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**Quia, quoniam, and information
management in Plautus**

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Abstract: This paper analyzes the Latin subordinate conjunctions *quia* and *quoniam* in Plautus' comedies. Previous studies have shown that *quia* and *quoniam* play an important role in managing the information flow of a discourse. Clauses introduced by *quia* typically contain information that is new to the addressee, while *quoniam*-clauses tend to present information that belongs to the speech participants' common ground. Our analysis shows that in Plautus, *quia* and *quoniam* each appear in specific communicative contexts that reflect their information management properties. We also demonstrate how Plautus exploits these characteristics of *quia* and *quoniam* to manipulate the information flow on stage for the purpose of audience entertainment.

Keywords: causal clauses; common ground; drama; information management; Plautus; *quia*; *quoniam*

1 Introduction

A number of recent studies in Latin and Ancient Greek linguistics have explored the way in which speakers/writers anchor new information to the knowledge that they already share (or expect or pretend to share) with their addressee(s), emphasizing that this process is crucial for successful communication.¹ Shared knowledge has been studied by Clark, who calls it *common ground* (Clark 1996: Ch. 4). Clark distinguishes between two types of common ground. *Communal common ground*

¹ For an introduction to this topic, see Kroon (2016).

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originates in the speech participants' membership of the same cultural community, and concerns cultural values, ideas, and conventions. *Personal common ground* covers the speech participants' shared perceptual surroundings and their previous interactional record, as well as their private memories.²

An example of a common ground marker in Latin is the particle *enim*, whose communicative function has been described in detail by Kroon (1995: 185). Kroon shows that “an *enim*-unit often contains information that counts as already shared knowledge of the speaker and addressee” (Kroon 1995: 185). In other words, *enim* indicates that the information provided by the unit in which it occurs belongs to the speech participants' common ground. This is exemplified in (1) below, where Seneca uses *enim* to appeal to the addressee's knowledge about dramatic actors.³

- (1) (Sen. *epist.* 11.7)
Artifices scaenici [...] hoc indicio imitantur uerecundiam: deiciunt enim uultum, uerba submittunt, figunt in terram oculos et deprimunt.
 ‘Actors in the theatre [...] imitate bashfulness by means of the following signs: they hang, **as you know (*enim*)**, their heads, lower their voices, and keep their eyes fixed and rooted upon the ground.’

Other linguistic elements that anchor their utterance to common ground are the Latin proximal demonstrative *hic* (Breunese 2022; Kroon 2017: 585–612), the Latin and Greek adversative particles and negations (Allan 2017; Allan and van Gils 2016) and the Latin historic present (van Gils and Kroon 2019).

The difference between several Latin causal subordinate conjunctions has been described in terms of common ground as well. Various studies have observed that *quia* and *quod* introduce subordinate clauses that contain new information, while clauses introduced by *quoniam* and *quando* present common ground (Baños 2011; Bolkestein 1991; Fantoli 2021; Fugier 1989; Kroon 2014; Mellet 1995; Pinkster 2010). In this paper, we will focus on *quia* and *quoniam*, which are exemplified in (2) and (3) below. In (2), Cicero explains to Atticus why he has sent him a letter despite the fact that he has nothing new to report. He reveals his motivation in a *quia*-clause. In (3), Cicero uses a *quoniam*-clause to justify repeating himself. The *quoniam*-clause refers to Atticus' initial repetition of a question, a piece of personal common ground that originates in the two friends' previous interaction.

2 For the connection between common ground and Gricean implicature (and presupposition), see Clark (1996).

3 Example, text, and translation by Kroon (1995: 185).

- (2) (Cic. Att. 12. 53)
*Ego, etsi nihil habeo quod ad te scribam, scribo tamen **quia** tecum loqui uideor.*
 ‘Although I have nothing to write to you, I write all the same **because** I feel that I am talking to you.’⁴
- (3) (Cic. Att. 8. 4. 2)
*Sed **quoniam** saepius de nominibus quaeris quid placeat, ego quoque tibi saepius respondeo placere.*
 ‘**Since** you repeat your question as to my wishes regarding the bonds, I too repeat my answer, that I do wish.’

In line with their divergent common ground properties, *quia* and *quoniam* have distinct communicative functions (Bolkestein 1991; Fantoli 2021; Fugier 1989; Mellet 1995; Pinkster 2010). Speakers use *quoniam*-clauses to justify, motivate, or explain their utterance in the main clause by drawing on their common ground with the addressee. *Quoniam* frequently occurs in contexts where speakers want to prevent criticism on or debate about their statements and expressive choices. For instance, in example (3) above, Cicero uses a *quoniam*-clause to justify repeating his answer, which may appear redundant in Atticus’ eyes. *Quia*-clauses, on the other hand, usually indicate a relation of causality between two events or states of affairs in the extra-linguistic world. Providing new information, clauses introduced by *quia* often occur in dialogues to answer WH-questions, such as in (4).⁵

- (4) (Pl. Amph. 552–554)
 AMPH *scelestissimum te arbitror. sos nam quam ob rem?*
 AMPH ***quia** id quod neque est nec fuit nec futurum est mihi praedicas.*
 ‘AMPH I think you’re a hardened criminal. sos But why? AMPH **Because** you’re telling me something that doesn’t exist, hasn’t existed, and won’t exist.’

Quia and *quoniam* also differ syntactically. While *quia*-clauses are integrated in the main clause, *quoniam*-clauses are, in Pinkster’s (2015: Ch. 2.10) terminology, disjuncts.⁶ That is, they are not integrated in the main clause, but constitute separate communicative units.

4 The texts and translations for Cicero are by Shackleton Bailey (1999). Those for Plautus are, unless otherwise specified, by de Melo (2011–2013).

5 For two more examples of *quia* in Plautus, see Cuzzolin (2013: 59).

6 See, e.g., Kroon (2014: 69) for the syntactic integration of *quia*-clauses in the main clause, an indication of which is the fact that they frequently have an antecedent in the main clause (e.g. *eo miser sum quia male illi feci*; Pl. *Capt.* 994) (see also Mellet 1995: 224).

