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THE LATIN CONSTRUCTION *DICERE QUOD* REVISITED¹

From the first century BC onwards the Accusativus cum Infinitivo started to be replaced, slowly but increasingly, by an explicit subordinate clause introduced by the conjunction quod 'because, that' or quia 'because, that'. Because of its semantic nature, this construction spread from the factive predicates to the assertive ones, in which the notion of speaker's commitment certainly played a crucial role. The hypothesis, however, that this construction came into being because of the influence of Greek is only correct to a small extent.

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1. Foreword

It is a fact that in Latin, from the oldest records onwards until almost to Proto-Romance, the regular way to express a subordinate clause after a verb of saying or thinking was a particular construction known as *Accusativus cum Infinitivo* (henceforth *AcI*), whose origin is still open to debate (on this point see the still useful paper by HETTRICH 1992). However, from the typological point of view, it has been observed that such a construction was rather inconsistent with the subordination system of Latin (Lehmann 1989). For this reason, it is undoubtedly remarkable the fact that the *AcI* is one of

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the distinctive features – I borrow this technical term from phonology – of the Latin syntax CUZZOLIN (2011 [2008]) and that it was productively employed, despite its being peripheral to the core of the subordination system, for centuries, as to survive, for instance, in the literary prose of Old Italian (in authors like Dante and Boccaccio, for instance: see DARDANO (2012: 124–126, 159–168); EGERLAND (2010: 857–859).

However, between the first century BC and the first century AD, the *AcI* started to be replaced by another construction, whose structure conformed to the majority of the other subordinate clauses, i.e. a conjunction introducing a subordinate with a finite verbal form in indicative or subjunctive mood. This construction is traditionally illustrated by the label *dicere quod* ‘to say that’.

Such a substitution took place in Latin slowly but constantly and the *AcI* or its equivalent construction is now perceived, in the Romance languages where it is used, only as a Latinism of very high register.

How and why this change occurred has been dealt with for almost one century in numerous contributions and nowadays scholars agree on some basic points that will be listed below in the next sections.

Before I go into details of this topic, it is necessary to remember that the crucial parameters according to which the different constructions have been analysed were first proposed by Joan HOOPER (1975); it can be worth recalling that this was the previous name of Joan Bybee, in a seminal paper that played a fundamental role in casting new light on the different predicates that govern – here this verb is not used in any technical sense of the generative grammar – a completive subordinate. That contribution was a turning point that broke new grounds to all subsequent investigations on this topic.

The following paper is subdivided into the following sections: in 2. some metalinguistic terms will be discussed; in 3. I will discuss the so called internal factors that have favoured the replacement of the *AcI*; in 4. I will shortly deal with the so called external factors that brought about the change from the *AcI* to the *dicere quod* construction, and in particular I will discuss whether *dicere quod* can be considered a Graecism; and in 5 there will be a short discussion on some recent sociolinguistic assessments about *dicere quod*; in 6. there are some concluding remarks.

2. *Dicere quod* as a metalinguistic label

2.1. As mentioned above, the label *dicere quod* ‘to say that’ is frequently employed as the representative of all the predicates that govern a completive beside the *AcI*, could be misleading in two respects.

First of all, although the predicate *dicere* typically governs a completive subordinate clause, as mentioned above, it belongs to the set of the assertive predicates, which show some crucial differences with respect to other predicates that also govern a completive. No matter how much the assertive predicates are representative of the whole set of predicates governing a completive, they cannot represent the entire set. Equally representative, for instance, could also be a non-assertive predicate such as *pigere* ‘to regret’. Additionally, it must be observed that the non-assertive predicates start occurring earlier than the assertive ones in the documents we possess; but I will come back to this point later. This remark is strictly associated with the fact that the non-assertive predicates are factive, whereas the assertive predicates are not. As well known from the seminal paper by Paul and Carol Kiparsky (1970), in which the two scholars detected the class of predicates whose main feature, but not the only one, was the possibility to govern the phrase *the fact* that providing pairs like *I regret that you leave* or *I regret the fact that you leave*. This simple observation, based on syntax, was diagnostic enough to envisage the semantic category of factivity, i.e. the inherent characteristic of some predicates to logically presuppose the truth of the subordinate they govern. There are several tests that can ascertain whether a predicate is factive or not. One of the most reliable is the test of negation. If a predicate is factive, the content of its subordinate is true independently whether the predicate of the main clause is negated or not; for this reason in the literature on the topic the label “logical factivity” is used. A typical example is represented the *verba affectuum* as in the following pair:

