

IGNOTA LATEBAT
FILOSOFIA E FILOLOGIA

TESTI IN ANASTATICA

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Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.

Terenzio, *Heautontimorumenos*, I, 1, 25

A partire dal 350° anniversario della nascita del filosofo napoletano Giambattista Vico, la collana riavvia il confronto con i classici del pensiero europeo d'età moderna e contemporanea. E lo persegue senza *clamores*, nei termini di una storicizzazione della filosofia, considerata nei saperi del diritto e dell'etica, della religione e della politica, delle teorie artistiche e letterarie. Alla luce del nesso (vichiano) con la filologia e senza mai indulgere in occasionali rievocazioni o banali attualizzazioni, promuove sui testi e i lessici studi irrinunciabili proprio oggi nel mondo della banale semplificazione rassicurante.

Tutti i volumi sono sottoposti alla procedura di valutazione nella forma di *blind peer review*.

Giuliana Russo

**The *De Analogia Anglicani Sermonis*
Liber Grammaticus (1612)
by Thomas Tonkis**

A Transcription of the Original Manuscript
with an Introduction, notes and comments



Il presente volume è stato stampato con il contributo
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I edizione: novembre 2020

A Costanza, Ginevra, e Agnese

“I’ll burn my books! — Ah Mephistophilis!”

“рукописи не сжигают”

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Preface

This is in fact a meticulous authorship attribution study concerning the identification of the materials, content and structure of two works joined by the same title and topic, *De Analogia Anglicani Sermonis Liber Grammaticus* by Thomas Tonkis in 1612 and a more widely known *English Grammar* by Ben Jonson, which was published in the year 1640. The editor, Giuliana Russo, of the University of Catania, undertook a splendid work to present the role and significance of Thomas Tonkis' analysis of the grammar of the English language of his times and his contribution to the field of grammaticography.

Thomas Tonkis, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge from the seventeenth century is a largely forgotten figure. Even the results of googling his name, with two mentions or so, are particularly modest. Giuliana Russo's work then had a clearly double aim. To identify the original author of the seventeenth century grammar of the English language on the one hand and to present evidence of Tonkis' spectacular scholarship on the other.

Giuliana Russo is already an experienced scholar with multiple interests, but her main contributions, relevant to the present editorial work, are in the field of the history of English grammaticography. Her extensive study on the *Grammar of the English Language* by William Cobbett (2005) as well as the most recent publication on contact contexts between English grammars and Latin (2020), together with Russo's contribution to the monumental international repertoire of *Lexicon Grammaticorum*, are especially valuable signals of her competences in this field.

Giuliana Russo's publication is not the first edition of Tonkis's opus magnum. The one preceding it was Albert B. Cook's *The De Analogia Anglicani Sermonis of Thomas Tonkis*, published in the year 1982. There are other accounts referring to this period of grammar development of English. However, they are either analyses of a more general field of studies in which the

position of Tonkis' s work could not be sufficiently foregrounded or else, like Cook's publication, which did not emphasise or entirely missed some major parts of Tonkis's contribution to the English grammar description, like the inclusion of non-standard varieties of Early Modern English, compounding and syntax, English phonology description, and, finally, Tonkis's *De Analogia* position as Ben Jonson's unacknowledged source of his grammar. This latter fact was entirely unaccounted for in other more general publications on this theme either.

Notwithstanding those unquestionable linguistic properties of Tonkis's work, the main stimulus for Russo's interest in editing and a thorough analysis of Tonkis's *De Analogia* was this unusual coincidence between details of the language of this text and those of Ben Jonson's *Grammar*, first noted by Ian Michael in 1970. The controversy regarding the similarities had surrounded the text for some time but it had never been undertaken as a real scholarly question, whether there was plagiarism there and if so, which of the two, if any, was the plagiariser. While other scholars considered the similarities between the two only accidental, Russo's findings presented in this publication provide strong evidence that it was Ben Jonson's *Grammar* which not only heavily plagiarised Tonkis's treatise but that the plagiarism case also related to the plays *Alchemist* and *Albumazar* as further confirmation. The problem is that since the moment people started using words in writing until the Age of Enlightenment, repeating somebody's words or ideas had not been considered a legal infraction. The reason was that there was no concept of intellectual property rights. It is indeed paradoxical then to learn that it was precisely Ben Jonson who has been credited with the use of the word *plagiarism* for the first time in 1601 to describe an act of literary theft (cf. Issacs 2011). However, to get a fuller picture of the case, one needs to mention that Jonson's original treaty is dated as about 1621, then apparently lost in a fire. Recreated by the author it was probably left unfinished (Giddens 2014, Vyroubalova n.d.) and published in 1640 only after Jonson's death. It is interesting to note that some of the contributors to Giddens' *Handbook of Ben Jonson* in 2014, commenting Ben Jonson's *Grammar* (Jean Lambert) consider it "intriguing and raising questions" with regard to Jonson's authorial motivation.

Giuliana Russo provides a meticulous and complete argument both in favour of the originality and value of Thomas Tonkis's grammar of English, Ben Jonson's grammar status in this respect as well as their positions in the historiography of English grammars. Russo's editorial work is significant. She deftly navigates through manuscripts, the authors and their editorial work and manages to show us details of her argument. It is all invoked due to Giuliana Russo's thorough knowledge of philology, English language history and a meticulous analytical skill concerning the comparison of the texts.

The editor's key message of her elaborate text analysis, notes and a revealing introduction is fully conveyed. Firstly, new evidence is provided as to the originality and significance of Thomas Tonkis's modern perception of grammar and, contrary to opinions of others, who treated Tonkis's grammar study as an average and not particularly important text, Russo managed to show that it is a valuable scholarly work, fully worth publishing and occupying a special position within the history of grammaticography. Russo's edition should also be praised for the detailed and extensive comments, presenting and verifying philological information and claims put forth in previous grammar studies.

Giuliana Russo's edition of *The De Analogia Anglicani Sermonis Liber Grammaticus* by Thomas Tonkis, her text analysis and interpretation in this full editorial and analytical endeavor is a particularly effective contribution to reviving Tonkis's grammar and placing it in a position adequate to its merits. It makes the publication specially valuable and of interest to scholars and students of both grammaticography, lexicography and teaching grammar but also to those interested in pursuing histories of lives and work of eminent personalities and effects of their work.

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