam ex tot linguis perfectam, et quod in unoquoque genere optimum, illud sibi delibasse").

Most interestingly, Greaves goes on to advocate for the utter importance of teaching the language correctly, expressing his preoccupation for the dangers faced by "the still unripe intellects of children" ("puerorum ingeniola") if presented with incorrect linguistic models. Erroneous comparative forms, lack of agreement between subject and verb, and the improper use of pronouns are just some of the mistakes that, he writes, can be heard everywhere. In this regard, Greaves underscores how even learned men, proficient in foreign languages, do lack accuracy when it comes to the use of their own native language. Ironically, he argues, they have assimilated the functioning of other languages before having learnt the rules governing their own:

> Experientia docet, plerosque haud mediocri eruditione praeditos, natione Anglos, cum in aliis linguis accurate omnia dictitant, modernae huius et nativae scriptione, turpiter omnino hallucinatos esse; taceo nomina, vitia dum reprehendo. Huiusmodi locutiones passim in usu sunt. *More better*. *Such works was finished*. *He spake it to she*. *Whose fountaines is dried up*. Non mirum si vulgus barbare omnino loquatur, cum qui docti, et sunt, et habentur, tam inscite, et impure scribunt. Quid dicam quantis hinc molestiarum undique procellis, puerorum ingeniola contorquentur.
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> [Experience teaches that although the English people in this country – most of whom are gifted with not mediocre erudition – say everything accurately in other languages, they ramble all too shamelessly in the writing of their modern and native language; I will not reveal their names, but blame their vices. Locutions like the following are used everywhere: *More better*. *Such works was finished*. *He spake it to she*. *Whose fountains is dried up*. Small wonder

that common people speak utterly uncouthly, when those who are and are esteemed learned write so ignorantly and impurely. Not to mention how much everywhere the still unripe intellects of children may be twisted for this reason]

In so doing, therefore, not only does Greaves implicitly state the usefulness of his own *Grammatica*, but he also associates with those who claimed the importance of being acquainted with the grammatical and syntactical rules of English in order to learn Latin accurately (Marsico 2020a, 78).

If the primary beneficiaries of Greaves' *Grammatica* seem to be the "literarum magistri et doctores" ("masters and doctors of letters"), in the last part of his Prefatory Epistle, he hints at the fact that his choice of writing in Latin is also functional to another aim. Greaves reveals that he has embarked on this endeavour so that "exteri" ("foreigners") too may have the opportunity to learn English, "celeberrimae huius linguae" ("this most celebrated language") whose rules have been finally put together thanks to his work: "Nec illud solum sed praeclusum sibi ad celeberrimae huius linguae perceptionem, tot saeculis aditum, mea unius opera reclusum iam tandem, et reseratum serio triumphabunt" ("Not only will they possess that, but also everything is necessary to the acquisition of this most celebrated language, and was denied to them during the course of its secular evolution, which at last has been disclosed and given new life thanks to my work"). If it is undoubtedly true, as Burke pointed out, that "learning English was not a high priority for continental Europeans at this time, at least not until the eighteenth century" (2004, 115), Greaves' intention – despite his actual success – can be defined at least pioneering.

3. *Greaves' Ramist Attempt and the Influence of Latin*

Stating his intent to write an English grammar "ad unicam P. Rami methodum concinnata" ("arranged according to the unique method of Peter Ramus") on the title page of his *Grammatica Anglicana*, Paul Greaves placed himself within a century-old debate. This involved questioning which had to be the fundamental criteria of research and the order of transmission of knowledge. Troubled with growing contradictions and tensions, the European Humanist culture of the early modern age had soon realized to be dealing with a growing body of knowledge – more and more often in contradiction with ancient precepts and theories

– and thus engaged in developing novel ways to make an inventory of the human sciences and particularly clarify them. This fruitful debate on the *methodus* and *ordo* of the humanities was spurred not only by the re-discovery of the classical masters of philosophical and scientific thought, but also by the necessities of a changing society, where a growing number of political, administrative, and cultural institutions, as well as the raise of the middle class and the development of mechanical *artes* and mathematics faced new forms of knowledge (Gilbert 1960; Crescini 1965; Grafton and Jardine 1986; Briggs 1989). Universities were obviously the centres of this 'arranging effort': their most inquisitive members dedicated their best efforts to providing their own solutions to the several doubts raised by the various people involved in the debate (Vasoli 1968).

