12. DEMONSTRATIO AD OCULUM AND DEMONSTRATIO AD INTELLECTUM: PRONOUNS IN PS.-JORDAN AND ROBERT KILWARDBY

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Quis accipit praemium?
Qui interficiet tyrannum, praemium accipiat.

Quem accuso?
Hominem, quem vitupero accuso, et ille est idem isti.

How many pronouns would the medieval professor of linguistics or philosophy of language—the grammarian—detect in these exchanges? From the modern perspective, this is a trick question. For our medieval theorist, only the relative pronoun 'he' (ille) and the demonstrative 'him' (isti) are true pronouns. 'Who' (Quis, Quem) is an interrogative noun here;¹ its signification is extremely broad; and a question asked with quis or quem calls for an answer featuring a referring expression whose signification is narrower, e.g. 'Ajax', or more narrow still, e.g., 'that Ajax', pointing to Ajax. ‘Whom’ (quem) in the answer to the second question is a relative noun; its signification is fixed by its antecedent, hominem. Qui in the first exchange is an infinite noun,² since the point of the answer is that ‘whoever’ kills a tyrant should get a reward. Idem can function as a relative pronoun, as in Ajax venit ad Troiam, idem fortiter pugnavit;³ but it is an adjectival noun here. For our medieval grammarian, aliquis, ullus, alicubi, talis, and qualis are all nouns as well.

Thus for the medieval grammarian a very large number of referring expressions are considered nouns.⁴ The theory of the pronoun develops in tandem with the theory of the noun. This approach has its roots in Priscian’s Institutiones Grammaticae. Early medieval grammarians writing

² Priscian, IG 17.29 (vol. 2, p. 127:12). Modern grammars classify such expressions as ‘indefinite’ pronouns.
³ Priscian, IG 17.56 (vol. 2, p. 142:10).
commentaries on the text were content to follow the text with its criss-crossing organization and *ad hoc* solutions to particular problems of syntax. But when, in the course of the thirteenth century grammar set out to redefine itself as a linguistic science on the Aristotelian model, problems arose.\(^5\) Many of these are simply the result of the intersection of a theory from late antiquity and later medieval grammarians who have a much greater interest in scientific rigor understood on the Aristotelian model; but others arise from genuine pressure points in Priscian’s approach that are revealed by this more rigorous reasoning. Theories about the noun and pronoun are located at such a pressure point.

Ps.-Jordan, who was active most probably about the middle of the thirteenth century, and Robert Kilwardby, whose commentary is perhaps a generation later, are writing at this critical juncture. Both wrote standard, literal commentaries on books 17–18 of *Institutiones Grammaticae*, in which Priscian develops his theory of syntax; but both commentaries begin with an introduction that attempts to define grammar as a science in Aristotelian terms. It is the purpose of this paper to show how these two important grammarians writing at a critical point handled the function and semantics of pronouns and other referring expressions.

*The Priscianic Source Material*

Medieval theories about pronouns were presented in Priscian’s *Institutiones Grammaticae*, which corresponded to set university courses.\(^6\) The courses focussed either on *Priscian Maior* (*P Mai*), books 1–16, in which the parts of speech are discussed individually; or on *Priscian Minor* (*P Min*), books 17–18, in which Priscian presents a syntactic theory, in which larger units (*constructiones, orationes*) are built up out of the grammatically admissible or grammatically required combinations of the individual parts of speech.\(^7\) But *P Min* in fact begins with its own separate presentation of

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