The research on *quia*- and *quoniam*-clauses in Plautus has predominantly focused on the position of these clauses relative to the main clause. Various studies have shown that *quoniam*-clauses usually precede the main clause, such as in (3) above, while *quia*-clauses tend to follow it, such as in (2) above.⁷ Although Mellet (1995: 219) reports a different distribution in Plautus' *Amphitruo* and *Asinaria*,⁸ our analysis of *quoniam* in the entire Plautine corpus confirms this trend: *quoniam*-clauses precede the main clause roughly twice as often as they follow it. Furthermore, it is well known that *quoniam*-clauses in Early Latin occasionally reflect the subordinator's temporal origin (*quoniam* < **quom* + *iam*), such as in (5).⁹

(5) (Pl. *Most.* 1048–1050)

TRA *postquam ex oppidione in tutum eduxi manuplaris meos,
capio consilium ut senatum congerronum conuocem.*

quoniam *conuocauit, atque illi me ex senatu segregant.* 1050

‘TRA After I led all my comrades from siege to safety, I come up with the plan of calling together a senate meeting of debauchees. **When** I've assembled them, they exclude me from the senate meeting at once.’

Our aim in this study is to complement the existing picture of *quia* and *quoniam* in Plautus' comedies in two ways. First, we aim to provide a more detailed account of the relationship of *quia* and *quoniam* to common ground in Plautus, discussing the two types of common ground (*personal* and *communal* common ground) introduced by Clark (1996) as well as the combination of *quia* with the common ground marking particle *enim*. This is the topic of Section 2. Second, we will explore the ways in which Plautus exploits the specific characteristics of *quia* and *quoniam* to control the information flow on stage. We will show that each conjunction is associated with specific communicative contexts that are directly connected to its information management properties. Since the audience at a dramatic performance often knows more (or less) than (some of) the characters on stage, an analysis of information management in this genre should always determine the informational value of an utterance for the characters as well as for the spectators (Pfister 1988: 40). Therefore, Section 3 will analyze the way in which Plautus' characters exploit the specific properties of *quia* and *quoniam* for their own communicative purposes in dialogues

7 For a recent overview of the data, see Baños (2014: 112). See also Szantyr (1972: 626–627), who discusses a number of passages from Plautus.

8 Mellet (1995: 219) observes that *quoniam*-clauses in Plautus' *Amphitruo* and *Asinaria* precede the main clause ($n = 4$) slightly less often than they follow it ($n = 5$).

9 See, e.g., Baños (2011: 209–210). The temporal use of *quoniam* occurs very rarely after Plautus, according to Lindsay (1907: 21). Lindsay also observes that instances of *quoniam* in Plautus are usually on the borderline between a temporal and a causal interpretation. For the development of causal meaning from temporal meaning, see, e.g., Hopper and Traugott (2003: 91).

with each other, while Section 4 will shift the attention towards the spectators as the implied recipients or addressees of information expressed in *quia*- and *quoniam*-clauses. We conclude that Plautus often uses *quia* and *quoniam* to manipulate the information flow on stage with the intention of entertaining his spectators. The function of these conjunctions is thus strongly linked to the comic genre of his performances.

2 *Quoniam* and *quia* in Plautus

There are 51 *quoniam*-clauses in Plautus' plays.¹⁰ All of these contain personal – as opposed to communal – common ground, drawing on the speech participants' shared perceptual context, previous conversation(s), or private memories. This is not surprising, as common ground in drama predominantly relies on a shared fictional world. For instance, the *quoniam*-clause in example (6) evokes the speech participants' perceptual common ground: the content of the subordinate clause (Daemones' presence in the speech situation) is visually accessible to the addressees.

- (6) (Pl. *Rud.* 1049–1051)
 DAE *ego uos saluas sistam, ne timete. sed quid uos foras*
prosequimini? quoniam ego assum, faciet nemo iniuriam; 1050
ite, inquam, domum ambo nunciam. ex praesidio praesides!
 'DAE I'll make sure you're safe, stop being afraid. (to the slaves) But why are you following me out? **Since** I am with them, no one will do them an injustice. Both of you, I'm telling you, go home now. Guards, off guard!'

More frequently, the common ground in *quoniam*-clauses originates in the previous discourse, such as in example (7) from *Amphitruo*. After informing the audience about his failure to thank the gods upon his safe return from abroad in 180–181, Sosia expects this piece of information to be common ground, and he refers to it again in a *quoniam*-clause in 184.

- (7) (Pl. *Amph.* 180–184)
 SOS *sum uero uerna uerbero: numero mihi in mentem fuit* 180
dis aduenientem gratias pro meritis agere atque alloqui?
ne illi edepol si merito meo referre studeant gratiam,
aliquem hominem allegent qui mihi aduenienti os occillet probe,
quoniam bene quae in me fecerunt ingrata ea habui atque irrita.

¹⁰ In the edition of de Melo (2011–2013). The Teubner editions of Goetz and Schoell read *quoniam* two more times, viz. in *Aul.* 377 and *Stich.* 556, but de Melo reads *quom* instead of *quoniam* in these lines.

‘sos I really am a slave fit for a beating: when I arrived, it didn’t occur to me too quickly to thank the gods for their good turns and to address them, did it? Seriously, if they were keen to thank me for my good turns, they’d send somebody to smash up my face properly on my arrival, **since** I felt no gratitude for the good they did me and didn’t appreciate it.’

Apart from the speech participants’ joint perceptual context and previous conversations, clauses introduced by *quoniam* also evoke their shared memories. These memories frequently originate in the preceding fictional action.¹¹ Consider, for instance, excerpt (8) from *Asinaria*, which presents part of a conversation between the *adulescens* Argyrippus and his slaves Libanus and Leonida. Argyrippus needs money to buy the freedom of his girlfriend Philaenium, who is also present on stage. Libanus has acquired this money, and the two slaves take advantage of their situation by promising Argyrippus the money on several conditions. First, they force Philaenium to kiss Leonida and Argyrippus to rub his knees, after which Libanus wants to take a ride on Argyrippus’ back. After this humiliating experience, Argyrippus refers to the slaves’ games in a *quoniam*-clause. The fact that these games have been performed is known to the speech participants based on their previous shared experiences.

(8) (Pl. *Asin.* 711–712)

ARG *quid nunc, amabo? quoniam, ut est lubitum, nos delusistis, datisne argentum?*

‘ARG What now, please? **Now that** you two have had your fun with us as you liked, are you giving us the money?’

