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## Character, Provenance, and Use of the Icelandic Fifth Grammatical Treatise

The short treatise on poetics which has come to be known as the Fifth Grammatical Treatise (below 5GT) has received very limited scholarly attention since it was edited in 1884 (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 159).<sup>1</sup> In the edition, the treatise is attributed to ‘Olaf [= Óláfr Þórðarson; see below] or another, slightly earlier author’.<sup>2</sup> This somewhat evasive attri-

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<sup>1</sup> The name (‘The Fifth Grammatical Treatise’) was first given by Sverrir Tómasson 1997: 190. Apart from the edition and Sverrir Tómasson’s very short article, I am only aware of one more scholar who discusses 5GT beyond the mere mention of its existence, namely Guðrún Nordal 2001: 88, 213.

<sup>2</sup> ‘[...] at Olaf har indlemmet sin egen afhandling i samlingen, ligesom også det brudstykke af en afhandling om skjaldefigurer, hvormed AM. 748, 4° begynder (3. tillæg), hvad enten den nu hindrer fra Olaf eller fra en anden lidt ældre forfatter.’ (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: xlvi)

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Males, M., associate professor of Old Norse philology, University of Oslo. “Character, Provenance, and Use of the Icelandic Fifth Grammatical Treatise”. *ANF* 132 (2016), pp. 121–138.

**Abstract:** This article argues that the short textual fragment today called the Fifth Grammatical Treatise (below 5GT) represents a kind of hybrid within Icelandic poetics, occupying a middle ground between the nativizing treatises, such as Snorri’s *Edda*, and the Latinate ones, such as 3GT and 4GT. Like Snorri’s *Edda*, 5GT uses vernacular rather than Latin terminology and it is not arranged according to principles canonized within the grammatical tradition, but the concepts it treats are alien to the vernacular tradition and belong in the sphere of Latin learning. The article also contends that the combined evidence of manuscript context and features within the text itself suggests that its author is Óláfr Þórðarson, nephew of Snorri Sturluson, or someone very close to him, and that Óláfr drew on 5GT in his composition of 3GT. This contextualization sheds further light on how 5GT fits into the evolving tradition of Icelandic poetics, not least because Óláfr is the person who took this tradition from a nativizing to a Latinate mode in 3GT. The attribution of 5GT to his intellectual milieu thus enables us to get close to the individuals who, after Snorri, developed the discourse on vernacular poetics in the thirteenth century. The translation of Latin texts that Óláfr undertook in 3GT may appear as the most straightforward way of transferring Latin learning into the vernacular. The intermediate, hybrid solution of 5GT, however, suggests that the nativizing mode held such a strong position in Icelandic intellectual circles that translation was the most, rather than the least, challenging solution for transforming local poetics into a theoretical discourse recognizable by European standards.

**Keywords:** Icelandic, grammatical treatises, poetics, skaldic poetry, Fifth Grammatical Treatise, Third Grammatical Treatise, Donatus, *Barbarismus*, Óláfr Þórðarson, Snorri’s *Edda*.

bution has not been discussed in subsequent research. We have only the end of the text – eight lines and two words on the ninth – on the first page of AM 748 Ib 4to (A), dating to c. 1300–1325 (*ONP Registre* 1989: 464). We do not know how long it originally was. No traces of 5GT or of its technical terminology are to be found elsewhere. In A, 5GT is followed by 3GT (see below), *Litla Skálda* (a short treatise on kennings), a redaction of Snorri’s *Skáldskaparmál* (part three of his *Edda*) where most of the prose has been cut out, and finally *Íslendingadrápa* (a poem about Icelandic heroes of the Saga Age). In this article, I discuss the character, provenance, and use of 5GT, and I argue that these aspects are closely interrelated; the character and use of the treatise are important for the question of its provenance, which in turn may contribute to our understanding of the place of 5GT within the development of Icelandic poetics. I therefore begin with a presentation of the text and its manuscript context, including the most obvious indication of authorship. I then move on to a closer analysis of the contents of 5GT, after which I discuss the implications of its contents for the question of its provenance, before finally turning to how that provenance may further inform our understanding of the text within the evolution of Icelandic learning.

## Text and manuscript context of 5GT

The text of 5GT appears to begin in the middle of a word. I have normalized the text based on the manuscript and Björn M. Ólsens edition, except for one word which I render diplomatically (in bold>, for reasons that will appear later:

[...] garð er þat kallat ef lengi er talat  
um hit sama efni, sem Guðbrandr  
kvað í Svölu:

Upp dregr mǫkk hinn mikla

ok allar vísur þær er eptir fara eru af  
einu efni allt til stefja fram. Snyrða  
þykkir heldr bragarbót<sup>3</sup> en spell ok  
skulu þá standa margir samhljóðendr

[...] It is called (-)garð if you stick to  
the same subject for a long time, as  
Guðbrandr í Svölu composed:

The great fog gathers

and all stanzas that follow treat one and  
the same subject all the way to the  
refrain. *Snyrða* is considered a poetic  
virtue rather than a vice, and then

<sup>3</sup> *Bragarbót* here clearly retains its natural meaning of ‘poetic virtue’ rather than being used as the name of a metre, as in *Háttatal* (Faulkes (ed.) 2007: 17; Finnur Jónsson 1931, s.v. *bragarbót*).

