FORMS AND EFFECTS OF THE HUMANISTS' GRAMMATICAL METADISCOURSE:

Valla's *Elegantiae* and the development of humanist Latin*

By Camilla Plesner Horster

Taking clauses with quia *as an example, this article addresses the relationship between grammatical metadiscourse on how one should compose in Latin and actual practice among humanist writers in order to shed light on the workings of grammatical metadiscourse. The investigation compares quantitative data on the distribution of clauses with* quia *to Lorenzo Valla's warnings in his* Elegantiae *against the complement use of* quia. *It is shown how value-laden and multi-faceted this particular grammatical question is in the humanists' treatment, and how grammatical discussions interact with linguistic practice as well as with other topics in humanist metadiscourse.*

Introduction

Lorenzo Valla's *De elegantiis latinae linguae* is considered one of the most influential works on the Latin language from the fifteenth century. But Valla (1407–1457) does not describe a language system as a linguist would today. He supplies his reader with innumerable observations on classical Latin usage intended to help the experienced writer of Latin to refine his skills and write a more nuanced, varied, and stylistically appropriate Latin. He not only gives rules for correct usage, but draws attention to the different practices – the *usus* – in the different genres and periods of the Latin language.[1]

Valla's *Elegantiae* reflects the general nature and the position of humanist Latin. That which distinguishes humanist Latin from other Latin variants of the fifteenth century is less a matter of grammar than of stylistics,

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[1] For a recent description of the structure and the arguments in the *Elegantiae*, see the introduction in Marsico 2013.

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eloquence, and imitation.[2] Humanist Latin was, to a certain degree, a re-action against a too-strict focus on grammatical rules and theoretical discussions, and a movement back towards the classical texts themselves. Humanists would learn to integrate the language of the classical Latin authors into their own language by reading, observing, and practising literary language, rather than by speculating about grammatical rules. While they did not underestimate correctness, the development of humanist Latin would go beyond correctness, aiming at elegant, eloquent Latin.[3]

This article investigates a specific grammatical question, namely clauses with *quia*, in Valla's metadisciplinary writings as well as in his linguistic practice. Valla's practice is compared to that of other Italian neo-Latin writers, both earlier and later in the fifteenth century. By focusing on theory and practice regarding this particular syntactic phenomenon, we shall see, on a micro scale, how even grammar reflects key elements of the humanist cultural programme: how grammar interacts with stylistics, tradition, trends, and literary genres. We shall see how observations regarding the word *quia* assist humanists in reinforcing antiquity as the gold standard. We shall also see how the humanists' awareness of a particularity supports their increased familiarity with the ancient practice and makes possible the continuing refinement of their writing skills.

Valla's favourite topics were often concerned with the lexicon, with de-scribing the small nuances between near-synonyms – differences in meaning as well as how they are to be constructed correctly. However, some syntactic constructions seem to concern him as well, and cause him to return to them. One such is the question whether one should use the conjunctions *quod*, *quia* and *quoniam* (all meaning "because"/"that") after *verba dicendi* and *sentiendi* (verbs of saying and sensing). Curiously, Valla's literary writings show a certain interest in *quia* also in practice, and his use of the conjunction may have had a certain influence on its popularity. For this reason, we shall compare Valla's grammatical observations on *quia* to the popularity of *quia* in fifteenth-century Italian neo-Latin.

But the ambition behind Valla's writings on the Latin language is not to give a systematic account of grammar, and his comments on *quia* are scattered among a plurality of linguistic and stylistic observations. In order

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[2] On the similarities between teaching methods used in the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance, and on the changes in the texts studied at the advanced levels, see Black 2001. For a recent study showing the central place of eloquence in the humanists' self-representa-tion, see Baker 2015. See also the article by den Haan in this volume for the dependency between Biblical studies, language and style. Grafton & Jardine 1986 also notice the occupation with discussing literary expressions in the humanist classroom.

[3] On imitation, see McLaughlin 1995, on the distinction between *grammatice* and *Latine*, esp. 145.

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to fill some of the gaps in our understanding of the grammatical discussions of *quia* in Valla's time, we shall also draw upon his successor Niccolò Perotti (1430–1480). Besides his immense *Cornu copiae* – formally a commentary on Martial, but in practice an abundance of observations on the Latin language[4] – Perotti also wrote a beginner's grammar, the *Rudimenta grammatices*. This was the first Renaissance grammar to comprise both morphology and some aspects of Latin syntax, concluding with a manual on the stylistics of letter writing. With a different purpose and a different audience, this school book supplements the insights on *quia* that we find in Valla's learned discussions with his peers.

The linguistic results presented in this article are based on a text corpus of thirteen humanist writers of neo-Latin from fifteenth-century Italy.[5] The corpus contains a total of 302,045 words of Latin literary prose, from five different genres: history, speeches, letters, treatises, and dialogues. The linguistic study is based primarily on 361 clauses with *quia*, and on information on the contexts in which they appear. This data gives a detailed overview of the frequency of *quia* and shows whether it is associated with the language of individual authors, with specific genres, or with either the early or the late fifteenth century. Further discussions of the data, the corpus, and the test statistics are presented in the appendix.

