Shakespeare's Latin: A pragmatic perspective

Jonathan Culpeper (Lancaster University) and Caterina Guardamagna (University of Liverpool)

@ShakespeareLang
The initial inspiration: Recent research on the pragmatics of borrowing

- Shift from traditional areas of lexis, morphology and phonology into the realms of pragmatics.
- 2017 saw the publication of a special issue on the topic in the *Journal of Pragmatics*.
- Most of the papers there considered present-day language and pragmatic borrowing from English ('Anglicisms').

Two views on pragmatic borrowing

The initial inspiration: Recent research on the pragmatics of borrowing

(2) *The broad view* (sociopragmatic focus): local contextual relationships and functions of the borrowed linguistic material; often driven by a desire to account for the pragmatic motivations for lexical borrowing.

Our aims in this presentation:

- Very little Latin pragmalinguistic material in the narrow sense.
- Broad view more promising. First steps:

  - To work out the norms and parameters of Latin in Shakespeare
  - To devise a research agenda
Latin and Latin loans in English

English and borrowing from Latin (conventional & approximate dates!)

Classical Latin → Medieval Latin → Italian
(75BC–3rd century AD) → (5th–15th century AD) → (14th century –)

Also, Latin entering English via other languages, notably, French!
Latin and Latin loans in English

English and borrowing from Latin (conventional & approximate dates!)

Classical Latin → Medieval Latin → Italian
(75BC–3rd century AD) (5th–15th century AD) (14th century –)

OE → ME → EModE
(6th–11th century) (12th–15th century) (16th century –)

Also, Latin entering English via other languages, notably, French!
Latin and Latin loans in English

Latin and Greek words as percentages of all words first cited in the OED, 701-1989
Shakespeare and Latin

- School at Stratford
- No university

“Most contemporary scholars agree that S’s grammar-school education suffices to account for his evident familiarity with the language and literature of ancient Rome [...]” (Wolfe 2012 p.519)

+ collections of maxims, fables, dialogues, epithets...

No detailed info → guesswork (< other schools + S’s writings)

“S probably would have studied selections from the major Latin poets, historians and rhetoricians, including Virgil, Ovid, Livy, Cicero and Quintilian.” (Wolfe 2012 p.519)

+ Lily’s *Brevissima Institutio* (Grammar Textbook)

Holofernes
“Novi hominem tamquam te”
“Vir sapit qui paucha loquitur”
Shakespeare and Latin

Ben Jonson

“To the memory of my beloved, the author,
Mr William Shakespeare.”

[How far thou didst our Lyly outshine
Or sporting Kyd or Marlowe’s mighty line.

And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek
From thence to honor thee, I would not seek
For names, but call forth thund’ring Aeschylus,
Euripides and Sophocles to us….

Deserved? Supported? Misunderstood?
The Literature on Shakespeare’s Latin

• **Scanty** literature + Tends to...

• Focus on **speculations** about Shakespeare’s **knowledge** of Latin and Latinisms

• Take a narrow **lexicographic/stylistic** perspective

1. Claflin (1921)
2. Wilder (1925)
4. Hower (1951)
5. Enck (1961)
8. Avery (1994)
9. Damascelli (undated)

See also - on knowledge of the classics:
Wolfe (2012) and Karagiorgos (blog, undated)
The Literature on Shakespeare’s “Latin”

Latinisms (e.g. *festinate*) not Latin (e.g. *domine*)

1. **Philological/Historical** RQs, e.g.:
   - How much Latin did S. know?
   - What were his sources?
   - Were these first-hand or second-hand?

2. **Semantic/Pedagogical** RQs, e.g.:
   - What is the etymology of S’s Latinisms?
   - What semantic change did these undergo?
   - How can we enhance the teaching of S?

3. **Stylistic** RQs, e.g.:
   - Shak as a creative neologist/inventive word-maker?
   - Shak as a user of current Latinate words?
   - Inkhorn words? Renaissance vibes?

Lists/Inventories

- Claflin 1921 (66)
- Hower 1951(39)
- Avery (1994) (38)
- Garner 1987 (626)
The Literature on Shakespeare’s “Latin”

Broad pragmatic borrowings (well, a hint of...) + stylistics

• (Some) Humour/puns
  Hower 1951, Enck 1961

Corpus: Damascelli (undated)

• 900,000 wd corpus + Garner’s (1987) list
• Wordsmith / WordCruncher

Distribution/Variation parameters

• Genre (tragedy/comedy/history/poetry)
• Narrative Character (main/secondary)
• Character's social positioning (to an extent)
• Date of production

Examples of findings

Tragedies
  evidence of expressively more mature production + characterization of hero
  (→ stylistic explanation)

Comedies
  aristocratic characters
  (→ sociolinguistic explanation)