One of the most influential participants in this debate was the Huguenot humanist Peter Ramus (1515-1572), *Regius Professor* at the Collège de France. He defended new criteria of simplicity, brevity, and efficacy, and explained that it had to be the purpose of dialectic to teach both how to debate and how to expose one's arguments. Building on such considerations, he elaborated his own *methodus*, which consisted in arranging each discipline from the general to the particular: after the general definition of the discipline, one had to consider its various parts, with their own definitions and distinctions, and finally illustrate the most specific notions by virtue of examples (Walton 1971; Bruyère 1984; Oldrini 1997; Steven and Wilson 2011). Ramus' theorical elaborations brought him to consider linguistic structures as well, and he did indeed apply them to his two influential Latin grammars, *Rudimenta grammaticae* and *Grammatica*, both published in 1559 (Dons 2004, 8-9). In these works, Ramus proposed a formal distinction between *etymologia* (that is, orthography and morphology) and *syntaxis*, which simplified what had been the standard arrangement of linguistic categories until that moment. Setting himself apart from the tradition of classical Latin grammars, moreover, he also did not discuss the different parts of speech, but limited himself to distinguishing between those which had number and those which did not (Michael 1970, 52). This was indeed typical, as Ian Michael argued, of "all those grammarians who were strongly influenced by logic", who "made one essential distinction: between words themselves and words in combination" (1970, 37). Last, it is also important to underscore that Ramus' approach was innovatively based on the observation of linguistic facts, which led him to elaborate what can be defined as descriptive, rather than prescriptive, rules (Michael 1970, 187; Dons 2004, 246-7).

Widely known throughout early modern Europe, Ramus' theories and grammars found particularly fertile ground in Elizabethan England, both because of the "status of Protestant martyr", as George Arthur Padley put it, that he had gained after his death in the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and because of the process of Protestantization that invested both Oxford and Cambridge, leading to a significant reformation of their curricula (Padley 1985, 53). Scholars as varied as Gabriel Harvey, George Downham, William Temple, or John Rainolds placed Ramism at the basis of their teaching, and proved unwavering supporters of Ramus' *unica methodus*. It little surprises, therefore, that Cambridge-educated Paul Greaves too should adopt it for his *Grammatica Anglicana*. In line with Ramus' approach, Greaves tended to base his considerations on the observation of linguistic data, and therefore the rules he discusses are not generally prescriptive. The fact that Greaves was clearly more interested in providing examples rather than theoretical elaborations does however result, as will be shown below, in a treatment of the various topics which is minimalist and also sometimes unclear (Michael 1970, 187; Dons 2004, 246-7).

Despite the patriotic spur that emerges from his Prefatory Epistle, Greaves' attempt at following Ramus' *methodus* obviously contributed to reinforce the role played by the Latin grammar tradition in his *Grammatica*. This emerges, in particular, in Chapters 3–8, which deal with what we would today call 'inflectional and derivational morphology'. The fact itself that he paid great attention to Ramus' category of *etymologia* was due to the fact that their common model, Latin, was indeed a highly inflected language (Vezzosi 2012).

The influence of Latin emerges for the first time in Chapters 3 and 4, devoted to nouns and adjectives respectively. As regards nouns, Greaves shows a keen interest in the formation of plural forms, and especially anomalous ones. He lists, for example, nouns with irregular plurals, such as *man, men*; nouns in which the stem *f(e)* changes to *v*, such as *knife, knives*; and also invariable nouns, such as *news* or the rather obsolete *swine*. He then goes on to provide long and detailed lists of *pluralia* and *singularia tantum*. If this reveals his careful application of Ramus' *methodus*, it is also the exact structure, as can be easily understood, which could be found in any Latin grammar of the time.[5]

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[5] The list of these anomalous plural forms can also be found in the works by other early grammarians, as a result of both the influence of Latin grammars and plagiarism. In this regard, see Dons 2004, 39.

In this regard, it is also hardly surprising that Greaves provides no accurate description of the use of articles in English. In Chapter 4, he limits himself to mentioning that "[a]diectivis annumerantur etiam Articulus *The*" ("the article *The* too is counted among the adjectives") and he only briefly touches on the use of *a/an* in Chapter 2 of the Syntax section, where he distinguishes them from *one* – this being "magisque emphatice" ("more emphatic"), and "substantive saepius ponitur" ("more often used as a substantive noun") – and specifies that before vowels *an* is used instead of *a*. The lack of attention for this aspect of the English language was typical of most early grammarians, and again proves, as Dons argued, how slow they were in distancing "themselves from [their Latin] model" (2004, 84), which of course did not have articles. It also confirms Ivan Poldauf's description of early modern grammars as "a thoroughly confused mixture of what is required by the grammar of English and what has come down from the Latin grammatical tradition" (1948, 161).

