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THE THIRD QUI, AND SIX WAYS TO RECOGNIZE IT,
OR
“WHO HAPPENS, MAECENAS?”

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All Latin students eventually have a problem with qui. To solve it, they need a third qui in their quiver. The problem shows up when they advance into third year, transitioning from Caesar to Roman Comedy, or to the poets. The familiar “who” often leads to nonsense, and they are at a loss. Here is an interesting illustration:

A trophy boar, killed by a shepherd, is brought to Lucius Domitius, the Roman governor of Sicily. Admiring, he asks who killed it. “Whereby/why? Because. . . .” When the dictionary tells them “qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ qui’ who killed it,” but odds are good that the same student, not withstanding the contrast with the first qui, will try “Domitius asked who killed such a beast” for the second sentence, and then even be pushed into looking for a first person verb with the base venabul-! And when the dictionary tells them venabulum is a hunting spear, perplexity is only augmented.

There are three qui’s: the relative pronoun, the interrogative adjective, and the old ablative instrumental, e.g.

1. qui dixit, who spoke
2. qui vis, which man
3. illud qui, that thing by means of which

It is the third that causes problems. In third year, Golden Age prose does not use it: Julius Caesar never uses qui to mean “whereby” or “how.” Neither, apparently does Livy. “Who speaks?” In Cicero it is rare. But in the poets, qui is ambiguous with two very different meanings, and the student trained on Caesar’s consistent avoidance of potential ambiguity often stumbles.

Of the qui’s in Plautus’ Miles Gloriosus, 14% turn out to mean “whereby” or “how.” Of the qui’s in Terence Eunuch, 17% are whereby/how. Of the qui’s in Terences Self-tormentor, 21% are whereby/how. Not being alert to this qui can make Roman Comedy or even Horace’s lead-off line Qui fit, Maecenas . . . artificially difficult. So this article addresses the question “how do you tell qui from qui?”

There are six main ways to tell when to say “how,” “whereby,” or “the way” for qui:

1. The whereby/how qui is usually interrogative.
2. It is often marked further by being paired with a following quia: qui? quia “How . . . ? Because . . . .”
3. The most frequent associated idea is of knowing, with a form of scire or gnoscere: qui scis, qui noveris “How do you know?”
4. Qui followed immediately by an adverb or comparative is whereby/how/the way: qui minus quam . . . “How less than . . .”
5. The obvious noun antecedent is not a person, but a tool: machinas qui, “tools to __ with” (“with which to __”).
6. If the context is of giving or seeking, qui is instrumental, “how,” “a way,” “the means,” e.g. da mi qui comparem “Give me the means to buy . . .” There is no antecedent.

The Problem Illustrated

The Latin student embarking upon Plautus or Terence has no problem with mecum eram, qui Athenis fuerat my master, who had been at Athens (MG 32); or eos pro liberis babebo, qui mihi mit-tunt munera I consider the ones who send me presents my children (MG 710); or interea miles qui me amare oceperat meanwhile, the soldier who fell in love with me (Eun 125). These exhibit the standard requirements for a “who,” namely a leading noun phrase, representing a person or persons, and a following verb.

Most students, though, are stumped with the qui a few lines farther on in MG: itaque ego paravi hic intus magnas machinas, qui amantis una inter se facerem convenas And so I have prepared great machinations here inside, by which I may help the lovers rendezvous (138–9). Here, where the antecedent is machinas, a noun of means, Caesar would have written machinas qui bus, as in pice reriusque res quibus ignus excitari potest (7.24.4), but Plautus writes machinas qui. The qui stands revealed as an instrumental, equivalent to quo, qua, or quibus. Terence, needing to restate clever slave ideas, alternates this qui with quo modo “by which way,” and with ea via, literally “by that way.” The first time the desired means are sought in Self-tormentor, the means are quo modo: non num pecunia agitur sed illud quo modo minimo periculo id demus adulescentulo (Heaut. 476–7). When the means are reprised in lines 610 and 612, the quo modo becomes qui. The same means in line 850 become ea via. In Plautus, when the speaker asks “by what means?” the qui, still an instrumental, becomes the interrogative: nam tibi iam ut pereas paratum est dupliciter, nisi suprimis/ tuum meum erum, qui Athenis fuerat (MG 295–6).