Subordinate clauses introduced by *quoniam* are often connected to common ground in two ways. In addition to the informational content of the *quoniam*-clause, as we have hitherto discussed, the causal relationship that holds between the contents of the subordinate clause and the main clause typically belongs to the speech participants’ common ground as well. This is illustrated by the excerpt from *Asinaria* in (8) above. The previous agreement between Argyrippus and Libanus – viz. that Argyrippus would receive the money after undergoing a number of humiliations – forms the connection between the *quoniam*-clause and the main clause. After the humiliations, Argyrippus draws on this agreement to justify his request for the money in 712. Interestingly, although the information expressed in *quoniam*-clauses usually concerns *personal* common ground, their causal relationship with the contents of the main clause frequently constitutes *communal* common ground, as we will discuss later (examples [15] and [26]).

¹¹ This common ground between the characters is, of course, not private *sensu stricto*, as their previous joint conversations and activities have been witnessed by the spectators.

Quoniam-clauses with a temporal meaning often contain common ground as well. Risselada showed that temporal subordinate clauses typically describe background information to the plot, presenting events that serve as a starting point for the more central event(s) expressed in the main clause (Risselada 1997: 107–109). These subordinate clauses often recapitulate events that have previously been narrated. In other words, they contain discourse-based common ground. Temporal *quoniam*-clauses in Plautus do the same. For instance, in example (5) above, the *quoniam*-clause summarized the information expressed in the preceding clause, even repeating the verb *conuocare*.

According to Risselada, temporal subordinate clauses occasionally also describe a new event in the story. By expressing this event in a subordinate clause, the author labels it as background information, and speeds up his narrative. An example from Plautus of *quoniam* used in this way is presented in (9) below. Plautus also uses this strategy to narrate events that have happened during the play but offstage, e.g., in *Merc.* 667.

(9) (Pl. *Aul.* 9–12)

LAR is **quoniam** moritur (ita auideo ingenio fuit),
 numquam indicare id filio uoluit suo,
 inopemque optauit potius eum relinquere
 quam eum thesaurum commonstraret filio; [...].

10

‘LAR **When** he died, he didn’t even want to make this known to his own son – he was so greedy. He wished to leave him penniless rather than show this treasure to his son.’

Section 1 already mentioned that *quia*-clauses frequently answer WH-questions, especially in Plautus.¹² More than half of the *quia*-clauses that we investigated in Plautus are responses to questions. These clauses present new and/or surprising information. Consider, for instance, the excerpt taken from *Poenulus* shown in (10) below, which presents part of a dialogue between two slaves: Milphio serves the play’s *adulescens* Agorastocles and Syncerastus serves the play’s pimp Lycus. Agorastocles is in love with Adelphasium, but her owner Lycus does not allow him to see her. As is frequently the case in Plautus’ comedies, Adelphasium turns out to be a free-born citizen at the end of the play: she was stolen from her parents by pirates when she was a young child. Syncerastus reveals this information in two *quia*-clauses. *Quia* here thus mark a major twist in the plot, which solves Agorastocles’ problems.¹³

¹² For instance, questions introduced by *quid ita?*, as observed by Conlon (2016) in his comment on *Pers.* 592. See also Walker (2005: 468).

¹³ Similarly, in *Curc.* 666–670, a *quia*-clause reveals that the pimp Cappadox is obliged to return the money that he has received for the courtesan Planesium because someone has claimed her as a free-born citizen.

(10) (Pl. *Poen.* 892–897)

SYN *erus si tuos uolt facere frugem, meum erum perdet.* MIL *qui id potest?*

SYN *facile.* MIL *fac ergo id “facile” noscam ego, ut ille possit noscere.*

SYN **quia** *Adelphasium, quam erus deamat tuos, ingenua est.* MIL *quo modo?*

SYN *eodem quo soror illius altera Anterastilis.* 895

MIL *cedo qui id credam.* SYN **quia** *illas emit in Anactorio paruolas de praedone Siculo.*

‘SYN If your master wants to do something useful, he’ll ruin my master. MIL How can he do so? SYN Easily. MIL Then let me learn this “easily,” so that he can learn it. SYN **Because** Adelphasium, whom your master is in love with, is freeborn. MIL How so? SYN In the same way as the other one, her sister Anterastilis. MIL Tell me how I can believe this. SYN **Because** he bought them in Anactorium from a Sicilian pirate when they were little.’

Given that *quia* introduces new information, it is at first sight surprising that we frequently find it in combination with the particle *enim* in Plautus ($n = 21$; see examples [18], [19] and [25]).¹⁴ As we discussed in Section 1, *enim* appeals to the consensus of the interlocutor, and this pragmatic value appears to contrast with the novelty of the information that *quia* typically introduces. Kroon (1995: 188) observes that responses that include *enim* frequently question the relevance of the enquiry or the sincerity of the enquirer, the particle expressing that the answer is obvious and should have immediately been understood. Similarly, a closer examination of all 21 instances of *quia enim* in Plautus, all of which introduce the answer to a request for explanation or clarification, reveals that *enim* appeals to the common ground between the speaker and their addressee, while *quia* indicates the novelty of the information. The combination often appears to reflect the speaker’s impatience and/or irritation with the addressee. Consider, for instance, the three examples of *quia enim* presented below:

(11) (Pl. *Bacch.* 50–51)

PIS *uisus merus uostra est blanditia.* BAC *quid iam?* PIS **quia enim** 50
intellego,

duae unum expetitis palumbem [...].

‘PIS Your flattery is pure birdlime. BAC How so? PIS **Because** I understand you two are trying to catch one pigeon.’

¹⁴ *Quia* combines with *enim* in *Amph.* 666, 1034; *Bacch.* 50; *Capt.* 884; *Cas.* 262, 385; *Curc.* 442, 449; *Epid.* 299; *Merc.* 648; *Mil.* 834, 1001, 1139; *Most.* 1097; *Persa* 86, 108; *Pseud.* 325, 804; *Rud.* 1116; *Truc.* 266, 732. See also Lindsay (1907: 120).