The starting point of this investigation is Valla's discussion of the complement use of *quia* (as opposed to *quod*), compared with his own and Perotti's discussions of *quia* and *quod* as causal conjunctions. There then follows an investigation of the frequency of *quia in* fifteenth-century Latin.

The essential difference between *quia* and *quod*

The conjunction *quia* is best known in the grammatical debates of the fifteenth century for its role in the discussion of the use of noun clauses with *quod*, *quia* or *quoniam* rather than the *Accusativus cum Infinitivo* (AcI, accusative with infinitive). While in classical Latin the main clause of the reported speech is most often transferred into the AcI,[6] in neo-Latin both the AcI and the complement clause with *quod* are accepted. That *quod* is

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[4] On the *Cornu copiae* in the grammatical tradition, see Percival 1981; on the method and the form of the *Cornu copiae*, see e.g. Furno 1995 and Pade 2005.

[5] Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444), Guarino Guarini, of Verona (1374–1460), Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), Gianozzo Manetti (1396–1459), Francesco Filelfo (1398–1481), Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457), Giovanni Giovio Pontano (1429–1503), Niccolò Perotti (1430–1480), Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), Battista Guarino (1434–1503), Ermolao Barbaro (1454–1493), and Angelo Ambrogini, il Poliziano (1454–1494).

[6] On reported speech in classical Latin, e.g. Kühner & Stegmann 1914, vol. II §§ 237–39.

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accepted without reservations in these constructions, while *quia* and *quoniam* are not, is made clear by Valla in his *Elegantiae*. His view on complement *quia* and *quod* turns up within a discussion of Latin translations of Matthew 5,17. In her article in this volume, Annet den Haan addresses Valla's challenge to the authority of the Latin language in the Vulgate and his position that theology must obey the rules of grammar in order to be clear and comprehensible. To substantiate his views, Valla enlarges on the correct use of certain syntactical constructions. After dissuading a certain use of the infinitive inspired by the Greek, he claims:

> Quam enim causam habes, ut alienam linguam secteris, relinquas tuam? Quanquam ne illam quidem sequaris, quum careas articulis quibus Graeci utuntur. Et quod illi habent καθότι, tu malis dicere *Quia*, aut *Quoniam*, quam *Quod*; ut in eodem *putatis quia veni solvere legem*, quum esset dicendum *Quod*. (Valla, *Eleg.*, 1,27).[7]

> There is no reason to follow a foreign language and give up one's own. Although one does not even follow it when one leaves out the articles that the Greeks use. And because they have *kathoti*, one prefers to say *Quia*, or *Quoniam*, rather than *Quod*. As in this example*: you think that I have come to abolish the Law*, when *Quod* should have been used.

As examples of his accusation that the Vulgate translation forsakes its own Latin language, Valla here presents some very specific grammatical observations. Comparing Latin to Greek, he explains this use of *quia* and *quoniam* as influence from the Greek use of καθότι (in what manner), probably referring to the contamination of certain adverbs and conjunctions in Koine, such as the contamination of καθώς (even as) with ὡς (that).[8] Consequently, the complement use of *quia* and *quoniam* becomes one of the symbols of the contamination of Latin by Greek that Valla is fighting against; and avoiding it comes to symbolize a Latin language that respects its own grammar. It is worth noticing that Valla does not here suggest the infinitive construction as an alternative, but rather gives *quod* as the preferred conjunction. The differences in the use of *quia* and *quod* are what concerns him here.

But why this distinction between *quia* and *quod*? Valla does not give any classical sources, as is otherwise his custom, to support his acceptance of *quod* in these constructions. Perhaps his acceptance of *quod* in this situation could be connected to his reading of the Latin authors who first used *quod*

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[7] Valla 1999.
[8] Blass & Debrunner 1976, § 453; § 456; Muraoka 1964.

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to express reported speech.[9] Among the first authors who do this are writers who were often read by the humanists and cherished for other qualities than their language. Two such authors were Vitruvius (81 BC-15 AD), the humanists' architectural authority, and Aulus Gellius (c. AD 130-c. 180), whose work *Noctes Atticae* was an inspiration for the characteristic new *miscellanea* (miscellaneous) form of Renaissance commentaries represented by, among others, Perotti's *Cornu copiae*.[10] The use of *quia* in this position is a slightly later innovation, *quoniam* even later. Correspondingly, a recent study by Paolo Greco shows that *quod* is the preferred conjunction for expressing reported speech in some late Latin texts, while *quia* comes to be preferred over *quod* when introducing direct discourse.[11]