eptir raddarstaf hinir sömu, ok síðast  
t eða r, sem Einarr kvað:

Elfr varð unda gjalfri  
eitrköld roðin sveita  
vitnis fell með vatni  
varmt qldr í men Karmtar

many of the same consonants should  
stand after the vowel, and finally *t*  
or *r*, as Einarr composed:

The poison-cold Göta älv was  
reddened by the wounds' sweat's  
[blood's] sea [blood]. The warm  
wolf's warm beer [blood] fell,  
along with the water, into  
Kqrmt's necklace [sea].<sup>4</sup>

Skarbrot er þat ef aukit er samstöfu  
skammri í fyrsta vísuorði, svá at ófegra  
þykki, sem Óláfr Leggsson kvað:

'Skular' (= Skúla'r) bezt und báli  
byrræfrs sköpuð ævi.<sup>5</sup>

It is *skarbrot* if one short syllable is  
added in the first verse, so that it is  
less pleasant, as Óláfr Leggsson com-  
posed:

The best life under the wind-  
roof's [heaven's] bonfire [the sun]  
has been created for Skúli.

(AM 748 Ib 4to, 1r ll. 1–9; Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 159)

Here, the treatise ends, somewhat abruptly, and 3GT begins – a treatise which will become important in the following. It is a translation and adaptation of material derived from books 1 and 2 of Priscian's *Institutiones* – on orthography and phonology – and from what appears to have been a commentary on Donatus's *Ars maior* 3 (the *Barbarismus*) – on vices, licence, figures, and tropes.<sup>6</sup> In its Icelandic rendition, the focus on poetry in Donatus is enhanced and the text is partly transformed into a treatise on poetics. 3GT was composed by Snorri Sturluson's nephew Óláfr Þórðarson hvítaskáld (the white poet) around 1250.<sup>7</sup> The text of 3GT begins with a two-line initial and with its first rubric in red – *at*

<sup>4</sup> Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 297, introduces the variant *beitu* for *sveita*, giving 'the wounds' hot sea [blood]'.  
<sup>5</sup> As Björn M. Ólsen notes, the rhyme *-ræfrs : ævi* shows that /f/ must have merged with /v/ in this position at the time of composition (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 298).

<sup>6</sup> Kari Ellen Gade (2007) has demonstrated that the source for the first part of 3GT is likely to be Priscian's *Institutiones* rather than *Excerptiones de Prisciano*, which has sometimes been suggested, and that there is considerable terminological overlap between 3GT and Ælfric's *Excerptiones*. She has also shown that at least parts of Ælfric's *Excerptiones* were known in Iceland c. 1400, which makes it increasingly likely that they were used in the composition of 3GT. On the sources of the second part of 3GT, see below.

<sup>7</sup> The attribution is based on: 1. The colophon cited above. 2. Two references in 4GT naming Óláfr as the author of 3GT. 3. A reference by the author himself to 'his lord Valdimarr', the king of Denmark with whom Óláfr is known to have stayed (Jón Sigurðsson et al. (eds.) 1848–87, vol. 2: 62–63 note 1).

*greina hljóð* (to distinguish sound). The text of 3GT continues until fol. 8v l. 5, after which we read, in faint red:

Hér er lykt þeim hlut bókar er Óláfr Þórðarson hefir samansett ok upp hefir skáldskaparmál ok kenningar eftir því sem fyrri fundit var í kvæðum höfuðskálda ok Snorri hefir síðan samafœra látit. (AM 748 Ib 4to, 8v ll. 6–8; Jón Sigurðsson et al. (ed.) 1848–87, vol. 2: 427–28. My normalization.)

Here ends the part of the book that Óláfr Þórðarson has compiled and [the section on] poetic diction and kennings begins, according to what has been found in the poetry of the main poets, and which Snorri has later gathered.

The first question to prompt itself here is whether ‘the part of the book’ which ends here is 3GT alone or all of the text preceding the colophon, that is, whether the colophon really attributes 5GT to Óláfr or not. Some indication of this may perhaps be found in the reference to Snorri: if the rest of the manuscript text is attributed to him, then it is likely (albeit not certain) that the reference to the previous part is inclusive. The answer must be qualified, for two reasons. First of all, *Litla Skálda* and *Skáldskaparmál* are treated as one text in the colophon. It is highly unlikely that *Litla Skálda* is Snorri’s work, but rather the two have been adapted to produce a single, more or less coherent treatise, which retained Snorri’s authoritative name (Nordal 2001: 225–26; Jesch 2009). With this proviso, however, it is likely that the scribe thought of the following contents of A as Snorri’s and of *Íslendingadrápa* as a kind of appendix to his text, since poems are in several instances appended to Snorri’s *Edda* as the last item in other MSS.<sup>8</sup> Second of all, A both begins and ends defectively. The defective end means that additional material, not associated with Snorri, could in principle have followed. Again, however, since other MSS end with poetic appendices to Snorri’s *Edda*, it is likely that *Íslendingadrápa* too is such an appendix, or forms part of it, and that there was no more text after that. It would thus appear that the scribe did indeed think of the rest of A as a version of Snorri’s text and that the reference to the previous part of the MS is correspondingly inclusive, that is, that the colophon attributes 5GT and 3GT both to Óláfr. The initial and the title *at greina hljóð* (to distinguish sound) in the beginning of 3GT suggest some kind of border between 5GT and it, but this is how the scribe marks subdivisions generally and it does not in itself indicate a