(12) (Pl. *Cas.* 262–263)

LYS *qui, malum, homini scutigerulo dare lubet?* CLEO **quia enim filio nos oportet opitulari unico.**

‘LYS Why the hell do you want to give her to the shield-bearer? CLEO **Because** in fact we ought to help our only son.’

(13) (Pl. *Cas.* 384–385)

OL *sed manedum: num ista aut populna sors aut abiegna est tua?*

CHAL *quid tu id curas?* OL **quia enim metuo ne in aqua summa natet.** 385

‘OL But wait: is that lot of yours made of poplar or fir? CHAL Why are you interested in that? OL **Because** I’m afraid it might swim on the surface of the water.’

Example (11) presents an excerpt from *Bacchides*, taken from a dialogue between Pistoclerus and the play’s two eponymous sisters, who attempt to lure the young man into their house. Pistoclerus sees through their plans and compares their flattery to bird lime. The *quia*-clause explains Pistoclerus’ mysterious comparison,¹⁵ and it reveals to the sisters that he is aware of their malicious objectives. At the same time, *enim* underlines that Pistoclerus’ understanding should not surprise his interlocutors. Pistoclerus might be hinting at the stock prostitutes of Roman comedy, whose tricks and greed were well known.

Excerpt (12) is from Plautus’ *Casina*, which revolves around a music girl who is desired both by the *senex* Lysidamus and his son Euthynicus. When Euthynicus leaves town, Lysidamus attempts to get Casina married to his servant Olympio, hoping that he will have access to her via him. Lysidamus’ wife Cleostrata, however, annoyed at her husband’s trickery, wants to preserve Casina for their son, and suggests to marry the girl off to her own loyal servant Chalinus. She specifies her motivation – viz. the duty of parents towards their sons – in the *quia*-clause in 262–263. The fact that parents should take care of their sons belongs to the speech participants’ communal common ground, but Lysidamus’ current behavior, which deviates from this duty, warrants Cleostrata’s use of *quia* here. The combination of *quia* and *enim* underlines the irony of the situation, and lends an air of impatience to Cleostrata’s lines (‘because, as you should know, we, as parents, have to help our only son [which you are currently not doing]’).

Later in *Casina*, the characters have decided to draw lots to determine who will marry the girl. In lines 384–385, presented in (13), Olympio enquires after the material of Chalinus’ lot, stating his reason for doing so in a clause containing *quia enim*: a poplar lot would be lighter and would therefore float on the water surface, allowing

15 This question–answer structure will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.

Chalinus to manipulate the procedure. This is a strong accusation but, by using *enim*, Olympio implies that the other party is well aware of such tricks. Again, the combination of *quia enim* is used to answer a question with reference to the interlocutors' common ground.

3 *Quoniam* and *quia* in dialogues

The information management properties of *quia* and *quoniam* motivate their occurrence in specific communicative situations in Plautine dialogue. As has been observed before, speakers predominantly use *quoniam* in argumentative contexts to justify their utterance in the main clause. Since *quoniam*-clauses rely on common ground, with which the addressee is expected to agree, using these clauses is a deliberate rhetorical strategy to be as convincing as possible. For instance, requests that are motivated in a *quoniam*-clause can be perceived as unrefusable and pushy because they draw on a consensus between the speech participants. Consider excerpt (14) from *Captiui*, where Philocrates uses a *quoniam*-clause to elicit a reward from Hegio for returning the old man's lost son to him. Although Hegio initially assumes that there is nothing that he can offer in return for Philocrates' good deed (931–933), he eventually complies with the request (937).

(14) (Pl. *Capt.* 930–937)

PHILOC *quid nunc, quoniam tecum seruauī fidem* 930
tibique hunc reducem in libertatem feci? HEG *fecisti ut tibi,*
Philocrates, numquam referre gratiam possim satis,
proinde ut tu promeritu's de me et filio. PHILOP *immo potes,*
pater, et poteris et ego potero, et di eam potestatem dabunt
ut beneficium bene merenti nostro merito munerēs; 935
sicut tu huic potes, pater mi, facere merito maxime.

HEG *quid opust uerbis? lingua nulla est qua negem quicquid roges.*

'PHILOC What of me sir, **now that** I have kept faith with you and secured the liberty of your son here? HEG After the way you have acted, Philocrates, I'm entirely unable to show gratitude enough for your treatment of me and my son. PHILOP No, no, you are able, father, yes, and always will be able, and so shall I be, and Heaven will give you the ability to do a deserved kindness to a man that has been so kind to us. It's just as with this slave here, (*pointing to Stalagmus*) father dear; you're able to give him his full deserts. HEG (*to Philocrates*) It's plain enough, sir, – I have no tongue with which to refuse a request of yours.¹⁶

16 We have printed the translation by Nixon (1916), which reflects the function of *quoniam* here more clearly than the translation by de Melo (2011–2013).

This property of *quoniam*-clauses is frequently manipulated by speakers to suggest something to their interlocutors with which they will most certainly not agree. For instance, in excerpt (15) from *Trinummus*, the play's sycophant uses *quoniam* to present the safe return of his addressee Charmides from abroad as a good occasion to beat him up.

- (15) (Pl. *Trin.* 989–990)
 syc *enim uero serio, quoniam aduenis...*
uapulabis meo arbitrato et nouorum aedilium. 990
 'syc Truly and honestly, **since** you've arrived... you'll get a thrashing on my orders and those of the new aediles.'

This excerpt also illustrates the idea, referred to above, that the causal relationship between the contents of a *quoniam*-clause and its main clause frequently belongs to the speech participants' common ground. It was customary to invite somebody for a meal upon their safe return from abroad. In this excerpt, however, the sycophant uses *quoniam aduenis* to evoke this piece of communal common ground and raise the expectation of an invitation, only to reverse it in the main clause and astound Charmides by suggesting a thrashing instead.