No studies on Shakespeare’s (actual) Latin to date
Extracting Latin from Shakespeare

Shakespeare

• First Folio 1623 + *Pericles* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*
• Produced c.1589-1613; published 1623
• Just over one million words

The broad Latin list

• Manually code as Latin every word that has:
  (1) a plausible Latin (spelling) profile, and
  (2) is marked with respect to surrounding English words; or
  (3) is part of a cohesive chunk of other plausibly Latin words.
• Assisted by the *Variant Detector* (VARD) program (largely developed by Alistair Baron).
Extracting Latin from Shakespeare

The broad list includes (see Binns 1982):

- **Sententiae** (i.e. proverbs, maxims, etc.),
  
  e.g. *Veni, Vidi, Vici* (LLL 4, 1); *Satis quod sufficit* (LLL 5, 1); *Vir sapit qwui pauca loquitur* (LLL 4, 2); *Laus deo* (LLL 5, 1)

- **Quotations** from Latin texts (both Classical & Renaissance)
  
  e.g. *Irae furor brevis est* (Timon 1, 2, 28) < Horace (Epistles 1, 2, 62)
  
  *Fauste, precor gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra ruminat* (LLL 4, 2) < Italian Humanist Battista Spagnoli

- **Constructed** Latin text,
  
  e.g. *Bone intelligo* (LLL 5, 1)

- **Not always clear-cut distinction!**
  
  e.g. *Si fas aut nefas* (Titus 1,1, 633)
  
  < ~~~ *Fasque nefasque* (Ovid, Met. 6, 585, 6)
Extracting Latin from Shakespeare

- **Mock Latin expressions**
  
  *e.g. Gremio.* [...] I pray let us that are poor petitioners speak too? *Baccare,* you are marvellous forward. (TS 2.1) [back + -are; used by John Heywood 1555; dig at Gremio for being pompous]

- **Marked borrowings** (relatively recent loans in restricted contexts; listed in LEME (1580-1613), mostly, Thomas Thomas (1578) *Dictionarium Linguae Latinae et Anglicanae*)
  
  *e.g. ergo, ecce, terra, homo*

- **Ambiguous cases** (i.e. Latin and another language)
  
  *e.g. et, tres* (French), *tu, tua* (Italian), *non, si* (French, Italian, etc.)

- **Proper nouns**
  
  *e.g. Franciae, Jovem, Brutus, Angliae, Henricus*

- **Stage directions**
  
  *e.g. exeunt, manet, omnes, finis*
Latin in Shakespeare and in a corpus of contemporary playwrights

Shakespeare corpus: 38 plays (c.1589-1613); 1,038,509 words

Comparative plays corpus: 46 plays by 24 other playwrights (1584-1626); 1,091,729 words

N.B. It is likely that some of the “other playwrights” had a hand in co-writing some of Shakespeare’s plays.

A glance at the contents of the comparative plays corpus:
**Encyclopaedia of Shakespeare’s Language Project**

**Contents of comparative corpus for Shakespeare’s plays**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>First production*</th>
<th>First publication*</th>
<th>Edition in corpus**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comedy</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>John Lyly</td>
<td><em>Alexander and Comus</em></td>
<td>c. 1583</td>
<td>1584</td>
<td>1584</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Lyly</td>
<td><em>Galathea</em></td>
<td>1585</td>
<td>1592</td>
<td>1592</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Greene</td>
<td><em>Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay</em></td>
<td>1589</td>
<td>1594</td>
<td>1594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Peele</td>
<td><em>The Old Wives Tale</em></td>
<td>1590</td>
<td>1595</td>
<td>1595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Chapman</td>
<td><em>The Blind Beggar of Alexandria</em></td>
<td>1596</td>
<td>1598</td>
<td>1598</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Heywood</td>
<td><em>The Fair Maid of the West Part 1</em></td>
<td>1604</td>
<td>1631</td>
<td>1631</td>
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<tr>
<td>George Chapman</td>
<td><em>An Humorous Days</em> <em>War</em></td>
<td>1597</td>
<td>1599</td>
<td>1599</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Porter</td>
<td><em>The Two Angry Women of Abington</em></td>
<td>c. 1598</td>
<td>1599</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td><em>Macedorus</em></td>
<td>1590</td>
<td>1598</td>
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<td>Thomas Dekker</td>
<td><em>Old Fortunatus</em></td>
<td>1599</td>
<td>1600</td>
<td>1600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Heywood</td>
<td><em>How a Man May Chuse</em></td>
<td>1602</td>
<td>1602</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ben Jonson</td>
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<td>1606</td>
<td>1616</td>
<td>1616</td>
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<tr>
<td>Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher</td>
<td><em>The Woman Hater</em></td>
<td>1606</td>
<td>1607</td>
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<td>George Wilkins</td>
<td><em>The Miseries of Inconstable Marriage</em></td>
<td>1606</td>
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<td><em>The Knight of the Burning Pistle</em></td>
<td>1607</td>
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<td>John Fletcher</td>
<td><em>The Faithful Shepherdess</em></td>
<td>1608</td>
<td>c. 1610</td>
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<td>Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher</td>
<td><em>Phileaster</em></td>
<td>1609</td>
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<td>Thomas Middleton</td>
<td><em>The Roaring Girl</em></td>
<td>1611</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ben Jonson</td>
<td>* Bartholomew Faire*</td>
<td>1614</td>
<td>1631</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philip Massinger</td>
<td><em>The Bondman</em></td>
<td>1623</td>
<td>1624</td>
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*Dates of first production and first publication are from the Database of Early English Playbooks: [http://deep.sas.upenn.edu/](http://deep.sas.upenn.edu/)*