Whether this development in the Latin models cherished by the humanists is the direct reason for Valla to accept the use of *quod* as an alternative to the AcI while rejecting *quia* and *quoniam*, we can only speculate. But we shall keep in mind that the humanists' distinction between *quod* and *quia* is in correspondence with a development in ancient Latin, and could simply indicate their familiarity with their ancient models – including those that do not strictly adhere to Cicero's norms.[12]

It also seems decisive that this sharp distinction between *quia* and *quod* is limited to the complement constructions. For when in *Elegantiae* 2,37 Valla returns to the conjunctions in a discussion of *Non quia* and *Non quod* (not because), the two are treated as parallel expressions, with no difference in quality.[13] Here he explores the possible combinations of the two conjunctions with examples mostly taken from Quintilian that endorse this use of *quia*; and here he also discusses the moods that can follow in different positions, as well as other detailed observations that do not differ in expressions with *quia*

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[9] On the spread of *quod*, *quia* and *quoniam* in this function, see Kühner & Stegmann 1914, vol. II § 192,2. e; Stotz 1996–2004, vol. IV, book IX § 103.2. On some differences in use of AcI and *quia/quod* in late Latin, see Herman 1989.

[10] For comparisons of Perotti to Gellius, see Charlet 1997, esp. 96; for Perotti's own comparison of his work to Gellius, see Pade 2012b. Compare also Perotti's descriptions of etymology to Gellius's, cf. e.g. Cavazza 1987.

[11] Greco 2014 is based upon a study of sixth- and seventh-century Gallic hagiography.

[12] Tournoy & Tunberg 1996 argue in favour of a broader delimitation of "Latin" when looking for influence on neo-Latin from earlier Latin variants, for example including late Latin writers. The diversity of the grammatical norms that existed in antiquity is illustrated in various studies in Ferri & Zago 2016. See for instance the comparison of Varro's norm and practice with Cicero's by Chahoud 2016.

[13] This possibly reflects that the causal use of the two conjunctions in classical Latin is quite similar and to be distinguished only by small details, whereas *quoniam* differs more distinctively from *quia* and *quod*. See Fugier 1989 for a comparative study of the three conjunctions in Ciceronian Latin. On the complement use of *quia* as a result of Greek influence, as opposed to *quod*, see Cuzzolin.

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and *quod*.[14] Afterwards, *quia* and *quod* are again treated together as conjunctions expressing the *causa efficiens* (effecting cause), as opposed to the *causa finalis* (cause to what end) expressed with *quo* and *ut* (in order that). The complete interchangeability of *quia* and *quod* in this case becomes apparent when Valla summarizes a rule intended to avoid confusion of *quod* and *quo*: "Ubi est *quod*, illhic posse poni *quia*; et ubi *quo*, illic *ut*, vel duplex vel simplex, iam dictum est." (It has now been stated that where *quod* is, there can *quia* be placed; and where *quo* is, there *ut*, either twice or once. *Eleg.* 2,37). This use of *quia* is the only one described in Perotti's *Cornu copiae*, in which *quia* is mentioned only as a *coniunctio causalis* (causal conjunction, in 3,6 and 3,42), described as meaning the same as *quod*. Perotti's description in 3,42 clearly relies on Valla's; it first treats the difference between on the one hand *quod* and *quia* and on the other *quo* and *ut*, even repeating some of Valla's examples. As a causal conjunction, *quia* therefore seems uncontroversial. These grammatical observations by Valla and Perotti allow writers of humanist Latin to vary their language between causal *quia* and *quod*, so long as what combinations to use, and what semantic nuances to connect with the two (as opposed to *quo* and *ut*), are kept in mind.

In medieval Latin the AcI is frequently used, side by side with the tensed subordinate clauses, after *verba sentiendi* and *dicendi*. Though clauses with *quia* and *quod* become increasingly frequent, the AcI remains the predominant construction in most medieval Latin texts.[15] Accordingly, Petrarch seemed to use *quod* and the AcI interchangeably as a matter of stylistic variation, as described by Antonietta Bufano.[16] This relationship between the two constructions is described explicitly in Perotti's much later manual on elegant letter writing, *De componendis epistolis* at the end of his *Rudimenta grammatices*. Here, the difference between the two constructions seems to be a matter of stylistics, with the infinitive clause presented as the more "elegant":

> Quid hic in primis notandum est? Quod ea quae per subiunctiuum uerbum cum coniunctione *quod* dici possunt longe elegantius sine *quod* per infinitiuum dicuntur. (Perotti, *De comp. ep.,*[17] § 1147; italics mine).

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[14] For example with his quotation from Quintilian, *Inst.* 9,4,133: "*Non quia* negem hoc bene esse compositum, sed quia legem hanc esse componendi in omnibus principiis recusem." (Valla, *Eleg.* 2,37).

[15] Stotz 1996–2004, vol. IV, book IX §§ 103–10; in diachronic text corpora, Bamman *et al.* 2008 compare the spread of *quod* and *quia* in the place of the AcI after *verba dicendi* and *sentiendi* to that after impersonal verbs.