Speakers also manipulate the common ground marking property of *quoniam* to present something as shared knowledge when it is not.¹⁷ Consider, for instance, the use of *quoniam* in excerpt (16) below. In this passage from *Rudens*, Trachalio and Gripus each explain to Daemones what they think should happen to the contents of a trunk which Gripus has caught in his fishing nets. On an earlier occasion, Trachalio had suggested to Gripus that they both keep half of the contents, but he makes a different proposition to Daemones in 1119–1121: apart from a little box, Gripus can keep the contents of the trunk and claim a reward for returning it to its rightful owner. Gripus reacts in 1122, claiming that Trachalio has changed his mind because (*quoniam*) he understands that the trunk is Gripus' by right:

- (16) (Pl. *Rud.* 1119–1123)
 TRA *ut id occepi dicere, senex, eam te quaeso cistulam*
ut iubeas hunc reddere illis; ob eam si quid postulat 1120
sibi mercedis, dabitur: aliud quicquid ibi est habeat sibi.
 GRI *nunc demum istuc dicis, quoniam ius meum esse intellegis:*
dudum dimidiam petebas partem.

17 For a similar observation about *enim*, see Kroon (1995: 196–198).

‘TRA As I’ve begun to say, old man, I ask you to have him return this box to them; if he demands any reward for it, he shall receive it. Whatever else there is he can have for himself. GRI Now at last you’re saying that, **since** you realize that it’s my right; a while ago you were demanding half.’

Griplus uses the verb *intellegis* to construct a point of view for Trachalio with which the latter probably does not agree. Nevertheless, the *quoniam*-clause does present the information as shared between, and accepted by, both speech participants.

In Section 2, we showed that *quoniam*-clauses with a temporal meaning often provide background information to the plot by summarizing an event that has previously been narrated, thereby creating cohesion in narrative passages. These clauses can be used for convincing story-telling. Consider the passage below from *Bacchides*, taken from a dialogue between the *seruus callidus* Chrysalus and his master Nicobulus. Nicobulus’ son Mnesilochus has just returned with Chrysalus from a trip to Ephesus, where they have collected an outstanding debt for his father. Chrysalus tells Nicobulus that, because of an attack by pirates organized by the debtor, they had to leave part of the treasure in a safe temple in Ephesus, from which Nicobulus will be able to recuperate it later. This is, however, a lie: the servant is planning to use part of the money to buy Bacchis, the prostitute with whom Mnesilochus is in love. It is therefore a false narrative, which nevertheless has to sound convincing to avoid suspicions from Nicobulus.

(17) (Pl. *Bacch.* 286–302)

CHRY *is nostrae nauis lembus insidias dabat.*
occepi ego opseruare eos quam rem gerant.
interea e portu nostra nauis soluitur.
ubi portu eximus, homines remigio sequi,
*neque aues nec uenti citius. **quoniam** sentio* 290
quae res gereretur, nauem extemplo statuimus.
quoniam *uident nos stare, occeperunt ratem*
tardare in ponto. NIC edepol mortalis malos!
quid denique agitis? CHRY rursum in portum recipimus.
 NIC *sapienter factum a uobis. quid illi postea?* 295
 CHRY *reuorsionem ad terram faciunt uesperis.*
 NIC *aurum hercle auferre uoluere: ei rei operam dabant.*
 CHRY *non me fefellit, sensi, eo exanimatus fui.*
quoniam *uidemus auro insidias fieri,*
capimus consilium continuo; postridie 300
auferimus aurum omne illis praesentibus,
palam atque aperte, ut illi id factum sciscerent.

‘CHRY That fast-sailer was lying in wait for our ship. I began to observe what they were doing. Meanwhile our ship set sail from the harbor. As we were leaving the harbor, these people were rowing after us: neither birds nor winds are faster. **When (quoniam)** I realized what was going on, we immediately brought the ship to a standstill. **When (quoniam)** they saw us halted, they began to slow down their boat on the open sea. NIC Bad people they are! What did you do in the end? CHRY We returned to the harbor. NIC Wise of you. What did they do after this? CHRY They returned to the shore in the evening. NIC They wanted to steal the gold; that’s what they were after. CHRY It didn’t take me in, I saw through it, that’s why I was beside myself. **Since (quoniam)** we saw that a trap was being set for the gold, we made a plan at once. The next day we took all the gold ashore in their presence, openly and publicly, to let them know that this had been done.’

Chrysalus’ made-up story is a sequence of exciting events. In his commentary on this passage, Barsby (1986) notes that a sense of urgency is conveyed by, amongst other things, the rapid dialogue in iambic senarii, the vivid imagery, and the careful articulation of the narrative, which is marked by temporal particles and adverbs, while temporal and causal clauses build up the tension. The *quoniam*-clauses, by summarizing events that were previously narrated, contribute to this “vivid eyewitness account” (Barsby 1986: 121) and reflect the very plain structure of Chrysalus’ narrative. The present tense forms *sentio* (290), *uidet* (292), and *uidemus* (299), moreover, can be seen as augmenting the liveliness of the account. We mentioned in n. 9 that *quoniam*-clauses are frequently on the border between a temporal and a causal meaning. Accordingly, although the *quoniam*-clauses in the excerpt above reiterate the previous discourse, they do more than simply marking the temporal sequence of events in Chrysalus’ narrative. The clauses in 290 and 299 mark the reasoning of Chrysalus and his companions, presenting the events that occurred as inevitably leading to their own subsequent actions. Nicobulus clearly follows Chrysalus in his interpretation of events. Convinced by his slave’s fake narrative, he even fills in details that the narrator himself does not provide. The *quoniam*-clause in 292 can be interpreted in a similar way as marking the reasoning of the pirates.

Since *quia*-clauses present new information, they occur in completely different communicative contexts and serve different functions than *quoniam*-clauses. Section 2 already showed that *quia*-clauses often introduce unexpected twists in the plot. *Quia*-clauses also occur frequently in a typically Plautine question–answer structure, whereby characters utter an unexpected, paradoxical, or bizarre statement that prompts a request for explanation by their interlocutor, upon which they can deliver

the punchline.¹⁸ This punchline is often introduced by *quia*, such as in excerpt (18) from *Amphitruo*. In 1031, Mercury accuses Amphitryon of being a *prodigus* ‘a spendthrift’. Apart from bearing no apparent relation to the current conversation, this utterance surprises Amphitryon because, as Christenson (2000) points out in his commentary on this passage, the accusation of being financially unreliable contradicts the image of a well-respected *pater familias* such as Amphitryon should be. Amphitryon’s response *quidum?* allows Mercury to explain the contents of his earlier statement:

(18) (Pl. *Amph.* 1031–1034)

MER *prodigum te fuisse oportet olim in adolescentia.*

AMPH *quidum?* MER **quia** *a me mendicas... malum.*

AMPH *cum cruciatu tuo istaec hodie, uerna, uerba funditas.*

MER *sacrufico ego tibi.* AMPH *qui?* MER **quia** *enim te macto infortunio.*

‘MER You must have been a spendthrift back in your youth. AMPH How so? MER **Because** in your old age you’re begging me... for a thrashing. AMPH You’ll suffer for pouring out these words today, slave. MER I’m making a sacrifice to you. AMPH How? MER **Because** I’m giving you an offering of blows.’