Students transitioning to Latin where qui can equal quo modo will need guidance. When the instructor needs to give it, the following examples, sorted by the company they keep, will be useful illustrations.

Models for Recognition 1: Interrogative

Most qui’s of the qui fit, Maecenas mold are interrogative; they ask a question, and often the verb of asking goes right with it: qui quaeso is a comedy formula, “How, I ask.” These can be very simple like Example 3 below, “How does this happen?” In later Latin, the interrogative took over: all the instrumental qui’s of
Horaces *Satires* are interrogative.

Examples:
1. PA: *qui quaeso?* CH: amo. PA: *hem. CH. nunc; Parmeno, ostendes te qui vir sies.* PA: How, I ask? CH: Please. PA: Hem. CH. Now, Parmeno show yourself what kind of man you are (Eun. 307). The question format—and no nominative masculine noun to go with it—marks the first *qui* in this example as “why” or “how,” while the *vir* marks the second *qui* as the interrogative adjective.

2a. THR: *quid ignave?* Peniculon’ pugnare, *qui istum bue portes, cogitas?* (Eun. 777). Here the —ne, not the *qui*, holds the interrogative function: “What, silly, do you intend to fight with a sponge, you who brought this here?” And so, if *qui* in a question is not the initial interrogative word, it is still “who.”

2b. SA. Egon? Imperatoris virtutem noveram et vim militum; sine sanguine hoc non posse fieri: *qui abstergerem volnera?* (778–9) SA: Me! I know the leader’s prowess and the violence of the troops; this wasn’t going to happen without blood, and how would I staunch the wounds? Here, silly Sanga replies with what I call “the third *qui.*”

3. *boc qui fit?* How does this happen? (Heaut. 154)
4. *qui istum, miror. How that, I wonder.* (Heaut. 612)

**Models for Recognition 2: Answers with *Quia***

*Quia* trailing a *qui* has one meaning: abandon the “who” and say “how” or “why”:

1. PA: *Tum mihi sunt manus inquinatae.* SC. *Qui dum?* PA: *Quia ludo luto.* Then my hands are soiled. How so? Because I’m dealing with dirt. (MG 1276–7)

2. MIL. *Quin tua causa exigit virum ab se.* PYRG. *Qui id facere potuit?* MIL. *Quia aedis dotalis huius sunt.* Why, for your sake, she threw her husband out of the house. How was she able to do it? Because the house was part of her dowry. (MG 1235–2)

3. PYRG: *qui tu/ scis?* SER. *Philoconasius amor.* PYRG. *qui tu/ scis?* SER. *scio.* So who was it? Philocomasus’s lover. How do you know? I just know (MG 1431–2).

5. ACR: *quia non est intus quem ego volo.* MIL: *qui scis?/ ACR: Scio.* Because the one I want isn’t inside. How do you know? I just know (MG 1254–5).

6. ACR: *Numquam vidit: qui noverit me quis ego sim?* He’s never seen me; how would he know who I am? (MG 925)

**Models for Recognition 4: *Qui* [Comparative/Adverb]**

One of the costumes the third *qui* likes to wear is an immediately following adverb or comparative: *qui tam, nisi, qui dum.* All are translated “how?” or “why?”

1. CLIT. *at hoc demiror qui tam facile potueris/ persuadere illi* But I wonder at this, how you could so easily persuade him. (Heaut. 362–3)

2. GN. *qui minus quam Hercules servivit Ompalae?* How less than Hercules served Omphale? (Eun. 1027)


4. *aceto/ diluit insignem bacam: qui sanior ac si/ illud idem in rapaciam/ dissolvit aureum concretum/ cloacam? . . .* dissolved a priceless pearl in acid: how [was this] saner than to throw the same thing into a stream or sewer? (Hor. Sat. 2.3.239–41)

5. *qui pecass minus atque ego* How are you less in the wrong than I? (Hor. Sat. 2.7.46)

**Models for Recognition 5: Non-personal Antecedent**

The antecedent for “who” has to be a person. When the plain antecedent is impersonal, you have that impersonal as a means. Examples below exhibit *causa quis, argumentum quis,* and *illid qui—all instrumentals. Translation pattern is “to ___ with” or “with which to__.”