[16] Bufano 1961.

[17] Perotti 2010.

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> What should at first be noted here? That what can be said with a verb in the subjunctive[18] and the conjunction *quod* is said much more elegantly with the infinitive without *quod*.

However, more "elegant" could mean a difference in the stylistic quality as well as that of agreeing with the correct usage. But the fact that *quod* is given as a possible variation alongside the AcI, while *quia* is not, indicates that Perotti does not accept *quia* in this position. The context of this question in his grammar may also be important. This linguistic question is presented in that part of the grammar that truly defines humanist Latin, the section on eloquence. To Perotti, this is not a matter of basic grammar, but of elegant prose style.

When Valla discusses the translation of Matthew 5,17 again in his *Antidotum in Poggium* from 1452-53, he stands by his views in the *Elegantiae*. He still thinks *quia* and *quoniam* should be avoided, even in Bible translations; but now he adds the AcI as another possible variation:

> Ego me fateor, ut in Elegantiis dixi, potius translaturum fuisse 'Putatis quod venerim' sive Putatis me venisse ad legem solvendam' sive 'ut solvam legem: non veni ad solvendam, sed ad implendam' sive 'non veni ut solvam, sed ut impleam.' Et hoc opinor futurum fuisse Latinius et perinde apertius nec minus verum. (Valla, *in Poggium* 1,138[19])

> I acknowledge, as I said in the *Elegantiae*, that I would have translated into 'You think that I have come' or 'You think I have come to abolish the Law' or 'in order to abolish the Law: I have not come to abolish it, but to fulfil it' or 'I have not come in order to abolish it, but to fulfil it.' And I think this would have been more proper, just as clear and no less correct.

Valla does not claim that the one expression is better than the other, as likewise he refrains from choosing between several good possibilities for expressing "to abolish it" and "to fulfil it." But he associates his variety of suggestions with some central ideals about the Latin language: namely that it should be good and clear Latin, in addition to correct. Similarly, in yet another repetition of the discussion in his *Collatio Novi Testamenti* (Collation of the New Testament, Matt. 2,13[20]), he argues in favour of these con-

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[18] Note that Perotti's notion of grammatical mood is not consistent, and that "subiunctiuum" may sometimes be related to the subjunctive mood as opposed to the indicative, and sometimes merely denote a verb subordinate to another verb by means of a conjunction. This latter case seems to apply here, where he afterwards gives the following examples, with the indicative verb *legis*: "Verbi gratia: Io so che tu leggi. Scio quod tu legis: Scio te legere."

[19] Valla 1978.

[20] Valla 1970.

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structions because they meet this basic requirement, "sermo latinior ita planior" (the clearer, the better Latin). Such observations on syntactic choices are therefore connected with the very ideals of humanist Latin. Not only do they support clarity and variation indirectly, but the preferred expressions are explicitly signalled to have been deemed worthy by central humanist seals of approval.

A first impression of the actual use of *quia*

We have seen how Valla and Perotti were quite alert to differences in the use of *quia* and *quod*. But how did this awareness relate to the neo-Latin practice? In the present study, 361 clauses with *quia* were studied. None of them are complement clauses, following *verba sentiendi* and *dicendi*. This tells us that something effectively suppressed this practice from the neo-

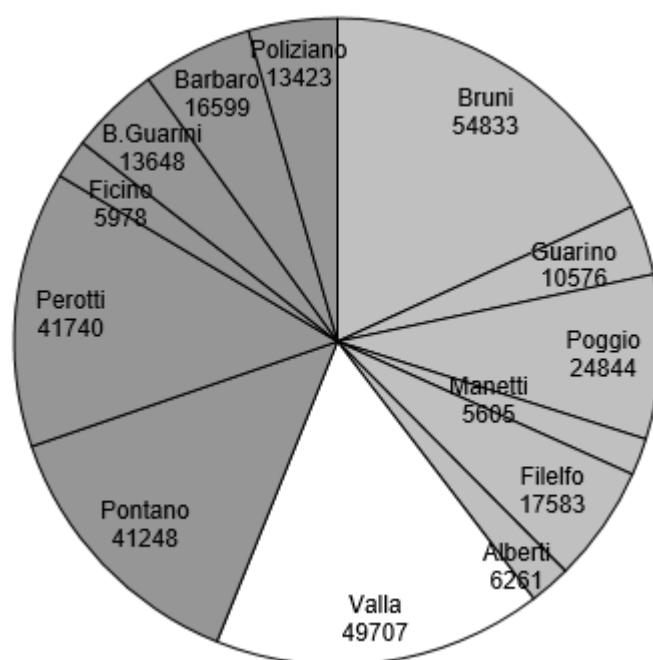*Distribution of words across individual authors*

Figure 1a: *Total number of words in corpus*

Latin language. But was it the direct effect of grammatical awareness such as Valla's and Perotti's?[21] One could argue that mere imitation of classical Latin could have had this effect, especially when it is clear that some of the

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[21] I suggest such effects with caution because of the general complexity of human language, shaped by numerous factors, both internal, cognitive, socioeconomic, social, and pragmatic – as indicated by the sheer diversity of subjects in any introduction to language change, such as Joseph & Janda 2004.