<sup>8</sup> Thus AM 2367 4to, AM 757 a 4to, and AM 242 fol (though it may be noted that 1–4GT are placed between *Skáldskaparmál* and *Háttatal* in the last of these).

switch between works or authors, as the colophon does. On the other hand, there is nothing to preclude the presence of such a switch. In short, it is likely but not certain that the scribe thought of Óláfr as the author of 5GT, and if he did, it is nonetheless possible that 5GT has originated with someone else and later been added to the beginning of 3GT. So far, then, manuscript evidence suggests Óláfr as a plausible author of 5GT, since the text is probably attributed to him and is in any event attached to his, and since A otherwise contains his and his uncle's text, which may indicate that it is a collection of Sturlung material. This is, however, far from conclusive, and in order to further evaluate the character and provenance of 5GT, a close analysis of the text is necessary.

## Contents of 5GT

5GT contains three poetic quotations and the dates of the poets involved have some bearing on the context and dating of the treatise. I therefore begin with a short description of these poets. The first of them, Guðbrandr í Svölu, is probably the same Guðbrandr who is quoted in *Hrafn saga Sveinbjarnarsonar*, and he seems to have been active in the beginning of the thirteenth century.<sup>9</sup> The same quotation, but including also its second verse, is also found in 3GT. The second poet, Einarr, is presumably the well-known Einarr Skúlason. He was probably born around 1090, and he is mentioned as a priest in *Morkinskinna* and in a list of high-born priests for the year 1143 (Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson (eds.) 2011 vol. 2: 87, 124; Nordal 2003: 4). He is most famous for having composed the poem *Geisli* in honour of saint Óláfr, a poem which was performed in Kristkirkja (Christ Church) in Þrándheimr (Trøndelag, i.e. Niðaróss) in 1153 (Clunies Ross et al. (eds.) 2007–vol. 7: 5). After c. 1159–1161, he disappears from our sources. The third, Óláfr Leggsson svartaskáld (the black poet), was a contemporary of Óláfr Þórðarson hvítaskáld (the white poet) and, like him, court poet of Hákon Hákonarson of Norway (Nordal 2001: 180–81). Their epithets, the black and the white poet, suggest that they were associated by con-

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<sup>9</sup> Nordal 2001: 163–64. Note that Björn M. Ólsen takes Svala (swallow) as the name of the poem, not as an epithet of the poet (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 194). Finnur Jónsson was inclined to emend to *i Svöllum* (perhaps taking this as 'in the gallery' from some peculiar architectonic or topographic feature, though he does not translate), which would make a more plausible, but still unknown, name of a farm (Finnur Jónsson 1920–24 vol. 2: 169).

temporaries, and Óláfr Leggsson is also quoted by his namesake in 3GT, which may further indicate some affinity between the two (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 70). Our only firm date for Óláfr Leggsson is that he was in Bergen in 1231. The quotation in 5GT must probably date from or after his Norwegian sojourn, since he there praises Hákon's earl and would-be rival Skúli (d. 1240).<sup>10</sup> 1231–1240, then, provides a *post quem* for 5GT. The manuscript itself gives us the *ante quem* of c. 1300.

I turn now to a discussion of the terminology. It begins with a detailed analysis of the figures described and the terms used for them in 5GT, after which it will be possible to draw some general conclusions about them and the treatise. The first figure is the only one to deal with content rather than form. The first word (-)gard may be fragmentary, but the author seems to feel that a term is needed for sticking to the same subject for a long time, a sentiment that probably derives from the Latin grammatical tradition. From the more pragmatic perspective of, say, Snorri's *Háttatal*, such a figure would have been superfluous. In Óláfr Þórðarson's translation of Donatus's *Barbarismus* in 3GT, by contrast, he quotes the same verse, as well as the following one, to illustrate the same phenomenon under the heading *macrologia* (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 81–82). The couplet in 3GT contains a semantically indifferent variant (*setr* for *dregr*) and the second verse clarifies what kind of fog we are dealing with: *Upp setr mǫkk enn mikla | móðfjalls veröld alla* (the great fog gathers | over all the courage-mountain's [heart's] world [breast]) (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 81–82, 193–94). This, then, is the fog of sorrow. What remains unclear in the surviving fragment of 5GT, but is explicitly stated in 3GT, is that this figure is a vice, often to be found in the beginning of poems, but not dealing with their actual subject. In 5GT, too, we read that it belongs in the beginning, before the refrain, at least in the poem in question. Even though we are not told whether we are dealing with a virtue or a vice, the formulation in the following example – ‘*snýrða* is considered a poetic virtue rather than a vice’ – suggests a contrast to the previous figure. This, as well as the verdict in 3GT, indicates that we are indeed dealing with a vice. Unlike 3GT, however, 5GT uses the vernacular but mysterious term (-)gard, which may be a compound

<sup>10</sup> Three fragments from a poem to Hákon are quoted in three different MSS of Snorri's *Edda*, but only in one MS per fragment, suggesting that they have entered into the tradition at various points in time after Snorri (and they thus conform to the chronology above) (Finnur Jónsson (ed.) 1912–1915 vol. A II: 84–85).