A second sequence of this question–answer structure is initiated in 1034, when Mercury claims that he’s making a sacrifice to Amphitryon. Again, we find the combination of *quia* with *enim* that was discussed in Section 2. This *quia*-clause explains Mercury’s confusing statement about a religious ritual in 1031 (‘I’m making a sacrifice to you’) by turning this ritual into an aggressive attack against Amphitryon (‘I’m giving you an offering of blows’). At the same time, the common ground marker *enim* comically suggests that Amphitryon cannot avoid the thrashing, probably because he is already being (or about to be) beaten.

This type of wordplay is often employed by characters who want to showcase their intellectual superiority to their interlocutors. Consider, for instance, the excerpt from *Pseudolus* in (19) below, which shows the pimp Ballio in conversation with Calidorus and Pseudolus. During their dialogue, Ballio, whose exuberant language makes him a worthy opponent of the play’s eponymous clever slave,¹⁹ repeatedly uses *quia*-clauses to play with the expectations of his interlocutors. Calidorus and Pseudolus plead with the pimp to give them more time for finding the money necessary to purchase Calidorus’ girlfriend Phoenicium before somebody

¹⁸ For this question–answer structure, see, e.g., Christenson’s (2000) comment on *Amph.* 664.

¹⁹ See Sharrock (2009: 188) for Ballio’s language as mirroring Pseudolus; see Christenson (2020: e.g., *ad Pseud.* 325) for Ballio’s manipulation of language; see, e.g., Slater (2000: 100–101) for the competition between Ballio and Pseudolus.

else does. Contrary to what pimps typically do in Plautus, Ballio appears to give in to their wishes, and reveals that Phoenicium is not for sale at the moment. This surprising statement is introduced in a *quia*-clause:

- (19) (Pl. *Pseud.* 324–325)
 BAL *immo uin etiam te faciam ex laeto laetantem magis?*
 CALI *quid iam?* BAL **quia** *enim non uenalem iam habeo Phoenicium.* 325
 ‘BAL That’s nothing; do you want me to turn you from joyful to even more joyful? CALI How so? BAL **Because** I don’t intend to sell Phoenicium anymore.’

Later, in line 342, the treacherous pimp reveals that Phoenicium is not for sale because he has already sold her. Before that, however, Ballio has a bit more fun with Calidorus and Pseudolus. In lines 336–339, shown below, Ballio repeatedly uses the question–answer structure outlined above to fool his interlocutors with paradoxical statements, exclaiming first that his death and then that his staying alive is advantageous to them. The two *quia*-clauses in 337 and 338 provide an explanation for sentences that are intended to fool his interlocutors.

- (20) (Pl. *Pseud.* 336–339)
 BAL *ex tua re est ut ego emoriar.* PSEV *quidum?* BAL *ego dicam tibi:*
quia *edepol, dum ego uiuos uiuam, numquam eris frugi bonae.*
ex tua re non est ut ego emoriar. PSEV *quidum?* BAL *sic, quia*
si ego emortuos sim, Athenis te sit nemo nequior.
 ‘BAL It’s to your advantage that I should die. PSEV How so? BAL I’ll tell you: **because** as long as I live my life you’ll never be any good. (after a pause) It’s not to your advantage that I should die. PSEV How so? BAL **Because** if I’m dead, you are the worst man in Athens.’

Characters use a similar type of structure to clarify weird or made-up names. In example (21), for instance, Curculio invents a name for himself (Summanus) and gives a funny explanation for it. Rather than playing with the characters’ and spectators’ expectations in paradoxical statements, such as Ballio did, the *quia*-clause in this passage relies on a pun, explaining the choice of the word *Summanus* with a very irreverent play of words that links the name to urinary incontinence.²⁰

²⁰ Other passages in which *quia*-clauses are used to explain names are *Capt.* 69–70, *Men.* 77–78 (see also *Men.* 263–264), and *Stich.* 174–175. This type of joke appears to be especially favored by parasites in Plautus. For parasites’ obsession with names and naming in Greek and Roman drama, see Tylawsky (2002).

(21) (Pl. *Curc.* 414–416)LYCO *Summane, salve. Qui Summanu's? fac sciam.*CVR **quia** uestimenta <mea>, ubi obdormiui ebrius,

415

summano, ob eam rem me omnes Summanum uocant.

'LYCO Hello, Summanus. How come you're Summanus? Let me know. CUR

Because whenever I'm drunk, I sure act like some anus. For that reason all men call me Summanus.²¹

4 *Quoniam* and *quia* and the information flow on stage

Section 3 considered the use of *quia* and *quoniam* for information management between characters. In this section, we will shift our attention to the spectators. The majority of this section will discuss a number of contexts where the audience knows more than (one or more of) the characters. According to Pfister, this position of “superior awareness” is especially enjoyable for the spectators:

From its position of superior awareness, the audience is able to recognize the discrepancies between the levels of awareness in the individual dramatic figures. It is therefore consciously aware of the ambiguities of every situation, and is thus in a position to judge to what extent the figures' differing assessments of a given situation deviate from the facts. As a contrast to the existential problems of real life, this superior awareness can be very pleasurable. (Pfister 1988: 51)

Consider excerpt (22) from *Aulularia* below. The plot of *Aulularia* revolves around the miserly Euclio, who has found a treasure in his house that he frantically attempts to hide from the other characters throughout the play. Euclio's neighbor Megadorus, who is wealthier than him and of a higher status, wants to marry Euclio's daughter. In a brief conversation, Megadorus asks Euclio to confirm his knowledge about Megadorus' fortune and social status. Afterwards, assuming that he and Euclio are now aware of each other's circumstances, Megadorus asks Euclio for his daughter's hand:

(22) (Pl. *Aul.* 217–219)MEG **quoniam** tu me et ego te qualis sis scio –*quae res recte uortat mihique tibi que tuaeque filiae –**filiam tuam mi uxorem posco. promitte hoc fore.*'MEG **Since** you know what I am like and I know what you are like – may this turn out well for me, you, and your daughter – I'm asking for your daughter's hand. Promise me that it'll happen.'