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authors whom the humanists read used the *quod* construction (which is found in neo-Latin), but not the *quia* construction (which generally is not). And 'sheer imitation' may certainly play its part here as well. However, the grammatical writings in this case construct a picture of Latin that coincides with practice.

But there is yet another peculiar circumstance surrounding the use of *quia*: a significant and curious development. Figure 1a shows the total number of words in the total corpus written by each author. The authors are
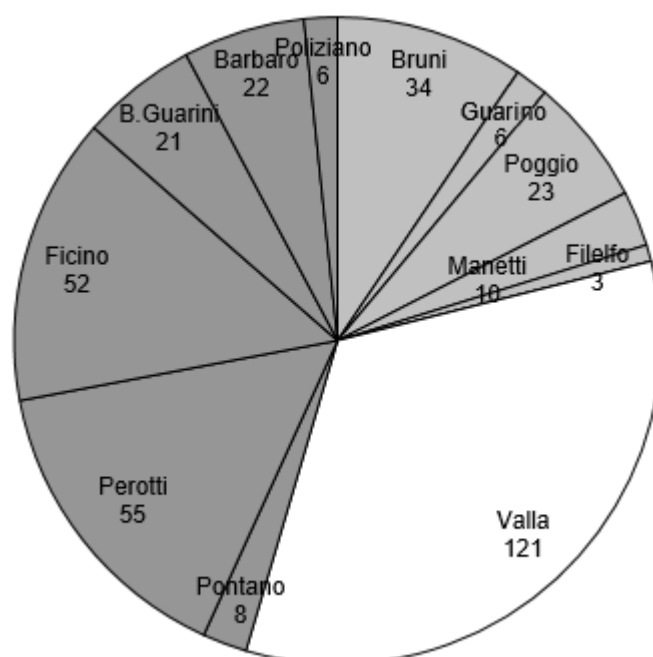
Distribution of words across individual authors

Figure 1b: *Number of clauses with* quia *in corpus*

arranged chronologically, and it is clear that Valla is represented by the largest individual share, and that the remaining corpus is fairly equally divided between those authors (light grey) who were active before the appearance of Valla's influential *Elegantiae* around 1444, and those (dark grey) who, roughly, learned Latin after Valla. I know that on the basis of my present material I cannot prove an influence from the humanist grammarians' discussions of *quia* and *quod* and actual linguistic practice. However, my figures show a significant coincidence. Figure 1b shows the number of clauses with *quia* that were found in the total corpus written by each author. This indicates that *quia* is generally unpopular among the

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earlier fifteenth-century humanists, and becomes more popular after Valla.[22] In her study of the translation of the New Testament by Gianozzo Manetti (1396–1459), Annet den Haan has shown how it is part of his ongoing revision of the text to replace *quia* and *quoniam* with *quod* in the process of making the Latin language more 'classical' (along with many other stylistic improvements) also directly influenced by Valla's grammatical writings.[23] This supports my data in indicating that *quia* was generally not considered to be properly classical in the first half of the century, and that it was very deliberately avoided. Yet, while Figure 1 shows a broad avoidance of *quia* in the first half of the fifteenth century*,* Valla's own practice may be fundamentally different. And something apparently happened in the mid-fifteenth century that made *quia* more popular. It may or may not be related to Valla.

How Valla differs from other humanists in his use of *quia*

Valla's practical use of *quia* compared to the other humanists displays several peculiar characteristics. In the entire study, only around fifteen clauses with *quia* appear subordinate to an AcI as part of reported speech, introduced by either a verbum dicendi or sentiendi. Six of those were written by Valla – which itself is not remarkable, given his dominant share in the corpus in total, cf. Figure 1a. But only once in the data predating Valla does *quia* occur subordinate to an AcI that complements a verbum dicendi or sentiendi, namely in a letter by Guarino of Verona in 1413.[24] It would basically seem illogical that the avoidance of complement *quia* affects the use of *quia* in the subordination of the complement AcI – where the clause with *quia* does not itself have a complement function. But the avoidance of *quia* subordinate to the AcI may be an overgeneralization of the dissociation of *quia* from the AcI, spreading to grammatical positions that are not in themselves problematic. From a statistical point of view, this is insignificant, but a glance at Valla's practice in this rare construction will shed light on his – perhaps changed – view on *quia*.

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[22] There is a significant difference between the "early" and "late" authors in the number of clauses with quia compared to the total number of words in each subdivision of the corpus: $\chi2 = 23.96, p < .01$. But Ficino in many respects writes differently from the other humanists in the corpus, and he is the reason for a large share of the difference between early and late authors. However, if we test his influence by removing Ficino from the investigation, the difference is still significant: $\chi2 = 5.02, p < .05$. For more details, see Figure 2 and the discussion of it below.