lacking its first element.<sup>11</sup> There appears to be some kind of textual connection between 3GT and 5GT, since both treatises opt for the same example to illustrate the same phenomenon, whether it be classified as a vice or not. The only difficulty is the variant *setr/dregr*. This can either be due to a textual connection mediated by memory, or to later graphic restitution based on an unclear exemplar. In any event, variants like these often occur in the textual transmission of skaldic poetry, where the difficulties involved and the strong emphasis on memorization seem to have blurred the already faint medieval border between orality and literacy (cf. Fidjestøl 1982: 45–60, albeit he believed in a firm distinction between oral and written variants; see further O'Brien O'Keefe 1990). I do not, therefore, believe that the variant weakens the indication of a textual connection provided by the coincidence of the quotation and its function.

The meaning of the following two examples is not entirely clear from the prose alone. It seems that to the author, *snyrða* (tangle, knot; cf. Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 323) entails a longer cluster than usual of consonants in the hending, even when ending in an *-r* or a *-t* which could, in his view, have been left out of the rhyme (cf. Sverrir Tómasson 1997: 191). The figure in question is found only in verses one and four (*Elfr : gjalfri, varmt : Karmtar*). What is somewhat peculiar is that, in skaldic practice, only nominative *-r* (as in *Elfr*) is really optional as part of the hending, whereas *-t* is not, at least not in this cluster (*-rmt*).<sup>12</sup> This underlines just how contrived the figure is, even though it remains true that the consonant cluster in the last set of hendings is longer than usual and choosing words containing such clusters is, of course, optional. Unlike what is probably the case with (*-*)*garð*, *snyrða* is here considered a virtue. The observation of this figure is based on vernacular poetics, but its character is equally superfluous to composition as are many of the figures which are given in 3GT and which depend on the Latin rather than the vernacular tradition.

<sup>11</sup> Björn M. Ólsen suggests that *garð* may have been inspired by the concepts of *macrologia* or *tautologia* (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 307). While we do not know what preceded *garð*, it seems safe to assume that it is not a calque on these or related classical terms (the term *amplificatio* is not attested in Icelandic sources, but would in any event not constitute a more likely model). Sverrir Tómasson 1997: 190, suggests that it may have read *langgarðr* (long-fence) or *seingarðr* (slow-fence), but this does not address the problem that *garðr* (fence) is a masculine a-stem, requiring a nominative *-r* which is lacking in the MS.

<sup>12</sup> The number of consonants which belong to the hending varies according to principles that have for a long time remained obscure, but although some clusters may still call for further explanation, Kristján Árnason seems to have found a general solution to the problem through his principle of sonority minimum, a point which is further elaborated by Klaus Johan Myrvoll (Kristján Árnason 2007: 87–93, 97–107; Myrvoll 2014: 53–82). Since /t/ is less sonorous than /m/ the rule of the sonority minimum applies in the cluster *-rmt*.

The last example is the most important and interesting one for the present argument. When discussing the figure *skarbrott*, the commentary speaks of adding a syllable in the first verse. The only way of obtaining an extra syllable in this verse is by expanding ‘Skular’ (= *Skúla*’r) to *Skúla er*, that is, by not eliding the *e*. There can thus be little doubt that this expansion (really lack of elision) is what the prose refers to, even though it is peculiar that the verse actually shows elision (more on this below). The words ‘so that it is less pleasant’ clearly indicate that this is a vice. The name *skarbrott* further supports that the prose refers to the unelided reading *Skúla er*. *Skarbrott* is a hapax legomenon, but *skor* means a seam between two overlapping planks on a ship or a roof, and *at skara skjöldum* means to arrange shields so that they partially overlap (Fritzner 1883–96, s.vv. *skör*, *skara*). *Brot* means ‘break’, and thus presumably, in this case, the breaking up of the ‘overlapping’ syllables (i.e. *Skúla er* for *Skúla*’r). Björn M. Ólsen interprets this term as meaning simply ‘seam between two planks’, but that is insufficient, since this is already the meaning of the first element of the compound (*skor*) (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 321–22). The whole word thus appears to designate a gap in what ought to have been a tight seam or overlap. Óláfr uses related imagery in 3GT, though for other phenomena, when he speaks of rhymes as the seams between a ship’s planks and alliteration as the nails holding the planks together (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 96–97). The imagery thus suggests a connection between the two texts. The use of nautical metaphors for metrical structures is not, as far as I can tell, derived from Latin literature. Rather, it is probably indebted to the strong nautical focus of skaldic poetry itself, and the content of the poetry has thus provided the means for conceptualizing its distinctive features. This ‘seam-break’, designating a kind of gap, appears to be a calque on Latin *hiatus* (gap), referring to the collision between two vowels that must for metrical reasons both be pronounced (i.e. lack of elision), much like the prose of 5GT suggests to be the case in this instance (although the expansion is not metrically required here). In both the Latin tradition and 5GT, it is considered a vice. The semantics of *skarbrott* (and *hiatus*) is somewhat at odds with the description of the phenomenon in 5GT. *Skarbrott* is not described as a gap between vowels, but only as the addition of a short syllable. I believe, however, that this may be explained partly on pragmatic grounds and partly by the lack of a perfect conceptual match in the Latin tradition. In fact, vowel collision is on the whole not a problem in Old Norse poetry, that is, vowels may generally collide without it being considered a vice. Words like *ek* and *er* (as in our example), however, when



