THE USE OF *QUIA* AND *QUONIAM*
IN CICERO, SENECA, AND TERTULLIAN

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1. Introduction

In Early and Classical Latin there was a clear semantic distinction between the causal subordinators *quoniam* ‘since’ on the one hand and *quia* and *quod* ‘because’ on the other. Whereas *quoniam* clauses contain the speaker’s (or writer’s) personal (‘subjective’) point of view in support of what is stated in the superordinate clause, often referring to shared knowledge, *quia* and *quod* signal an ‘objective’ cause/effect relationship between the contents of the subordinate and superordinate clauses. The traditional French equivalents are *puisque* for *quoniam* and *parce que* for the other two. Common English translations are *since* (also *as*) and *because*. 1 The former functions in so-called disjunct clauses, the latter two in so-called adjuncts (Pinkster 1990: 36). The semantic difference is reflected in the distribution of the words. *Quoniam* is at home in argumentative texts, for example no less than 129 instances of *quoniam* in Lucretius’ didactic poetry (only 104 of *quia*). On the other hand there are very few instances of *quoniam* in Livy’s narrative, and most of them in orations (39 out of 46) (Pinkster 2009: 314).

Szantyr (1965: 627) states that ‘Bei Dichtern seit Lucr[etius], namentlich aber in der silbernen Latinität wird *quoniam* ganz synonym von *quia* und *quod* (nicht selten in Wechsel mit diesen Konjunktionen, z. B. bei Colum[ella] … u.a.), which is confirmed, according to Szantyr (1965: 627–628), by its co-occurrence with corresponding expressions like *ideo* ‘therefore’ in the superordinate clause. On closer inspection there is little support for the latter statement in the authors on the BTL (Bibliotheca Teubneriana Latina) cd-rom (see Pinkster 2009). In addition to my earlier publication I mention as a continuous point of difference

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1 For the differences between *quoniam*, and *quia, quod* see Bolkestein (1991), Fugier (1989), Mellet (1994, 1995).
between _quoniam_ and _quia_ the absence of _quoniam_ clauses in answer to the idiomatic question _quid ita?_ ‘how come?’. _Quia_ is quite normal in this context (Plautus 12 times out of 24, Terence 2 / 13, Cicero 11 / 26, _Rhet. Her. _6 / 6). There are also a few purpose clauses with _ut_ in answer to _quid ita?_ (For _quod_ clauses see below). Alongside distributional differences like the one just mentioned an analysis of the contexts in which _quia_ and _quoniam_ are used by Columella shows that Szantyr’s statement about this author is incorrect. The two subordinators each have their own meaning, which, of course, does not mean that there are no contexts in which both are possible. A speaker / writer is to some extent free to present a reason as ‘subjective’ or ‘objective’. Typical contexts for _quoniam_ in Columella are shown in (1)–(3) below. A typical context of _quia_ is shown in (4). The two subordinators are definitely not ‘ganz synonym’ (details in Pinkster 2009).

(1) **Quoniam** de bubus satis praecepimus, opportune de tauris vaccisique dicemus.

(‘Now that we have given enough instruction about oxen, it will be proper to deal next with bulls and cows.’ Col. 6.20)³

(2) Nunc **quoniam** plerosque nostrum civilis ambitio saepe evocat ac saepius detinet evocatos, sequitur, ut suburbanum praedium _commodissimum_ esse putem, quo vel occupato cotidianus excursus facile post negotia fori contingat.

(‘But as things are, since political ambition often calls most of us away, and even more often keeps us away when called, I consequently rate it as most advantageous to have an estate near town, which even the busy man may easily visit every day after his business in the forum is done.’ Col. 1.1.19)

(3) Itaque nusquam experimentorum varietas _omittenda_ est, longeque etiam in pingui solo magis _audendum_, **quoniam** nec laborem nec sumptum frustratur effectus.

(‘Accordingly, there should be no neglect, anywhere, of experimentation in many forms; and far greater daring should be shown on rich soil, because the return will not render the toil and expense a total loss.’ Col. 1.4.5)

(4) … _quod_ in _re_ rustica nullo minus opere fatigatur prolixior, _quia_ in arando _stivae_ pene rectus innititur.

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² The first _quoniam_ clause in answer to _quid ita?_ on the BTL cd-rom is in Fortunatianus (Ars Rhetorica 1.7).

³ The translations are taken from the various Loeb editions. Those of Tertullian are from the _Corpus scriptorum latinorum_ website (http://www.forumromanum.org/literature).