[23] den Haan 2016, 47. Percival 1975, 232, also discusses the influence of the grammarians in the fifteenth century.

[24] "Haec ita contingere arbitror non vestro animi vitio aut rapiendi cupiditate, sed quia dum carissimas res meas habetis, eas a vobis divelli iniquo fertis animo." (*Epistolario* I,21 [1414], Guarino 1915).

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In practice, Valla sometimes uses *quia* in contexts where he wishes to express a reason that is subordinate to an AcI. In a letter, for example, he gives the reasons for a late deliverance reported to him by a courier:

> Hic ait alio adventu suo detulisse ad me vestras litteras, sed eas, *quia* rex eo tempore obsidebat Neapolim, non *potuisse* mihi reddere, qui essem Caiete: (Valla, *Lettere*, 10; italics mine).[25]

> He says that he has brought your letter down to me elsewhere on his arrival, but that he *could* not return it to me, who was in Gaeta, *because* the king occupied Naples then.

Valla also describes a barbarian king's reported reasons in a clause with *quia*:

> At ubi delectum ducem Ferdinandum comperit, vel magis *timuisse* dicitur, *quia* non per alium, ut rex fuerat, sed per se esset bella gesturus… (Valla, *Gesta Fernandi Regis Aragonum*, I,V; italics mine).[26]

> But when he learned that Ferdinand had been selected as duke, he is said to *have feared* even more, *because* he was to wage war not through another, after becoming king, but on his own…

Though this construction also appears in Valla's letters, it occurs most frequently in his historical work, *Gesta Fernandi Regis Aragonum*, where it is found four times. As shown in Figure 1b, Valla is represented in the study with 121 clauses with *quia*. Of those, 92 appear in his *Gesta Fernandi Regis*, which is a very high proportion of the 121 clauses compared with the popularity of the other clause types in this study of his language (cf. also Figure 2a below). Taking a look at the classical Latin authors, Cicero uses *quia* relatively rarely. Statistics from the Perseus Digital Library[27] return a relative frequency for *quia* in Cicero's works at 0.0007 – which means that we find seven appearances of *quia* for every 10,000 words in Cicero's texts. By contrast, *quia* is twice as frequent in Sallust's Latin, for example, where the relative frequency of *quia* is 0.0015, or Livy's at 0.0012. For comparison, Valla's relative frequency of *quia* in the present study is 0.0030, i.e. twice as high as Sallust's. Joseph Denooz has shown in a recent quantitative study based on the LASLA corpus at Université de Liège how the frequencies of specific subordinating conjunctions seem to converge

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[25] Bufano 1961.

[26] Valla 1973.

[27] The Latin Vocabulary Tool, available online at: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/vocablist?lang=la. The collection contains 1,318,334 words by Cicero, 898 of which are *quia*; compared to 80,274/121 in Sallust, 2,048,135/2,430 in Livy, and 49,707/149 in Valla.

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among authors of the same genres in classical Latin;[28] perhaps *quia* is, similarly, a "historical" conjunction among the classical authors.

It may be asked, therefore, if Valla's preference for *quia* in the historical genre is based upon his observation that this conjunction is particularly characteristic of some of the historical writers of antiquity. We cannot say for sure if Valla noticed this particular difference between the ancient authors, because his miscellaneous treatment does not examine *quia* with regard to the preferences of the particular ancient authors. But his grammatical writings clearly show a general attention to a variety of genres, as Keith Percival demonstrates in his article on "Lorenzo Valla and the Criterion of Exemplary Usage," where he argues that Valla saw such considerations on genre as part of the higher levels of composition – as opposed to the usefulness of the stricter prescriptive *regule* taught at entry level.[29]

Valla on language and genres

Valla's possible distinction between various classical authors within various genres sets the development of *quia* within the humanist debates of imitation and preferred models. Some authors from the earlier division of my corpus, such as Bruni and Poggio, are known to have argued both that humanists should not build their own Latin upon too many different ancient models, and that Cicero was the best ancient author to imitate.[30] Valla in his turn considered the imitation of several good writers as the basis from which the *ingenium* (natural talent) of the humanist author could be developed, a view which is also reflected in his *Elegantiae*, where he quotes numerous named ancient authors as his sources for Latin linguistic practice. There are also instances where Valla discusses the differences in the individual language of the ancient authors with reference to different genres. In a discussion of the figure *synecdoche* (generalization/particularization), he distinguishes between the language of historians such as Sallust and orators such as Cicero and Quintilian:

> In quo protinus admoniti sumus oratores summopere synecdochen refugisse; quale foret *gentem stridore horrendam...* historici non refugerunt, ut Sallustius: *At ex altera parte C. Antonius pedibus aeger*

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[28] Denooz 2013. See also the description by Steele (1906) of the use of causal conjunctions in Livy, of which *quia* is the most frequent (esp. p. 57).