cliticized, tend to undergo elision. The vice is thus really one of lacking elision and thus the addition (or really retention) of a short syllable. This phenomenon is described by Donatus, with the example of *abiisse* for *abisse*, but it does not receive its own name. Rather, Donatus simply talks about *adiectio syllabae* (addition of a syllable; Holtz (ed.) 1981: 653). Unlike *hiatus*, however, which occurs between words (Donatus gives no example, but *musa amabit* and *musae aonides* may be found in relevant commentaries; see note 16 below), *adiectio syllabae* is found within a word. The phenomenon described in 5GT thus has one feature from each category – an extra syllable and word division – but once the syllable is added, the result is *hiatus*. It is presumably for this reason that the author opted for a calque on *hiatus*. The descriptive prose, however, focuses on the aspect of this phenomenon that someone acquainted with skaldic poetry would have seen as the real problem (an extra vowel in a word which would normally undergo elision when cliticized, not the vowel gap *per se*). At this point, then, the text appears to display a tension between oral pragmatics and learned ambitions. This tension further strengthens the case for *skarbrott* being a calque: the problem described in the prose is not what the internal semantics of the word suggests. Rather, these semantics derive from somewhere else than the author's own feelings for skaldic decorum and thus, presumably, from a Latin source and a different poetic tradition.

For the present argument, it is important to attempt a reconstruction of the textual background of the calque on *hiatus* found in 5GT, to see whether it is likely to derive from 3GT, from the vorlage of 3GT, or from some other source. In 3GT, the vice of *hiatus* is omitted from the list of *cacosyntheta* (bad compounds) which Óláfr has taken from Donatus (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 69). Slightly later he describes the phenomenon, again without naming it (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 71). Rather, he subsumes it under *collisiones*, which makes intuitive sense, but Donatus conceptualizes the figure as a gap, not as a collision. The calque on the word in 5GT can thus not derive from 3GT, where it is not present. It could, however, derive from the Latin vorlage of 3GT, provided that the presence of the word can plausibly be assumed there. *Hiatus* appears twice in Donatus's text, and it is thus not likely that it would have been, for instance, illegible due to a lacuna which in any event has not affected the surrounding words (Holtz (ed.) 1981: 654). Óláfr, however, appears to have used a commented version of Donatus's text, and in the case of *hiatus*, verbal similarities point to a line of transmission from Sedulius's commentary. For reasons that will be explored in a forthcoming article,

the actual vorlage is likely to have been Pseudo-Remigius's commentary, blending Sedulius and Muretach, rather than Sedulius in his own right, but the point is moot for the present argument, since Pseudo-Remigius here follows Sedulius.<sup>13</sup> The key notion here is that the vowels in *hiatus* should be *similiter longae/jafnlangir* (of equal length), an observation which I have not found elsewhere. Thus, for instance, one text that may be counted as equally fundamental within grammatical studies as Priscian and Donatus, and one which is known to have existed in Iceland, is the first book of Isidore's *Etymologiae*, and in its definition of *hiatus*, there is nothing about vowel length.<sup>14</sup> In the Sedulius/Pseudo-Remigius discussion of *hiatus*, the word is not mentioned twice, as in Donatus, but four times (Löfstedt (ed.) 1977: 332–34). In the event that Óláfr used a commentary that differed somewhat from that of Pseudo-Remigius, one would still expect that the word would be mentioned at least as many times as in Donatus, and probably more. It is thus highly likely that the word would have been present in Óláfr's vorlage and that Óláfr actively chose to omit it. His reasons for doing so must probably remain obscure, but may possibly be linked to the fact that Donatus's texts is somewhat ambiguous regarding whether *hiatus* should be understood as the common designation for all *cacosyntheta* or if it applies only to one of them.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Valeria Micillo has convincingly argued that the translation of *Barbarismus* is based on a tradition that derives from the Carolingian commentaries of Muretach and Sedulius (Micillo 1993 and 1999; she also discusses the *Ars laureshamensis*, but this text appears to have no independent value in relation to the *Barbarismus*). The problem, however, is that these are two commentaries, not one, and that none of them can therefore be the direct vorlage of the Icelandic translation. Pseudo-Remigius's commentary contains the relevant passages as well as some additional material that is unique to Pseudo-Remigius and the Icelandic translation, and it is therefore likely that Pseudo-Remigius was the main vorlage for the translation (Males forthcoming).

<sup>14</sup> Lindsay (ed.) 1911: 59. On the influence of *Etymologiae* 1, see, for instance, Irvine 1994: 212. There is at least one fragment of the *Etymologiae* in Iceland (Geert Andersen 2008: 132). It is listed in two monastic inventories from 1396 and 1397 (Olmer 1902: 53). Large parts of it are translated in the Old Norse Pentateuch paraphrase *Stjórn* (Astås 1991: 25–25, 81–82, 180–81). Finally, there are fragments of two copies from medieval Norway (Karlsen 2013: 229–30).