- 1a. *Gaudeo te profectum esse*
 ‘I enjoy that you have left’
- 1b. *Non gaudeo te profectum esse*
 ‘I do not enjoy that you have left’

What the examples 1a. and 1b. have in common is that they presuppose the truth of the sentence *Tu profectus es* ‘You have left’: in both cases the subject enjoys or does not enjoy that the person s/he is referring to has left indeed.

The second group of predicates includes the assertive ones. Contrary to the non-assertive predicates, their inherent characteristic is that they simply affirm *that P*, i.e. a sentence, whose content is not logically presupposed. Typical examples are the *verba dicendi* (strong assertivity) like *dicere* ‘to say’ on the one hand, and the *verba sentiendi* (weak assertivity) like *putare*

‘to think’ on the other hand. In this case, the label “pragmatic factivity” is used, or better: used to be used; now not anymore.

2.2. But there is another reason for which *dicere quod* is representative of the entire set of predicates governing a completive only to a limited extent. Correctly, *quod* is identified as the oldest and most frequent conjunction that introduces the subordinate completive, but it is not the only one: other conjunctions occur as well. Some of them are attested in the oldest documents (*quia*, for instance; on which, see below, or *quoniam*) and are supposedly as old as *quod* is, whereas other are positively late, i.e. not attested from the beginning: *ut*, *cum*, *quomodo*. Therefore, in principle, instead of having *dicere quod* as the general label one could also use *gaudere quia*. This solution, however, would be hardly acceptable, because, independently of the fact that both the assertive and non-assertive predicates exhibit an alternation between the *AcI* and the finite completive, only the non-assertive verbs raise some theoretical questions about the presence of the explicit completive, whose origin is difficult to explain. In any case, it was due to a functional extension of this syntactic pattern to domains from which it was originally excluded. This is the core problem of the transition from the *AcI* to the subordinate introduced by a conjunction. It is easy to see the reason why *dicere quod* has been adopted as a general label able to characterise the phenomenon: because it is by far the most transparent one.

3. Internal factors

3.1. Many hypotheses have been put forward in order to explain why and on what grounds this change after *verba dicendi* and *sentientiendi* took place in Latin, provided that the *AcI* was and remained one of the most stable and typical constructions of Latin for centuries, from the oldest records to the 7th century AD. Of course, there is no single reason able to account for this syntactic change, even though during the nineteenth and at least in the beginning of the twentieth century, the hypothesis that this change was due to the influence of Greek was prevailing. I will briefly discuss the hypothesis that this construction could be a Graecism in the next section.

During the last decades, however, deeper and more refined investigations have demonstrated that the change from *dicere + AcI* to *dicere quod* was rather due to a conspiracy of several factors, some internal and some external – a very good state of the art is in GRECO (2012). Obviously it is not always easy to distinguish and keep separated what is internal from what is external: the issue is really thorny and involves the bases themselves of

the language theory, and, needless to say, it cannot be discussed here; for a still useful discussion on this topic see LOPORCARO (1998). However, for brevity's sake, I take for internal all factors that ultimately depend on the paradigmatic structures of the linguistic system; external are all the others.

3.2. In my dissertation (1994) I had accepted Hooper's basic assumptions and applied them to the analysis of Latin data. The crucial point was that the categories employed not only accounted for the data in synchrony, but also provided the keys to account for and interpret the development of the data in diachrony. Here I list the main factors that played a major role in favour of the *quod*-construction:

- the fact that Latin possessed a restricted set of predicates, both semantically and syntactically quite close to the verbs of saying and thinking such as *addere* 'to add', *adicere* 'to say additionally' or *praeterire* 'to pass over', *praetermittere* 'to omit', not to mention the bigger set of the factive predicates² like *gaudere* 'enjoy' or *queri* 'complain', already mentioned above. Interestingly, these predicates start being attested rather early both with the *AcI* and the *quod*-construction³;
- the presence in Latin of the so called correlative diptych, a pattern of presumably Indo-European age, well attested already in the oldest languages like Hittite, Vedic and Greek. In principle, thanks to its flexibility, any verb could be inserted into this syntactic pattern: *id/hoc X quod* ... because the pronoun *id/hoc* could obviously be the grammatical object of the main clause, but could also legitimately be an accusative of relation, simply representing a cataphoric pronoun pointing to the content of the subordinate. Of course, this pronoun could also be replaced by a noun, with the same cataphoric function, or, conversely, the subordinate clause could be the expansion of a cataphoric element whatsoever, be it a pronoun or a noun in accusative or occurring with *de* + ablative CUZZOLIN (1994: 43–47). See, for instance, the following example, drawn from Cicero's *Verrinae*, where it is highly remarkable, at least in my opinion, that the correlative diptych is represented by the pair *cur* ... *quod* 'why ... that':

² The label predicate is preferable to verb because predication is not limited to verbal forms.

³ As far as I know, these predicates still need deeper and more detailed investigations.

Cicero, *Actio in Verrem* II 1, 18

2. *et cum patronus ex eo quaereret cur suos familiarissimos ... reici passus esset, respondit quod eos in iudicando nimium sui iuris sententiae cognosset*

‘and when his advocate asked him why he had allowed his intimate friends ... to be rejected, replied that it was because he knew they were too independent in the way they thought and voted’ (tr. Greenwood (1928); cf. HOFMANN & SZANTYR (1965: 585))

The example 2., not adequately exploited in the literature on the subject, clearly exhibits the flexibility of this pattern and, implicitly, uncovers another available path along which *quod* could become the regular conjunction that introduced the completive.

Looking at the history of the correlative diptych in Latin, the data clearly show that in the course of time the first element of the diptych – which had to be necessarily obligatory when the pattern came into being – was omitted slowly but with higher frequency so that ultimately the correlation *id ... quod* ended up representing the marked pattern, whereas $\emptyset ... quod$, i.e. the simple conjunction, was perceived as the regular one⁴. Therefore, the development of the correlative diptych from Indo-European down to Latin record could be represented as in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1

$*k^w o- \dots *to- > *k^w o- \dots *i- > i- \dots quo- > (i-) \dots quo-$ ⁵

- The third and most important factor is the fact that, contrary to the *AcI*, which allows only the factive reading of the completive and always presupposes the commitment of the speakers to the truth of the subordinate, in the *quod*-construction the speaker does not commit himself/

⁴ This conjunction could also occur after non verbal predicates like Cic. *Phil.* 2, 91: *optimum, quod sustulisti* ‘it is great, the fact that you suppressed’. *Quia* never has this function.

⁵ As one of my referees correctly points out, the situation is more complex than this. Armand Minard, the scholar who for the first envisaged the correlative diptych, identifies two types: the “normal diptych”, represented by the sequence $*k^w o- \dots *to-$ and the “inverse diptych”, with the sequence of the pair inverse. The stem $*to-$ represents the original element of the pair instead of the later $*i-$, as we know comparing the oldest records even in Latin: cf. the famous sentence *Quot capita, tot sententiae*. Figure 1 is based, with a couple of minor changes, on CUZZOLIN (1994: 45). Probably the origin, the development and the relationship of the two types of correlative diptych should be investigated anew.

herself to the truth of the subordinate. Once again the flexibility of this construction is easily detectable in the first example recorded of a verb of saying with *quod*:

Bellum Hispaniense 36, 1

3. *dum haec geruntur legati Carteienses renuntiaverunt quod Pompeium in potestatem habent*

‘In the course of these proceedings envoys from Carteia duly reported that they had Pompeius in their hands’; (tr. Way 1955)

In the example 3., the envoys from Carteia report that Pompeius is in their hands. If the *AcI* had been used to convey the same content, the truth of the sentence *Pompeium in potestatem habemus* ‘We have Pompeius in our hands’ should have been presupposed. But the following portion of text (*Carteienses, dum Caesar in itinere reliqua oppida oppugnat, propter Pompeium dissentire coeperunt. Pars erat quae legatos ad Caesarem miserat, pars erat quae Pompeianarum partium fautores esset*) clearly indicates that such an interpretation was almost untenable, because in Carteia, during the proceedings, there were two parties, one against Pompeius, and one in favour. The situation the envoys from Carteia are alluding to is that in Carteia only a faction had in his hands Pompeius, not all citizens. The envoys, using this pattern, exploit the chance not to commit themselves with the truth of what they report. This distinction would have been opaque, if not impossible, with the *AcI*, in which the speaker’s commitment is presupposed.