1. *postquam inventa vera, inventast causa qui te expeletur.* After the truth came out, they found an excuse to throw you out. (Lit: a cause was found by which they might expel you) (Heaut. 989)

2. CH. *fortasse. SY. argutum dabitur ei ad nuptias/ aurum atque vestem qui. . .* (Ch. comparset? CH. Maybe. SY. Money will
be given him for the wedding, clothing and jewelry with which
to . . . you get it? CH. Buy clothes and jewelry? (Heaut. 777–8)

3. ibit ad illud illico/qui maxume apud te se valere sentiet: arbitu-
rum se abs te esse illico minuitatur. He’ll go straight to the way
for him to win you over: he’ll threaten to leave you on the spot
(Lit.: He’ll go straight to that by which he feels he most pre-
vails with you . . .) (Heaut. 487–9).

Models for Recognition 6: No Antecedent at All
(Substantive Clauses)

A qui–clause which is complement to a verb of seeking or
giving and which has a subjunctive verb can be rendered “a way
to,” “the means to,” “the wherewithal to.” The means is typically
money, as in Example 2 of the preceding set, where the ante-
cedent was spelled out, argentum qui.

1. PY. spero me habere qui hunc meo excruciem modo
I hope I’ve got a way to torture him in my turn (Eun. 920).

2. PE. dicat ‘da, mi vir, kalendis meam qui matrem munerem’
She’d say “Husband, give me by means of which I may get a present
for my mother on the fi rst” (MG 691).

3. CH. des qui aurum ac vestem atque alia quae opu’ sunt comparet.
so you’d give the wherewithal to buy jewelry, clothes, and other
needfuls (Heaut. 855).

4. CH. somnum hercle ego hac nocte oculis non vidi meis/ dum id
quaero tibi qui fi lium restituerem.
I stayed awake all night look-
ning for a way to get your son back to you (Heaut. 491–2).

In sum, Type Five, above (impersonal antecedent) is the
quintessence, since the converse, a personal antecedent, would
give you the “who”—the overall essential for the third qui. It is
sometimes also the most obvious visual cue. This is less help-
ful in the interrogative because the “antecedent” is being asked
for and will be the answer to the question, a postcedent! Thus
the other sets of cues, Types One—Four and Six are needed,
and describe common companions of the third qui. Many of
the six types often come together in a single example. Visually,
one factor or another of the six will be most obvious in a given
passage.

Appendix: A Word on the Second Qui

A nearby nominative masculine marks the interrogative ad-
djective (qui type two above). It asks a question, it has an obvious
nominative masculine noun right with it as in qui locus est, iudi-
ces, quid tempus, qui dies, quae nox . . . (Cic. Mur. 82). The ques-
tion can be direct: Is est an non est? ipsus est. quid hoc hominis?
Qui hic ornatust?
Is it him or not? It’s him. What kind of guy is
this, what get-up is this? (Eun. 546) Or indirect: AN:
tum equi-
dem istuc os tuom impudens videre nimium vellem/ qui eset status,
flabellulum tenere te asinum tantum I really would like to that
impudent face of yours then, what your pose was, you holding
that fan—such an ass!

Endnotes

1 This statement is made at the cost of a day spent cross-exam-
ining every qui in the two Commentaries. All appear to be
innocent.

2 75 of the 17,837 words in Book 2 of Livy are qui. All 75 turn
out to be “who.”

3 Of the 216 qui’s in Cicero Ad Familiares II and Pro Roscio
combined, one turns out to be the means/manner qui: Quae-
ro qui scias “I wonder how you know.”

4 In isolation, the nescio qui fuerit would certainly be “I don’t
know who it was,” but answering the “How could a eunuch
do it?” the qui could be read either way, probably as rendered
above.

5 This one is arguably an “ablative of degree of difference”: e.g.,
“By what degree less than Hercules was slave to Omphale?”

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