<sup>15</sup> 'Fiunt etiam barbarismi per hiatus. Sunt etiam malae compositiones, id est cacosyntheta, quas nonnulli barbarismos putant, in quibus sunt mytacismi, labdacismi, iotacismi, hiatus, conlisiones et omnia, quae plus aequo minusue sonantia ab eruditis auribus respuuntur.' (Holtz (ed.) 1981: 654) (Barbarisms also come about through *hiatus* [plural, which may be taken as referring to the following, in particular since *hiatus* is included there]. There are also bad compounds, that is, *cacosyntheta*, which many consider barbarisms, among which are mytacisms, labdacisms, iotacisms, hiatus, collisions and all things that produce more or less sound than they should and are rejected by learned ears.) What, precisely, is *hiatus* here – a synonym to *cacosyntheta* or one of the various such?

Whatever his precise reason for the omission, however, Óláfr clearly knows what *hiatus* is, since he places its description at the proper point in the list and gets it right, according to Donatus and Sedulius/Pseudo-Remigius.<sup>16</sup>

To return now to 5GT, we saw that *skarbrott* is likely to be a calque on *hiatus* and that it is described as a vice, which is also the case with *hiatus*. These factors, when taken together, suggest that the figure in 5GT has a Latin background in a text on linguistic vices. It can hardly draw its description from 3GT, since the word *hiatus* is suppressed there, so that there would have been no basis for the calque. The two most likely candidates, since they were widespread and are known to have existed in Iceland, are the *Barbarismus* with commentary and book one of the *Etymologiae*. The *Barbarismus* is the more likely of the two, since it was used by Óláfr for similar purposes and since the textual connection between 5GT and 3GT, as well as the copying of the two texts into the same manuscript, suggests that they have been present in the same scriptorium. On internal grounds, however, it cannot be decided whether Donatus or Isidore is the giver, and the present argument is open to both options, as well as more remote possible givers within Latin literature.

The problem with this interpretation, however, is that the manuscript reading is ‘Skular’ rather than \**Skúla er*. The poetic example thus features elision, whereas the prose clearly describes lack of elision (resulting in *hiatus*).<sup>17</sup> Elision is not a vice, either in Latin or in skaldic practice and theory (Snorri calls it *bragarmál*; see Faulkes (ed.) 1998: 8), and the prose is internally consistent and unambiguous. I see two possible explanations to this apparent contradiction between the prose and the poetic example. The first is that the author chose to represent the verse as it ought to have been and left it to the reader to add the extra syllable and thus the flaw. ‘Skular’ is certainly *lectio difficilior*, which may speak in favour of this interpretation. The second is that a scribe has ‘emended’ \**Skúla er* to

<sup>16</sup> The examples in Sedulius/Pseudo-Remigius show that *hiatus* could involve vowels of different quality (Sedulius/Pseudo-Remigius: *musa amabit vel musae aonides*), and the text specifies that they should either be alike or of like length to belong to the vice of *hiatus* (Löfstedt (ed.) 1977: 332, 334). Óláfr says that they should be of like length but does not mention quality, but provides both like and different quality in the example he gives: *Þorði Iðja orða* (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 71).

<sup>17</sup> This is a peculiar way of representing elision, because while elision of *e* in *er* (or *es*) in scribal practice could be represented graphically after a pronoun or an adverb, this is otherwise never the case after a proper name like Skúli (Konráð Gíslason 1846: 231–32, 235–37). At least one other instance of elision is present in A itself, namely ‘*hræddir ro*’ (= *hræddir ’ro*) for *hræddir eru* (7v l. 33).

‘Skular’ based on the concept of *bragarmál*.<sup>18</sup> Scholars have suggested that the prose, rather than the poetry, is corrupt, and that the concept that the author intended to describe was indeed *bragarmál*, but under another name (Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: 321–22; Sverrir Tómasson 1997: 191). This can hardly be the case, since the text clearly states that *skarbrott* is a vice, which *bragarmál* is not. No matter exactly how the form of the example should be explained, then, I believe that the internal consistency and circumstantial plausibility of the prose must be respected. This leaves us with the calque on *hiatus*, and thus the connection to a Latin text, intact.

Concerning the terminology, the first point to notice is that the author follows Snorri’s principle of using vernacular terminology only, rather than loan words or a blend of the two. At least the first and last figure appear to be more indebted to Latin than skaldic tradition, and it is therefore likely that the author invented them (this is particularly evident in the calque *skarbrott*), but in doing so, he took pains to avoid any Latin flavour. With some simplification, one may say that the author of 5GT occupies a middle position within Icelandic poetics; Snorri and *Litla Skálda* use vernacular terminology and a pragmatic template based on tradition, 5GT uses vernacular terminology but a predominantly Latinate template, whereas 3GT and 4GT use mainly Latin terminology and templates alike (since they are translations, the template was bound to be Latinate; on terminology, see Kristján Árnason 2016). Second, all three figures in 5GT are either entirely optional or even ‘less pleasant’, according to common skaldic use. This is quite contrary to Snorri’s *Háttatal*, which gives examples of recurrent patterns and what one should do, but generally not of possible embellishments and what to avoid.<sup>19</sup> *Skáld-*