To sum up, the idea behind this is that the entire system was reordering its principles, ousting peripheral and typologically inconsistent patterns like *AcI*, and the spreading of the pattern conjunction + finite verbal form was also selected by those predicates that originally only selected the *AcI* because of its flexibility, more adequate to express semantic subtleties involving the speaker’s commitment.

4. External factors: *dicere quod* as Graecism

Of course, beside the claim that the substitution of *AcI* by means of the explicit subordinate was brought about by an internal development of Latin, there is also the claim that this syntactic pattern was introduced into the Latin syntax as a calque from Greek. This issue deserves a specific section because it was strongly supported in the past decades and that the pattern

dicere quod in Latin was due to the influence of Greek, where verbs of saying and thinking showed both constructions from Homer onwards Sonia Cristofaro (1996), seemed to be almost a trivial fact.

Nowadays, at least after the contributions by Einar Löfstedt (1956), Eugenio Coseriu (1971), Robert Coleman (1975) Hannah Rosén (1999), and especially Gualtiero Calboli's most updated and rich chapter concerning the influence of the Greek syntax on Latin (2009), this claim cannot be maintained any longer as such. Needless to say, one should not also forget that there is a flavour of ideology behind the idea that the *quod*-construction was borrowed by Latin from Greek, as if Latin were admittedly inferior to Greek as to have necessarily to imitate it and borrow even syntactic patterns. All this belongs to the everlasting issue or discussion on the cultural relationship between Greece and Rome.

Since I have recently dealt with the notion of Graecism in Latin (Cuzzolin forthcoming), in the present paper I only provide a short survey of the reasons why a construction such as *dicere quod* cannot be described as a Graecism. Preliminary to this is the definition of syntactic Graecism: a syntactic construction that can only be accounted for as a replica, in the sense of Cuzzolin – see HAVERLING (2009: 23), i.e. calque or loan from Ancient Greek and cannot be explained as an independent development within Latin itself.

If we accept this definition, it is difficult to analyse the *dicere quod* construction as a Graecism, at least for the following reasons:

- a syntactic Graecism mainly presupposes an areal contact: in the history of Latin contacts between Greek and Latin are numerous and took place at different chronological stages. It implies that there are several types of Graecisms that we should distinguish. Of course, I would exclude the cases where the borrowing is induced by means of text translation, because this is another type of contact: “In studying linguistic interference, one should clearly distinguish between influence due to the historical phenomenon of actual language contact, and the influence the source language exerts on the target language as the result of a translation process. The latter case may receive the somewhat pejorative label “translationese” and does not entail any actual historical contact of the speakers of the languages involved”; RUBIO (2009: 195).
- cultural criteria have also to be taken into account: purely literary Graecisms that do not affect Latin should be kept apart and separated from those which played a significant role in the history of Latin. Vergil's borrowings from Homer or Sallust's Graecisms from Thucydides belong here. In my opinion, it should be clear that any connection or

contact through translations is different from the real contact that takes place in a situation of bilingualism, for instance, see the fundamental contributions by ADAMS (2003 and 2007). The effects of literary imitations on the living language from which Romance derived, with the partial exception of Christian Latin, see the still useful LUNDSTRÖM (1955), were rather limited.