**History**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>First production*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert Greene</td>
<td><em>The Scottish History of James the Fourth</em></td>
<td>c. 1590</td>
<td>1598</td>
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<td>Christopher</td>
<td><em>Tamburlaine Part I</em></td>
<td>c. 1587</td>
<td>1590</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td><em>Edward II</em></td>
<td>1592</td>
<td>1594</td>
<td>1594</td>
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<td>George Peele</td>
<td><em>The Famous Chronicle of Edward I</em></td>
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<td>Anthony Munday</td>
<td><em>The Death of Robert Earl of Huntingdon</em></td>
<td>1598</td>
<td>1601</td>
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<td>Thomas Heywood</td>
<td><em>Edward IV Part I</em></td>
<td>1599</td>
<td>1600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Heywood</td>
<td><em>Edward IV Part II</em></td>
<td>1599</td>
<td>1600</td>
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<td>Anonymous</td>
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<td>1600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Heywood</td>
<td><em>If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody Part I</em></td>
<td>1604</td>
<td>1605</td>
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<td>Thomas Dekker</td>
<td><em>Sir Thomas Wyatt</em></td>
<td>1602</td>
<td>1607</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Armin</td>
<td><em>The Valiant Welshman</em></td>
<td>1612</td>
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<td>Thomas Druce</td>
<td><em>The Duchess of Suffolk</em></td>
<td>1624</td>
<td>1631</td>
<td>1631</td>
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</table>

**Tragedy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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<th>First production*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Kyd</td>
<td><em>The Spanish Tragedy</em></td>
<td>1587</td>
<td>1592</td>
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<td>1633</td>
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<td><em>Dr Faustus</em></td>
<td>1592</td>
<td>1604</td>
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<td>Christopher</td>
<td><em>Dido, Queen of Carthage</em></td>
<td>1586</td>
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<td>Thomas Heywood</td>
<td><em>A Woman Killed With Kindness</em></td>
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<td>John Marston</td>
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<td>John Webster</td>
<td><em>The White Devil</em></td>
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<td>John Webster</td>
<td><em>The Duchess of Malfi</em></td>
<td>1614</td>
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<td>Thomas Middleton and William</td>
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<td><em>Women Beware Women</em></td>
<td>1621</td>
<td>1657</td>
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Shakespeare’s “small Latin”? (contd.)

From our **broad Shakespeare Latin list** we excluded:

- Mock Latin expressions
- Ambiguous cases (i.e. ambiguous between Latin and another language, e.g. Italian, French)
- Proper nouns
- Stage directions

This left: **Sententiae, quotations from Latin texts, constructed Latin text, marked borrowings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broad list</strong></td>
<td>970</td>
<td>457,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focussed list</strong></td>
<td>245</td>
<td>362</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shakespeare’s “small Latin”? (contd.)

A glance at the top-50 items from the focussed Latin list

hic (13), ergo (8), ad (6), pauca (6), quondam (6), videlicet (6), cum (5), inprimis (5), benedictus 4), extempore (4), aliis (3), bone (3), deum (3), horum (3), ibat (3), lapis (3), mater (3), nec (3), quis (3), quod (3), quo (3), senis (3), sigeia (3), suis (3), tellus (3), accusativo (2), aer (2), armiger (2), benedicite (2), bene (2), caret (2), cucullus (2), dii (2), domine (2), facit (2), fatuus (2), hac (2), haud (2), hoc (2), ignis (2), ipse (2), lentus (2), manes (2), mollis (2), monachum (2), mulier (2), nominativo (2), omne (2), perge (2), primus (2)
Shakespeare’s “small Latin”? (contd.)

The number of Latin words in the Shakespeare Corpus and the occurrence of those words in the Comparative Corpus of contemporary Playwrights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Type-Token Ratio</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shakespeare corpus</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(focussed list)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparative corpus of</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>contemporary playwrights</td>
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High = More lexical variation
Low = Less lexical variation

Sh’s Latin vocabulary is more varied than his contemporaries put together
Shakespeare’s “small Latin”? (contd.)