[29] Percival 1996.

[30] On the many ancient authors worth studying and Cicero as the prime model, see Bruni 2002, *De studiis*, esp. §§ 5; 8; 18. See also Percival 1996 and the introduction by DellaNeva 2007. On imitation in general, see McLaughlin 1995.

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in proelio adesse nequibat. Cicero Quintilianusque dixissent pedibus aegris… (Valla, *Eleg.*, 3.17)

In this, we have constantly been reminded that the orators worked hard to avoid the synecdoche, such as *a species terrible with trumpeting...*[31] The historians did not avoid the existence of such an expression, for instance Sallust: *But on the other hand, Gaius Antonius could not partake in the battle, being sick in his feet.* Cicero and Quintilian would have said *with sick feet…*

Valla's distinction between genres should therefore be seen, not merely as a random grammatical observation, but as a part of his contribution to a debate on the very core of neo-Latin: which ancient authors were worthy of imitation? I suggest that the general early fifteenth-century avoidance of *quia* may be an overgeneralization by humanists struggling to avoid the complement *quia*. Cicero's language does not provide reason for, in effect, banning *quia* from the Latin language. But the comparative rarity in Cicero of *quia* may have been a supporting factor when the early humanists preferred to avoid those conjunctions that were associated with the disreputable complement clauses used instead of the AcI. Similarly, the fact that *quia* was found more frequently among writers of history may have been the observation based on which Valla revived it, especially in the historical genre.

We do not have evidence from his grammatical writings that Valla was aware of this particular relation between *quia* and the historical genre. But there are other examples that indicate that there is a genre sensitivity in his grammatical metadiscourse that corresponds to his genre-sensitive practice. For example, his awareness of variation in the use of conjunctions in different genres is clear from his observation in *Elegantiae* 3,53 that *post* in *postquam* (after) is often omitted in historiography.[32] Similarly, Valla mentions the historical present in passing, the *more historico* (in the historical manner, Valla, *Eleg.*, 3.34).

After Valla, *quia* gained acceptance in the overall Latin language of the authors represented in the late division of the corpus, as we saw in the clear difference between early and late authors in Figure 1b. Especially Niccolò Perotti and Marsilio Ficino are fond of *quia*, and it is reasonable to consider at least Perotti as being somehow inspired by Valla, whose *Elegantiae* is

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[31] E.g. Liv. 44, 5: "elephanti … cum horrendo stridore..."

[32] Aliquando in huiusmodi genere sermonis omittimus *post*; sic: *Intra decem dies, quam venit, confecit omne negotium; in paucis diebus, quam Rhodum appulit, uxorem duxit.* Id est, *postquam venit, postquam appulit*, quae exempla apud historicos sunt plurima. (Valla, *Eleg.*, 3,53).

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also the source of some of the items in Perotti's *Cornu copiae*.[33] But the data presented in Figures 2b and 2c cannot support a spread of Valla's genre-sensitive use of *quia* to his successors.

Figure 2: Frequencies of quia *in five genres, comparison of Valla, the early and the late fifteenth century*

	History	Speeches	Letters	Treatises	Dialogues
Words in corpus	26,042	1,553	9,338	6,258	6,516
Quia	95	2	6	7	14
Relative frequency	0.0036	0.0013	0.0006	0.0011	0.0021

Figure 2a: *Valla*

	History	Speeches	Letters	Treatises	Dialogues
Words in corpus	30875	11035	28783	36302	12707
Quia	8	4	29	22	13
Relative frequency	0.0003	0.0004	0.001	0.0006	0.001

Figure 2b: *Early fifteenth century*

	History	Speeches	Letters	Treatises	Dialogues
Words in corpus	3781	38048	27340	27399	36068
Quia	0	50	26	68	20
Relative frequency	0	0.0013	0.001	0.0025	0.0006

Figure 2c: *Late fifteenth century*

A comparison of the relative frequency of *quia* in the historical genre and in others in the late fifteenth century is hindered by too sparse data, even if the

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[33] On Perotti's sources, see Ramminger 2011. Ficino's use of moods, tenses and types of clauses is in many respects less varied than the remaining authors in the study. His language may be influenced more by Biblical Latin and Greek, and it would be useful to consider if his preference for *quia* could be an influence from Greek. Accordingly, it is questionable whether his language should be taken as representative for humanist Latin.

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sheer absence of *quia* in the late historical corpus would seem remarkable in its own right. All the data can tell us is that we cannot reject the possibility that the distribution of *quia* is independent of the historical genre in the late fifteenth century. Research will have to be completed on more historical writings before we can say for sure if *quia* after Valla gained general acceptance into several genres of the neo-Latin language, or as his particular marker of historical genre.