In this perspective Hannah Rosén's statement points to the same direction – ROSÉN (1999: 26): “without going alone with those who dub each Latin phenomenon that can be found in suitable Greek sources a Graecism ... and rather sharing on this point the sober view of Löfstedt in the extensive chapter ‘Zur Frage der Gräzismen’ in which he introduced the notion of partial Graecism ... and Coleman in his ‘Greek influence on Latin syntax’, I will generalize and say that Graecism in syntax, while mostly beginning as literary imitation, could trigger systemic changes and produce new phenomena, provided they met with language features before the ‘argentea’ (whereas lexical and the rare morphological Graecism could lead an existence independent of current Latin material)”. And it is not a case that Calboli agrees: “I agree with Rosén and think that this is not a proof that Latin writers were careful to introduce literary Graecism that did not offend the Latin language but rather *could be adapted to it*”; CALBOLI (2009: 70; my emphasis).

5. A sociolinguistic look at *dicere quod*

5.1. As should be clear from what has been illustrated thus far, nowadays there is a consensus on the claim that *dicere quod* cannot be considered a total Graecism and that such a syntactic pattern, especially in Late Latin, could be influenced by Greek to a certain degree. The claim of those scholars (including myself) who think that a construction like *dicere quod* would have developed, at least theoretically, independently from Greek maybe still sounds too radical. In any case, it can be generally assessed that there is no juxtaposition any more between two factions.

It is rather interesting, on the contrary, that in the last years scholars have focussed their attention on the sociolinguistic value of this pattern. It must also be underlined that this perspective has been adopted because it somehow implicitly presupposes that the sociolinguistic approach could better cast light on the historical origin and development of this pattern. Of course, such an assumption has crucial consequences for the linguistic change theory, but basically a formulation so radical raises several questions, so that I prefer not to deal with this issue here.

The fact that the *quod*-construction occurs in an author like Petronius four times (see below) and that is exclusively used by persons of very low social prestige has led to the conclusion that this construction must be associated with an equally low variety of speech. If this conclusion were correct, the *AcI* and *dicere quod* would be in complementary distribution from a diastratic viewpoint. But is it correct indeed?

5.2. Therefore, let us shortly revise the oldest examples of the *dicere quod* construction according to this viewpoint. I have already mentioned that also in some of the most recent commentaries of the authors where the *verba dicendi* or *sentientiendi* govern a clause introduced by *quod* or *quia* the comments on this replacement are frequently out of date and the information given to the reader continues to be the same as decades ago. Clearly, commentators are more interested in the discussion on the plot, the literary characters, the cultural and historical background rather than to confine themselves to the unexciting domain of grammar.

The first commonly accepted example of a verb of saying has been already discussed and is taken from the *Bellum Hispaniense*, falsely ascribed to Caesar but of the same age. I repeat it here as 4.

Bellum Hispaniense 36, 1

3. = 4. *dum haec geruntur legati Carteienses renuntiaverunt quod Pompeium in potestatem haberent*

‘In the course of these proceedings envoys from Carteia duly reported that they had Pompeius in their hands’

In general, scholars and philologists have recognised, after several investigations, that this work is written in a rather low variety of Latin and, to the best of my knowledge, only GÄRTNER (2010) has recently tried to defend a different view, not without some good reason. In any case, it would be bizarre if the author, whoever he could be, employed a feature typical of the low and vulgar everyday speech in a work that aimed at continuing Caesar’s Commentaries.

In the same vein, there is another recent evaluation of this example that, at least in my opinion, needs a thorough revision.

In his recent and excellent syntax of Classical Latin, Baños Baños, describing the restructuring of the subordinate system, explicitly has mentioned the example taken from the *Bellum Hispaniense*: “... en este proceso de reestructuración del sistema de las completivas en latín tardío confluyen a la vez factores externos e internos ... Por un lado, es evidente que este cambio se produce primero en los niveles de lengua más coloquial o vulgar : ...el

primer ejemplo claro de *quod* completivo tras verbos de lengua aparece (s. I a.C.) en el *sermo castrensis* ... Precisamente es en el llamado “latín cristiano” donde este tipo de completivas conjuncionales se hace más frecuente (en especial *quia* y *quoniam*), a lo que contribuyó sin duda la influencia del griego (*λέγο ἡότι...*, > *dico quod...* / *quia...*) a través de las traducciones de los textos bíblicos y patrísticos. [...] BAÑOS BAÑOS (2009 : 554–555).