<sup>18</sup> A possible source of inspiration to the graphic representation may be found in the R and T text of *Háttatal*, where elision (*bragarmál*) is exemplified by quoting a couplet by Þórarinn máhliðingr: *Varðak mik þars myrðir | morðfárs vega þorði* (I defended myself [...] where the battle-harm’s [sword’s] killer [warrior] dared to fight). Here, elision is twice represented graphically, in *varðak* for *varða ek* and *þars* for *þar es* (Faulkes (ed.) 2007: 8). R has ‘Uarðat’ and ‘þorþu’, which does not allow for a meaningful reading (GKS 2367 4to, fol. 46 r l. 7; cf. Finnur Jónsson (ed.) 1912–15 vol. A I: 111 (1)). *Varðat* is not an instance of elision, but rather of use of the enclitic negative particle *-t*. This reading has, however, clearly arisen through the common misreading of *t* for *c* (the R-scribe otherwise mostly uses *k*). Unlike the form *Skúla’r*, these are instances where elision is sometimes represented in writing, but generally it is not.

<sup>19</sup> In the commentary to *Háttatal*, partial exceptions can be found, but they do not alter the tenor of the work. Thus, for instance, Snorri says that it is more beautiful to use fewer kennings than he does in his sample stanza for *sannkenningar* (Faulkes (ed.) 2007: 6), and he on several occasions says what one should not do but, crucially and in contrast to Donatus, 3GT, and 5GT, he does not give poetic examples of such features. His regularization of the loose style of the early poets may be the clearest example of how he seeks to give examples only of what one should do (Faulkes (ed.) 2007: 24–26).

*skaparmál*, too, is more prescriptive than prohibitive. There is, however, one treatise which shares this distribution of the prohibitive and the optional, namely the second part of 3GT, Óláfr's translation of Donatus's *Barbarismus*. Here, we find the figure of (-)garð described by using the same poetic example, but its name is given as *macrologia*. We also find *hiatus*, though without a name. Unusually long consonant clusters in hendings are specific to skaldic poetry and are not found in 3GT, but collisions of various letters are described there and the figure thus fits well into that conceptual framework. In practice, then, the fragment of 5GT appears to be something approaching a nativizing *Barbarismus*, albeit an incoherent one, mixing vices and virtues. This may seem a hefty conclusion to draw from so small a fragment; can we really say that this text is more nativizing than 3GT and that this impression is not simply due to the chance preservation of a portion of the treatise where vernacular terms are used, as they sometimes are in 3GT itself? I believe that we can. First, no portion of 3GT uses vernacular terms as consistently as 5GT. Second, the same concept is illustrated by the same poetic example in both treatises, the only major difference being the choice of Latin versus vernacular terminology. This corroborates the overall impression that the author of 5GT consciously uses vernacular terminology.

## 5GT within the Evolution of Icelandic Poetics

What kind of a text, then, is 5GT, and what is its place within the evolution of Icelandic poetics? I believe that the possibility that 5GT originally served as the beginning of 3GT, as one might perhaps surmise based on the layout of A, can be ruled out. 3GT begins with a two-line initial and the rubric *at greina hljóð*, but without a comprehensive rubric for the entire treatise. As already mentioned, however, *Litla Skálda* and *Skáldskaparmál* are also presented as a single treatise after 3GT, and it is very unlikely that this was originally the case. More importantly, 5GT and 3GT cover much of the same ground, and while the first is an original work, the second is a translation. They thus represent different kinds of undertakings, and it is difficult to see why a redundant original work would have been composed as an introduction to the translation. I thus think that we may safely assume that the two texts originated as separate treatises. With regard to the order of composition, it bears repetition that Guðbrandr's verse is quoted in both texts to illustrate the same phenom-

enon, a convergence too striking to be coincidental. This suggests that the author of 5GT must have had some connection to Óláfr's translation, either as giver or taker. It is on general grounds difficult to see why someone acquainted with 3GT would compose 5GT after the massive, synthetic, and mature undertaking of 3GT. There is also a more specific reason why it is likely that 5GT preceded 3GT. The meaning of the elements, as well as of the compound as a whole, of the word *skarbrott* in 5GT suggest that it is calque on *hiatus*, and this is further corroborated by the tension between the description and the semantics of the word. Since Óláfr had for his own reasons suppressed that term in 3GT, the author of 5GT must have been acquainted either with the Latin vorlage of 3GT or a closely related text (such as the Donatus-based paragraphs on the same topics in the *Etymologiae*). But why go through the trouble of finding and reading that text in order to produce such a humble treatise as 5GT (consider here the jumbled arrangement and terse definitions of figures in 5GT) if the groundwork had already been done on a much more ambitious scale in a text which the author himself drew on, as is shown by the overlapping use of the quotation by Guðbrandr? This can, I believe, be ruled out as an inherently unlikely procedure. The opposite order, by contrast, makes a great deal of sense: in 5GT, we encounter an author who tries out a nativizing model for Latin-derived poetics. Precedence for the nativizing mode had been set by Snorri in his *Edda*. One might perhaps have expected that translation would come first, original works later, and that 5GT would thus be a later text than 3GT, but as the chronological relation between Snorri's nativizing *Edda* and the Latinate 3GT shows, the opposite development seems to have taken place within Icelandic poetics. The same can be said of the relation between 1GT (c. 1150) and the first part of 3GT, both treating orthography rather than poetics: 1GT is an original work using vernacular terminology, the first part of 3GT is a translation using Latin and vernacular terminology alike. The progression from more to less original thus makes sense within the internal developments of Icelandic poetics and grammar.