Conclusions

The grammatical discussions of *quia* and related constructions that have been studied here concern themselves with how one should write Latin after the classical model. We have seen some possible effects of the grammatical discussions of Valla and Perotti on the linguistic practice. We have also seen what may have been the intended outcome of avoiding complement *quia*, perhaps even a more thorough banning of the conjunction from other functions than can be accounted for in the grammars. We may even have seen an indication of the kind of influence that grammatical discussions can have as a driving force behind the change in the Latin norm, but without the detailed control over language that grammatical rules seem to intend: Valla may have his opinion on the use of *quia*, but only the details that hold a central position in the discussion of humanist identity become a common trait in both his and his fellow humanists' language. This pattern to some degree corresponds to the patterns described by Johann Ramminger with regard to the limited spread and acceptance of certain words coined by Perotti in the *Cornu copiae*,[34] and the similarly limited effect of Perotti's rejection of a word as unclassical. An example of this is Perotti's rejection of *complurimus*, which was repeated in the somewhat later dictionary by Ambrogio Calepino, while it remained in use in the language of the humanists.[35] Such patterns may be a good indication of the nature and the extent of the influence grammatical discussions can have on the actual outcome of the humanist language project. They may set things in motion; but they cannot alone direct the change.

Whether or not an actual dependency between theory and practice can be argued for, this investigation has shown a general agreement between the two. Furthermore, in the details of *quia*, theory as well as practice is consistent with the general project of the humanists. We have, for instance, seen imitation in Valla's distinctions between genres in his use of *quia*. We saw the humanist focus on eloquence when Perotti positioned the *quod*/AcI

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[34] Ramminger 2012.
[35] Ramminger 2011, 174–75.

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discussion in his manual on letter writing. We found the humanists' urge to refine their skills and come closer to the ancient model in the fact that the use of *quia* develops over the fifteenth century, as well as in Valla's repeated and further developed discussions of *quia*. Finally, the humanists' aversion to grammatical rules and their love of literary practice are reflected in the very nature of the grammatical treatment of *quia*, scattered and turning up in different contexts.

In short, the evidence on *quia* presented here shows how the grammatical problem touches upon a variety of other topics – among them genre, Holy languages, translation, authorities, *elegantia*, variation, *Latinitas*. Both in theory and in practice, *quia* seems entangled in other, central aspects of humanist metadiscourse, sometimes explicitly attached to them. *Quia* is shaping within the parameters set by other aspects of humanist metadiscourse and in its turn supports and develops the refinement of humanist activities and humanist identity.

Appendix: the data and the corpus

In this appendix, the data, corpus and test statistics are further discussed in order to clarify what can be concluded, and what cannot, on the basis of the investigation. The neo-Latin authors represented in the corpus are representative only of literary prose of that time, and not of all neo-Latin, because the language is also found in diverse textual typologies not covered here.[36] The composition of the corpus was particularly dependent on the availability of modern digitized editions, and the primary principle behind the selection was the wish to establish equally large sub-corpora for each of the five genres represented. Secondarily, some of the neo-Latin authors were chosen because of their prominent role in the linguistic discussions of their time – i.e. actively engaging with the metadiscourse studied here – including leading teachers and writers of grammatical and didactic treatises such as Guarino of Verona (*Regulae grammaticales*, c. 1418[37]), Leonardo Bruni (*De studiis et litteris liber ad Baptistam de Malatestis*, 1422–29), Battista Guarino (*De ordine docendi ac studendi*, appeared 1459), Lorenzo Valla (*De elegantiis latinae linguae*, appeared c. 1444[38]), and Niccolò Perotti

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[36] Such as poetry and administrative language. For a recent examination of related administrative Latin, see Demo 2014. For a discussion of the representative/normative nature of the data in historical linguistics, see Labov 1994, 11; or similar considerations in Rieger 1979.

[37] On the composition and copies of the *Regulae*, see Percival 1978.

[38] Percival 1975, 232.

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(*Rudimenta grammatices*, appeared c. 1468[39]; *Cornu copiae*, printed 1489). The corpus may therefore be biased by the authors' relatively high Latin proficiency.

The 361 clauses with *quia* in the data collection were identified manually and entered into a system that stores quantitative data. This data contains information on the distribution of *quia* in various contexts.[40] Because quantitative distributions may to some degree have appeared by chance, test statistics are presented to ensure that conclusions are not drawn from apparent relations between contexts and grammatical forms which merely *seem* to depend on each other but which probably appeared at random. Results presented as significant have at least a 95 per cent chance of reflecting an actual dependency. For all statistical tests, it is shown if the probability of the figure occurring by chance was less than 5 per cent or even less than 1 per cent, with the denotations $p < .05$ and $p < .01$, or an exact value $p =$. The exact result of the test will also be mentioned, using the Chi-squared test for independence.

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[39] Percival 1981, 234.

[40] E.g. whether the superordinate clause is a main clause, an AcI, or a subordinate clause; whether the clause is part of reported speech; if there were negations nearby; which tense is found in the main clause; which genre the clause appears in; who the author is. Further details are found in the unpublished PhD dissertation, Horster 2013.

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