In my opinion, two remarks are in order, here. First of all, I would keep separated the linguistic register from the textual genre. The distinction is difficult but not impossible; otherwise the risk is to equate the text of Petronius’ novel with the *Bellum Hispaniense*: the former is an artificial fiction with clear artistic, mimetic purposes, whereas the latter is a historical text, without any other purpose than to narrate the events of the war; a work stylistically mediocre. In this respect, James Adams’ words are decisive, ADAMS (2005: 195–196): “The fact of the matter is that in the later Republic and Early Empire (of about the first three centuries A.D.) the construction is entirely restricted to literary sources ... Either the accidents of survival have given us a misleading impression of subliterary practice, or the construction did indeed start at a relatively high social or educational level”. I will come back to this point in the next section.

Secondly, I find it difficult to ascribe the pattern *renuntiare quod* to the inventory of the features proper to the *sermo castrensis*, not to mention *renuntiare* alone, when it means ‘to report’ just in the example 3. = 4. Nor is possible in my opinion to connect the phrases *legationem renuntiare* ‘to give an account of an embassy’ or *repudium renuntiare* ‘to give announce of the breaking off of the betrothal’ with the example treated here since they belong to other semantic domains, i.e. diplomacy and law.

It is also interesting to observe that the second example of a verb of saying with a conjunction (the first is example 6. below) occurs in an inscription of the beginning of the second century AD. Actually, the crucial point has been restored but the restoration is if not certain, at least plausible (in principle, a doubt could concern *quod* instead of *quia*):

CIL VIII Suppl. II 18042 (from *castra Lambaesitana*, Numidia, 129 AD):

5. ... *omnia mihi pro vobis di[xit quod] cohors abest, quod ... mittitur, quod ... dedistis ...*

‘he told me everything in favour of you, that the cohort is absent, that is sent, that you gave...’

If the inscription really reflects the *sermo castrensis*, given its origin, it should be observed that at his chronological stage, i.e. a couple of centuries later than the *Bellum Hispaniense*, the verb employed, was *dicere*.

5.3. As well known, four of the first examples showing the *quod*-construction occur in Petronius' novel. Paradoxically enough, the element that has drawn attention is the conjunction.

Petronius 46, 4

6. *Ego illi iam tres cardeles occidi, et dixi quia mustella comedit*

'I killed three of his goldfinches just lately, and said a weasel had eaten them' (tr. Heseltine 1913)

In his rich and recent commentary, SCHMELING (2011: 189) observes on this example what follows: "Clauses introduced by *quod*, *quia*, *quoniam*, plus the indicative or subjunctive gradually replace the classical accusative + infinitive construction after verbs of saying or thinking. P[etronius] might be said to mark a very rough dividing line between the two constructions ... The classical construction (accusative + infinitive) remains, however, the usual construction even for freedmen in the *S[atyrical]*"⁶. Nothing special with respect to what was already well known about this phenomenon.

An interesting and more substantial remark occurs in HERMAN (2003: 141) and concerns the choice of the conjunction: "[À propos de *quia*], non encore généralisé de l'usage 'vulgaire'. Il devait s'agir d'une rareté, d'une variante frustrée et peut-être même légèrement comique des complétives avec *quod*, elles-mêmes peu courantes encore".

In my opinion, the choice between *quod* and *quia* has never received the attention it deserves. Traditionally *quia* has been strongly associated with the indicative mood in the subordinate as to express commitment and factuality. Undoubtedly, this trend is clearly confirmed by the data we have. The point that should be investigated, however, is how *quia*, originally the plural form of the neuter interrogative pronoun *quid*, developed the function of subordinating conjunction. A parallel story – parallel only to a certain

⁶ One of the things I regret the most is the fact that, even though many important contributions have been published during the last two decades on this topic, apparently they went unnoticed by philologists and Latinists – with some exceptions, obviously. The result is that the remarks devoted to the passages where the explicit subordinate clause is employed for the first time instead of *AcI* come into being, so to say, already out of date, at least from the perspective of a linguist. In order to avoid misunderstandings, what I really regret is not the fact that my dissertation is not quoted by Schmeling, which can be an absolutely legitimate position, but the fact that, on this specific topic, no contribution at all is mentioned. To some philologists, it seems that, if the contribution (be it either a book or an article) is not well seasoned, it is not appealing. But seriously, my impression is that philologists and linguists do not communicate; but do they really want to?

extent – is that of the Greek form *σά*, occurring in the Megarian dialect (jokingly employed by Aristophanes in the *Acharnians* 759, 787), and *τά*, that occurs in Pindar (in the first Olympian, 82). These two forms perfectly correspond to Latin *quia* and still preserve their interrogative function. But the relationship between the Greek forms and *quia*, given the close contacts between Greek speaking and Latin speaking population, could help us in detecting the paths along which *quia* developed its function. Needless to say, that this point needs further and deep investigations.