The number of Latin words with a **single occurrence** in the Shakespeare Corpus and the number of Latin words (from the Shakespeare focussed list) with single occurrences in the comparative corpus of contemporary playwrights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single occurrences</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shakespeare corpus</strong></td>
<td>187</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>53%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(focussed list)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comparative corpus</strong></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<td>of contemporary playwrights</td>
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</table>

**High** = More lexical variation

**Low** = Less lexical variation

Further evidence Sh’s Latin vocabulary is more varied than his contemporaries put together
# Shakespeare’s Latin: Social Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Feature marked</th>
<th>Possible values</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>speaker(s)</td>
<td>singular (s) or multiple (m)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>speaker ID tag</td>
<td>already undertaken for us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>gender of speaker</td>
<td>male (m), female (f), assumed male (am), assumed female (af), neither (n), mixed (mi), problematic (p)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>status/social rank of speaker</td>
<td>Monarch (0), Nobility (1), Gentry (2), Professional (3), Other Middling Groups (4), Ordinary Commoners (5), Lowest Groups (6), Supernatural Beings (7), Problematic (8)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Status/social rank** categories initially based on rank, estate or sort, in order to reflect (i) pre-industrialised nature of EmodE society, and (ii) way in which EmodE contemporaries spoke about status, but also reworked to capture particular Shakespearean features ...
Shakespeare’s Latin: Social distribution

Dispersion = no. of speakers with 1+ hits in their social class
e.g. 7.8% of professionals use at least one word of Latin

How much Latin does each social class use?
Shakespeare’s Latin: Social distribution
A case study – Love’s Labour’s Lost

Ferdinand King of Navarre
Princess of France
Ladies
Don Adriano - noble
Holofernes – schoolmaster
Sir Nathaniel – curate
Moth – page
Dull – constable
Costard – rustic
Jaquenetta – rustic wench
LLL: the nobles

- Latin absent from the King/Princess, Ladies and Gentlemen apart from **Don Adriano de Armado** – a noble Spaniard **braggart** who talks in fancy language to suggest that he is more refined than he actually is.

- He is infatuated with the **villain wench Jaquenetta**... who can’t even read! And uses Latin in a love letter to her.

  [...] and he it was that might rightly say, **Veni, vidi, vici**; which to annothanize in the vulgar,--O base and obscure vulgar!---**videlicet**, He came, saw, and overcame: [...]  

→ Effect: pretentious and comical
LLL: the professionals / pedants

- Most intense interaction between Holofernes & Nathaniel
- In-group / identity / belonging to **the learned**
- Holofernes produces **the longest string**: “Fauste, precor gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra Ruminat,--and so forth.” – a quote from Italian Humanist Battista Spagnoli
- Holofernes addresses in Latin everyone but Jaquenetta → **comic** effect.
LLL: the lower classes

- **Type 1: The Wit** -- Moth outwits both his master Don Adriano and Holofernes – he shows a reasonable command of Latin (he “gets back at them” intellectually – he challenges their in-groupness)

  ADRIANO The meaning, pretty ingenious? Is not lead a metal heavy, dull, and slow?
  MOOTH Minime, honest master; or rather, master, no.

- **Type 2: The Fool** -- Dull and Costard are fools whose misunderstandings produce comical effects (they are out-groups)

  HOLOFERNES Sir Nathaniel, haud credo.
  DULL 'Twas not a haud credo; 'twas a pricket.

→ identity/social management and humour
Concluding remarks

• Scarce literature on Latinisms; especially scarce for Latin in Shakespeare, aside from quick footnotes.
• Shakespeare’s Latin is not so small!
• Social distribution: appears to be stuff of the professionals/middling and lower orders (though dispersion is narrow)
• Functions include:
  Ø Characterisation (e.g. the wit, the fool, the braggart) (e.g. characters manipulating others, characters not in control of their language),
  Ø Humour for audience,
  Ø Demonstrating author learnedness (cf. quotations, sententiae),
  Ø Conforming to play conventions (cf. stage directions)
  Ø Etc.
Concluding remarks

Limitation
• Small Latin: we don’t take account of Latin items in the comparative corpus but not in Shakespeare.

Future research
• More work on a data-driven taxonomy of functions (e.g. social marking, humour)
• More work needed on ‘status’ of borrowings:
  ➢ (1) frequency, dispersion and date of first citation (e.g. “ergo” – first cited 1400(?) (OED), but still marked as Latin, used in widely circulated Latin texts, appears in Latin-English dictionaries), and
  ➢ (2) often not single words but chunks.
• Work on metalinguistic comments concerning Latin.
• More work on comparative data, especially EEBO.