²¹ The *OLD* defines *submano* as “to run or flow underneath; to be running with moisture underneath.” For the allusion to the divinity *Summanus*, god of nocturnal thunder, see Lefèvre (1991: 104, n. 144).

Megadorus, however, has misestimated the common ground shared between himself and Euclio. He may think that he is familiar with the financial circumstances of Euclio, as the use of *quoniam* suggests, but he does not know that the miserly man has a treasure in his house. The audience, on the other hand, are aware of this fact, which gives Megadorus' lines an air of comic irony.

Although *quia*-clauses do not contain common ground, they are related to common ground management because speakers use *quia* to present information as *not* belonging to common ground. As was the case with *quoniam*, the use of *quia* therefore occasionally leads to misunderstandings that are entertaining for the spectators because characters misestimate the knowledge of their interlocutors. For instance, we find a *quia*-clause at the very heart of one of the most comical scenes of *Aulularia*, part of which is shown in (23) below.²² In this excerpt, Lyconides, after overhearing Euclio's complaint about the theft of his pot of gold (713–726), decides to reveal to the old man that he has raped and impregnated his daughter:

- (23) (Pl. *Aul.* 732–734)
 LYC *animo bono es.*
 EVC *quo, opsecro, pacto esse possum?* LYC **quia** *istuc facinus quod tuom sollicitat animum, id ego feci et fateor.*
 'LYC Cheer up. EVC Please, how can I possibly do that? LYC **Because** that deed which is upsetting you, well, I did it and I admit it.'

The management of information between Lyconides and Euclio fails in multiple ways. First, Lyconides misinterprets Euclio's earlier speech, and thinks the old man is lamenting his daughter's rape and pregnancy, rather than the loss of his treasure. Second, Euclio consequently interprets the rather vague description *istuc facinus quod tuom sollicitat animum*, which Lyconides mistakenly believes is crystal clear, as a reference to the theft of his treasure. Rather than providing the surprising solution to Euclio's problems, as Lyconides had hoped, the *quia*-clause therefore results in Euclio's outrage.

The misunderstanding continues when Euclio asks Lyconides why he has touched his property. Still thinking about Euclio's daughter, Lyconides hopes to give a valid and effective explanation for his behavior with a *quia*-clause: wine and love made him rape the girl.

- (24) (Pl. *Aul.* 744–746)
 EVC *quid tibi ergo meam me inuito tactio est?*
 LYC **quia** *uini uitio atque amoris feci.* EVC *homo audacissime, cum istacin te oratione huc ad me adire ausum, impudens!*

²² See also MacLennan and Stockert (2016: 192).

‘EUC Then why did you touch what was mine without my agreement? LYC
Because I did so through the fault of wine and love. EUC You utterly reckless
 individual, how dare you come here to me with that sort of story, you
 shameless rascal!’

From Euclio’s point of view, Lyconides’ explanation sounds implausible, and his reply indicates that the conversation breaks down at this point. Again, Lyconides’ *quia*-clause does not provide the crucial information that he expected it would. Since the spectators were perfectly aware of the situation presented on stage, they could enjoy and appreciate these ambiguities especially well.

Example (25) below presents an excerpt from *Amphitruo* in which Amphitryon and his slave Sosia return from war to the royal palace in Thebes, where they expect Amphitryon’s wife Alcmena to be awaiting them. Seeing the pregnant Alcmena *saturam* ‘stuffed’ in front of the house prompts Sosia to embark upon a number of jokes that are arranged in the question–answer pattern described above, which Plautus here elaborates to allow Sosia three punchlines (in 665, 666, and 667), the first two of which lead up to the final climactic one.²³ Christenson (2001) has shown that Alcmena’s grotesque pregnancy – once by Jupiter and once by Amphitryon – is thematized throughout *Amphitruo*. Her condition must have been obvious to Sosia, Amphitryon, and the spectators, but in his *quia*-clauses, Sosia deliberately misinterprets Alcmena’s increase in size as an indication of the fact that she has already eaten lunch.²⁴ In other words, Sosia purposely misconstrues a piece of perceptual common ground between himself and his addressee, and he presents his own (obviously wrong) conclusion in a number of *quia*-clauses, which emphasize the newness of his interpretation. The slave’s jokes do not impress Amphitryon, whose reaction in 668 refocuses everybody’s attention on his wife’s pregnancy.

(25) (Pl. *Amph.* 664–668)

SOS *Amphitruo, redire ad nauem meliust nos.* AMPH *qua gratia?*

SOS **quia** *domi daturus nemo est prandium aduenientibus.* 665

AMPH *qui tibi nunc istuc in mentem est?* SOS **quia** *enim sero aduenimus.*

AMPH *qui?* SOS **quia** *Alcumenam ante aedis stare saturam intellego.*

AMPH *gravidam ego illanc hic reliqui quom abeo.*

23 For the sexual connotation of *saturam*, see Christenson (2001: 250–251).

24 Plautus also played with the convention of offering a meal to arriving guests in example (15). The different conjunctions involved – *quoniam* in (15) and *quia* in (25) – neatly reflect a difference in comical structure. In (15), the *quoniam*-clause foreshadows an invitation by drawing on this convention, and the comical effect comes from the reversed conclusion in the main clause. In (25), on the other hand, the convention remains implicit, but a *quia*-clause introduces its current reversal (Alcmena has already eaten lunch and will not provide a meal for her husband) as something surprising.

‘SOS (*seeing Alcumena*) Amphitruo, it’s better if we return to the ship. AMPH Why? SOS **Because** at home no one’s going to give us a lunch on our arrival. AMPH How did that idea occur to you now? SOS Well, **because** we’ve come too late. AMPH How so? SOS **Because** I can see that Alcumena is standing in front of the house, with a well-fed look. AMPH I left her pregnant here when I went away.’