Greaves' Chapter 5 is instead dedicated to pronouns, which he defines "quoque anomala" ("somewhat anomalous"), because they distinguish both number and case. The influence of Latin grammar is particularly evident here, as Greaves includes personal pronouns (*I, thou, he, she*) within *demonstrativa*, together with *this* and *that* (although he concludes the chapter by stating that the former are actually considered substantive nouns). In Latin grammars, "[j]ust as *ille* and *is* could be called either relative or demonstrative", Ian Michael explained, "so ITH (*I, Thou, He*) were sometimes put with TT (*This, That*) among demonstrative pronouns" (1970, 328).[6]

Chapter 6 constitutes the largest part of the Etymology section of Greaves' *Grammatica Anglicana*, and is unsurprisingly devoted to verbs. As in the chapter dedicated to nouns, Greaves provides particularly detailed lists of irregular verbs, so much so that Algeo concluded that this was reason enough for him to be considered a better grammarian than his predecessor Bullokar (1985, 194). Even though this chapter testifies to Greaves' uncommon descriptive approach to linguistic data, his attempt to stick to Ramus' model and the unmistakable influence of Latin do often result in somewhat confusing definitions, especially as regards the terms he uses to refer to the various past tenses (Michael 1970, 187 and Dons 2004, 246-7). In Latin, as is known, there were three past tenses: *praeteritum infectum* (or *imperfectum*); *praeteritum perfectum*; and *plus quam*

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[6] See also Nevalainen 2006, 77-9; 85-6.

perfectum. Greaves evidently adapts this tripartite model to English, and distinguishes between *praeteritum primum*, *secundum*, and *tertium*. His explanations, however, are often unclear, as he uses the Latin terms for the different past tenses rather interchangeably. For example, when he describes what we today call 'modal verbs', he defines their past tense (*could*, *would*, *should*, and *might* respectively) not as *praeteritum*, but with a Latin term he has never used before, *infectum*. Of course, Greaves knew well that his readership would understand that *infectum* was but a synonym of *praeteritum*, but this is rather confusing nonetheless, and also inconsistent with his advocated Ramist approach. The same happens when he describes the *praeteritum tertium*, formed with *had* – which he defines as the *imperfectum* of *have*, even though he has never used this term before – and the past participle of the main verb, such as *I had hated* (Barber 1976, 249-50; Nevalainen 2006, 92-6).

The last aspect which is worth mentioning is that Greaves does not acknowledge infinitives and participles as 'moods'. Greaves' negligence as regards the concept of mood was not an exception *per se*. Rather, it can be always ascribable to his attempt to adhere to Ramus' model and is again a sign of the influence of the classical grammar tradition, since 'moods' were presented as a baffling part of grammar even in Latin textbooks. It had been Ramus, as John O. Reed discussed in detail, "who solved the problem of finding a way to deal with the confusion over moods in Latin by abandoning the concept of mood altogether" (Reed 1988, 121).[7] Small wonder then that Greaves' *Grammatica*, arranged as it was according to Ramus' method, should overlook this aspect.

All in all, therefore, Greaves' attempt to explain how much English "differs from Latin" cannot be said to have been entirely successful. His analysis of the differences between English and Latin and the use of Ramus' *unica methodus* are indeed "mutually exclusive," as Padley acknowledged, because "[...] a system based on purely morphological criteria cannot well be applied to a language such as English, in which grammatical relationships that in Latin are indicated by formal congruence are expressed syntactically" (1985, 58). This is also the reason why Greaves met with several difficulties in dealing with the various parts of speech, which he decided to treat separately (Marsico 2020a, 65-89). Sketchy and imperfect though it is, Greaves' *Grammatica Anglicana* is nonetheless the only grammar-book among those produced in England in the early modern period to try and describe the functioning of the English language by following the prestigious Ramist model, and this is yet another reason to acknowledge its merits.

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[7] See also Nevalainen 2004, 9-7.

4. *Conclusion*

In an age when the term 'grammar' was still firmly associated with classical languages, Paul Greaves's *Grammatica Anglicana* (1594) stands out for what he himself defines as the "novelty" of his book and testifies to the recently gained prestige of the English language. Inevitably, as has been discussed above, the mediation of the Latin grammar tradition – a result of both the cultural context in which he lived and his willingness to adhere to Peter Ramus' model – did represent a fundamental filter for Greaves. The analysis of this mediation has indeed allowed to put forward evidence of peculiar, although sometimes confusing, mechanisms of imitation and syncretism. Still, what his Prefatory Epistle proves is that, if Greaves was not entirely successful in illustrating how far English differed from Latin, he did nonetheless allow for the emergence of a wave of patriotic sentiment, which revealed his original attempt at providing a textbook which could teach the rules of the English language to both native speakers and foreigners, and thus confirmed the novel role that England – and its language – had gained in early modern Europe.

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