5.4. The other examples taken from Petronius are the following:

Petronius 45, 10

7. *Sed subolfacio quia nobis epulum daturus est Mammaea, binos denarios et meis.*

‘My nose prophesies a good meal from Mammaea, two pence each for me and mine’ (tr. Heseltine 1913)

Petronius, 131, 7

8. *At illa gaudio exultans: “vides, inquit, Chrysis mea, vides, quod aliis leporem excitavi?”*

‘Look, Chrysis, look’ she cried, ‘how I have started the hare for other folk to course’ (tr. Allinson 1930; available on line)⁷

According to ADAMS (2005: 197; my emphasis): Petronius’ vulgarism “might have been located, not in the complementing of *verba dicendi* et *sentiendi* by a subordinate clause, but in a perversion of the more ‘educated’ construction by the analogical replacement of the *correct* subordinator *quod* with *quia*.” This viewpoint is surely novel and deserves attention, even though it sounds so subtle that it is difficult to accept it *toto corde*. There is one point of this position that I like, i.e. also in this perspective Greek seems to play a peripheral role, if any; and the origin and the development of the construction tell us of a story inside Latin. What clearly comes out also from Adams’ observations is that the history of the relationship between *quod* and *quia* as subordinators, and subsequently between them and the other conjunctions needs still to be written.

⁷ Incredibly, in Heseltine’s translation this example remains in Latin.

5.5. The last example from Petronius also deserves a special comment because this is not the first time *scire* occurs with *quod* in Latin:

Petronius 71, 9

9. *Scis enim, quod epulum dedi binos denarios*

‘You remember that I gave a free dinner worth two denarii a head’ (tr. Heseltine 1913)

One of clearest results achieved in my dissertation was the path along which *quod*-construction could spread instead of the *AcI*: the replacement initiated with the factive predicates, continued with the semifactive predicates and it stopped with the assertive predicates, strong ones and weak ones respectively. The chronology of the process is very clear and this sequence is well ascertained.

However this order shows an exception. A predicate like *scire* ‘to know’, with a very low degree of factivity, is recorded already in Plautus with the *quod*-construction instead of the *AcI*. The only relevant difference is that in Petronius the indicative mood occurs whereas Plautus’ example shows the subjunctive (possibly a more archaic usage?)

Plautus, *Asinaria* 52–53

10. *Equidem scio iam filius quod amet meus*

Istanc meretricem e proximo Philaenium

‘Well, I already know that my son is in love with that prostitute from next door, Philaenium’ (tr. de Melo 2011)

It would be easy to classify this exception as a disturbing one. But scholars must try to explain exceptions scientifically, if they can, not complain because reality does not conform to theory. Needless to say, for centuries philologists tried to get rid of this example by emending *quod*. I have tried to give my own explanation in my book CUZZOLIN (1994: 123–128). Probably, a deep re-examination of the situation could cast new light on these old but well known data.

6. Temporary conclusion

Despite its long history, the investigation on the origin and development of the construction *dicere quod* and its spreading at the expense of the *AcI* is

far from its end. The mechanisms by means of which this replacement took place have been illustrated from several viewpoints and the different reasons invoked in order to account for this change are all correct, although with a different degree of relevance.

Rather surprisingly, what remains underinvestigated is the sociolinguistic part of the story. Probably the fact that for so many years this change was ascribed to the influence of Greek prevented serious and deeper analyses of the diastatic and diaphasic side of the data. What is evident now is that any element of this change, i.e. conjunction, verbal mood, context among others, should be thoroughly revised according to the results of recent research in the field.

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