Note again the combination of *quia* and *enim* in 666. Similar to what we described in Section 2, this combination signals the unexpected content of Sosia’s utterance while also emphasizing its connection to common ground. More specifically, although Sosia’s statements are (jokingly) intended to reveal new and surprising information to Amphitryon, the particle *enim* underlines the fact that they are anchored to the perceptual common ground of Sosia and his master: Amphitryon should be able to see everything for himself.

Plautine characters also manage their information flow with the audience when they address the spectators directly. *Quoniam*-clauses play an important role in these contexts as well. Consider excerpt (26) from Mercury’s prologue to *Amphitruo*. In this extraordinarily long prologue, Mercury establishes a great deal of rapport with his audience, which he manages to retain throughout the play.²⁵ The messenger god starts by drawing up a contract between himself and the spectators, offering his financial support in exchange for their silence during the performance. Afterwards, he embarks on a number of digressions, one of which is concerned with the genre of the play. Mercury initially uses the term *tragoedia* (51) for *Amphitruo*, but subsequently uses his divine power to change it into a *tragicomoedia* after the audience’s (scripted) surprise.²⁶

(26) (Pl. *Amph.* 62–63)

MER *quid igitur? Quoniam hic seruos quoque partis habet, faciam sit, proinde ut dixi, tragicoco]moedia.*

‘MER What then? **Since** a slave has a role here as well, I’ll make it, as I said, a tragicomedy.’

In line 62, Mercury uses *quoniam* to draw on (at least) two pieces of common ground with his audience. On the one hand, actors were predominantly slaves in Plautus’ times, and Mercury here continues a string of jokes on the idea that the roles of divine Mercury and Jupiter are played by slaves.²⁷ On the other hand, as Christenson (2000) points out in his comments on this passage, Mercury also plays with the spectators’ expectation that slaves will play a role in *Amphitruo*, which derives from their

25 See Moore (1998: 115).

26 For the performative power of language in the prologue to *Amphitruo*, see Gonçalves (2015: 61).

27 See Christenson (2000), especially on *Amph.* 26–27.

experience with the stock clever slaves that appear in Greek New Comedy. In the *quoniam*-clause, then, Mercury simultaneously evokes two pieces of communal common ground with his spectators: he himself is played by a slave and slaves appear in comedies.²⁸ For the consequence of slaves and gods playing a role in this play (viz. the creation of a mixed genre), Mercury draws on one more piece of communal common ground: Aristotle's ideas about social status as a distinctive characteristic between comedy and tragedy. By explicitly evoking these cultural conventions, Mercury emphasizes the similarity between himself and his spectators, which undoubtedly contributed to his rapport with the audience.

5 Conclusion

In this paper, we have discussed the use of *quia* and *quoniam* in Plautus' comedies. Section 2 focused on the connection of these two conjunctions to common ground. Previous studies have observed that *quia*-clauses typically present new information, while clauses introduced by *quoniam* tend to contain common ground. We showed that in Plautus, *quoniam*-clauses typically contain personal – and not communal – common ground, which originates in the speech participants' shared perceptual and discursive context as well as their previous experiences during the fictional action. Moreover, we argued that the causal relationship between the contents of the main clause and its subordinate *quoniam*-clause often belongs to the speech participants' common ground as well. Interestingly, unlike the content of *quoniam*-clauses, the causal relationship asserted by *quoniam* frequently belongs to the speech participants' communal common ground. Contrary to *quoniam*, *quia* typically occurs in answers to *WH*-questions, introducing new and focal information into the discourse. In Plautus, *quia* frequently combines with the common ground marking particle *enim*, which is at first sight surprising in light of the particle's common ground marking function. In Section 2, we showed that speakers use this combination when they introduce a piece of new information that they nevertheless expect their addressee to understand. This use may carry a hint of impatience on the part of the speaker, similarly to what Kroon (1995: 188) has described for other instances of *enim*.

Sections 3 and 4 focused on the role played by *quia* and *quoniam* in the management of information between characters. Previous studies have shown that

²⁸ Based on Sharrock's (2009: 133–134) interpretation of Mercury and other *servi callidi* in Plautus as playwrights, Risselada (2022) intriguingly suggests a third layer to Mercury's lines: if we interpret *partes habere* as a reference to the direction of the play (for which see *OLD*, *habere* 10c. and 10d.), Mercury here evokes the idea that clever slaves are in charge of the performance, a recurring phenomenon in Plautus.

quoniam's common ground properties make it especially suitable for argumentative contexts, where speakers draw on common ground to justify their utterance in the main clause. Section 3 showed that Plautus' characters exploit this property of *quoniam* for their own purposes, such as justifying an unreasonable request or creating the impression of shared knowledge when there is none. Contrary to *quoniam*, *quia* is known to introduce new information and bring salient elements into a debate. In Plautus, *quia*-clauses also serve to reverse the addressee's and the audience's expectations. Apart from marking central and unexpected turns in the plot, speakers often use *quia*-clauses to fool their addressee (and to entertain the audience) with plays on words and paradoxical statements.

Whereas Section 3 was concerned with the fictional level of the drama, Section 4 discussed *quia* and *quoniam* while taking the perspective of the audience into account. On the one hand, *quia* and *quoniam* are frequently involved in situations where there is a mismatch between the knowledge available to two conversational partners in the fiction, which leads to misunderstandings and, occasionally, a breakdown of the conversation. From their position of superior awareness, the spectators could appreciate the ambiguities of these conversations well, and these scenes must have had a profound comical effect. On the other hand, Plautine characters emphasize that they have common ground with the spectators during audience address to gain their favor and create rapport.

In conclusion, *quia* and *quoniam* in Plautus are associated with their own specific communicative patterns, which are crucially related to their common ground management properties. *Quia*-clauses play an essential role in reversing common ground, either in the creation of misunderstandings in the plot or simply with sentences that underline the unexpected behavior of characters. *Quoniam*-clauses, on the other hand, may draw on common ground to justify bizarre statements, or they explicitly evoke common ground which is then rejected. Displaying a keen eye for their potential, Plautus thus exploits the common ground properties of *quia* and *quoniam* for his own comical purposes.

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