Based on this initial experiment with a nativizing framing of Latin learning, Óláfr – either as author or reader of 5GT, as shown by the Guðbrandr quotation – set out to derive the authority of 3GT not exclusively from local tradition, but rather to import some of the regard for Donatus outright into the vernacular, using loan words and explicit references to the Latin master. As far as we can tell, this was a novel approach within grammatical studies in Iceland, at odds with Snorri and *Litla Skálda* (if indeed *Litla Skálda* existed at the time), but also with 1GT, albeit this

treatise deals with orthography rather than poetics. Whether Óláfr himself was the originator of this first attempt or not must perhaps remain open to some doubt, but many factors suggest that he was. 5GT has a *post quem* of c. 1231 and appears to have been used in 3GT, giving an *ante quem* of c. 1250. It is thus probably contemporary with Óláfr. The author of 5GT has some textual connection to 3GT, as shown by the Guðbrandr quotation, and this is further supported by the use of the imagery of overlapping planks for metrical phenomena in both texts. The author of 5GT also made use of the vorlage of 3GT or of some closely related Latin text, suggesting that he was active in a milieu where similar Latin texts were read for similar purposes. Furthermore, 5GT is associated with and perhaps attributed to Óláfr in A, and the texts in the MS are otherwise authored/compiled by Óláfr and his uncle (albeit Snorri's *Edda* is a somewhat amorphous entity). All of these factors suggest Óláfr as the most likely author, but more importantly, I believe that the overall connection to Óláfr's intellectual milieu may be considered as secure. This allows us to draw some important conclusions about the development of Icelandic poetics in the thirteenth century.

When compared with other texts, 5GT shows us that Icelandic intellectuals of the period c. 1150–1350 came up with at least three solutions to the problem of how to apply the Latinate format of a learned treatise to vernacular poetics. Snorri's *Edda* and *Litla Skálda* are nativizing with regard to style and content alike. 3–4GT are predominantly Latinate in both style and content. 5GT is as nativizing as Snorri in its style, but its contents are fundamentally Latinate, although the Donatan template does not affect its organization. 5GT thus forms a link between nativizing and Latinate approaches. Its importance for the development of Icelandic poetics is thus far greater than its content and state of preservation might suggest. The treatise indicates that the step from nativizing to Latinate poetics was one which required considerable intellectual efforts to take and that it was not done all at once. The strategies not only of Snorri, but also of other Icelandic authors, had suggested a nativizing approach. With 5GT, we get a glimpse of how one Icelandic intellectual tried to negotiate the space between vernacular and Latinate poetics. Only after that, in a text that drew on the initial experiences of 5GT, do we encounter a true masterpiece, ingeniously adapting Priscian and Donatus to accommodate both runes and skaldic poetry. With 3GT, the new Latinate approach was established and Óláfr's anonymous fourteenth-century continuator had a clear method to follow in the composition of 4GT (on 4GT, see Björn M. Ólsen (ed.) 1884: xlii–xliv; Clunies Ross and

Wellendorf (eds.) 2014: xi–lvi). This analysis is, I believe, of fundamental importance for understanding the development of Icelandic poetics, but it is also of general interest with regard to translation strategies. It seems likely that it was the extremely prestigious art of skaldic poetry that here upset what one might expect to be the normal progression from translation to independent production of texts. In this instance, Latin learning had to undergo several stages of adaptation to what was, in reality if not in theory, the dominant discourse on the topic. This view of the relative dominance of the vernacular versus Latin opens for a nuanced discussion of exactly when, and in what contexts, Latin was indeed dominant. This story is less straightforward and more interesting than a simple top-down analysis would suggest. In thirteenth-century Iceland, what strikes the eye is not the passive reception of Latin learning. Rather, the individual enters center stage, boldly adapting external influences to whatever use he finds most expedient. For all its humble appearances, then, 5GT reveals some of the dynamics behind the creative force whose effects can be seen across the literary landscape of thirteenth-century Iceland.

## Manuscripts

- A: Reykjavik, AM 748 Ib 4to, c. 1300–1325 (*ONP Registre*, p. 464).  
 Reykjavik, AM 757 b 4to, c. 1400–1500 (*ONP Registre*, p. 464).  
 B: Reykjavik, AM 757 a 4to, c. 1400 (*ONP Registre*, p. 464).  
 R: Reykjavik, GKS 2367 4to (*Codex Regius*), c. 1300–1350 (*ONP Registre*, p. 472).  
 T: Utrecht, University Library, 1374, c. 1595, but believed to be a copy of a lost medieval exemplar (Snorri Sturluson, *Edda. Prologue and Gylfaginning*, ed. Anthony Faulkes. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2005), p. xxviii).  
 W: Copenhagen, AM 242 fol (*Codex Wormianus*) c. 1340–70 (*ONP Registre*, p. 438; Karl G. Johansson, *Studier i Codex Wormianus*, pp. 17–18).  
 U: Uppsala, University Library, DG 11 4to (*Codex Upsaliensis*), c. 1300–1325 (*ONP Registre*, p. 469).

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