

# Latin Indirect Speech

## Data Science for Linguists 2022

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# Background

I have an interest in historical languages and linguistics

Found a corpus of annotated Latin texts

Decided to pick a phenomenon that showed change throughout the language's history

# PROIEL Treebank

Part of the Syntacticus project  
Multiple languages

- Latin
- Ancient Greek
- Classical Armenian
- Gothic
- Old Church Slavonic

## Indirect speech

Indirect speech refers to reported speech that is not directly quoted

‘He said that you are a poor student.’

More generally, any sort of subclause introduced by a verb

‘I think I’ll take a nap.’

There are two types of construction for this in Latin

# The accusative + infinitive construction

In this construction:

- The main verb in the subclause becomes an infinitive
- The subject is in the accusative case

It is similar to the English 'I know them to be a fine scholar'

## The accusative + infinitive construction

- (1) reum                      Pūblium      nisi      ante  
defendant.ACC.SG Publius.ACC unless before  
occīsus                                      erit  
fell.PRF.PSV.PTCP.NOM.SG be.FUT.ACT.IND.3SG  
fore                      ā      Milōne      putō  
be.FUT.ACT.INF by Milo.ABL think.PRS.ACT.IND.1SG  
'I think Publius will be brought to trial by Milo, unless he's  
killed.'

# The subordinating constructions

In these types, a complementizer is used

The complementizer is one of:

- *quod* 'because'
- *quia* 'because'
- *quīn* that (complementizer; in negated sentences of doubt, knowledge, etc.)
- *quoniam* 'since'

## The subordinating constructions

- (2)    *dīcō*    *enim*    *vōbīs*            *quoniam*  
say.PRS.ACT.IND.1SG    because 2.DAT.PL    since.COMP  
*potest*    *Deus*            *dē*    *lapidibus*  
can.PRS.ACT.3SG    god.NOM.SG    from stone.ABL.PL  
*istīs*    *suscitāre*            *filiōs*            *Ābrahae*  
DEM.ABL.PL    awaken.ACT.INF    son.ACC.PL    Abraham.GEN  
'For I say to you that God can raise up the children of  
Abraham from those stones.'



# Analysis

I classified sentences according to several features:

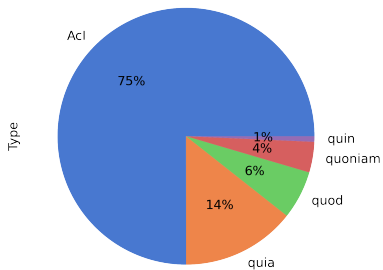
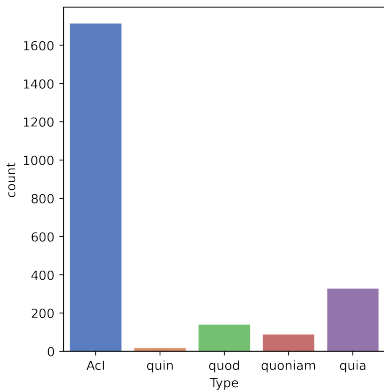
- Era
- Author
- Type of construction
- Verb (in the indirect speech clause)
- Tense
- Mood
- Voice

## Texts Used

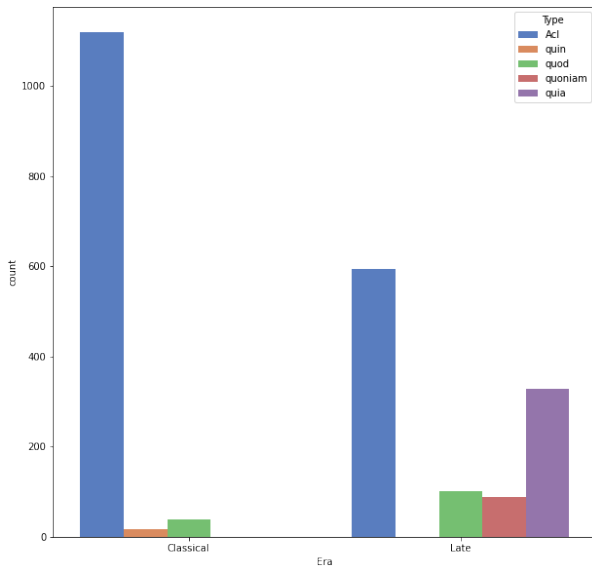
I used five texts:

- Gaius Julius Caesar – *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars*
- Marcus Tullius Cicero – *Dē officiīs*
- Marcus Tullius Cicero – *Letters to Atticus*
- Jerome – New Testament (VUL)
- *Peregrinātiō Aetheriae*
- Palladius – *Opus agricultūrae*

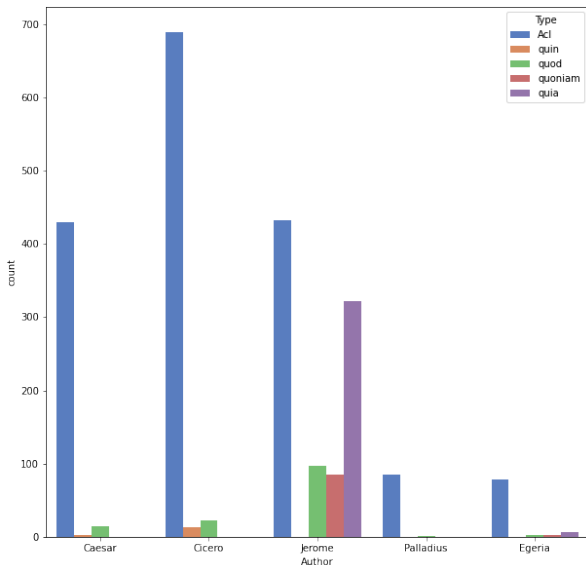
# Type



## Type by era



## Type by author



## The problem with Jerome

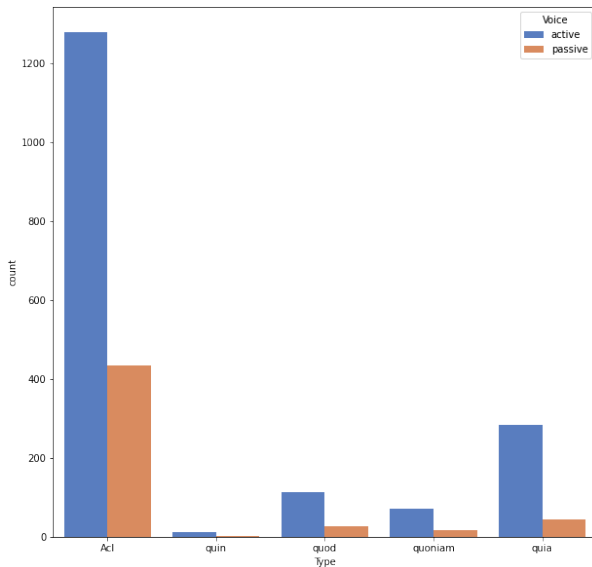
Jerome was known for preserving the original syntax

Greek has complementizers like *hóti* and *gár*

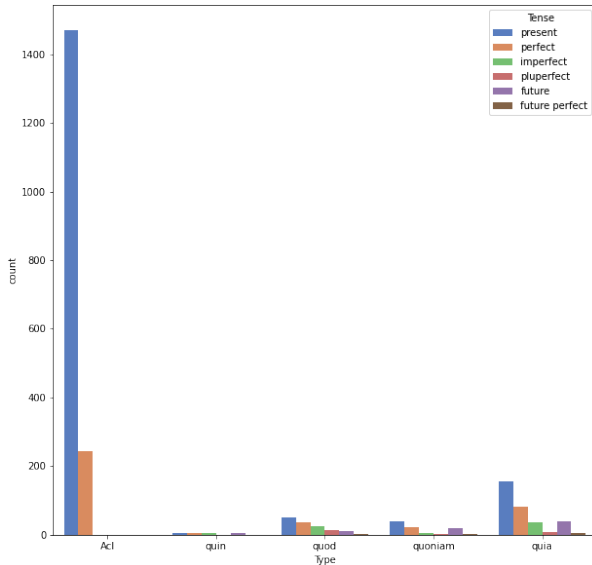
Therefore, his high use of complementizers may not reflect a wholly-Latin development

Would need to do more research into Greek

## Voice by type

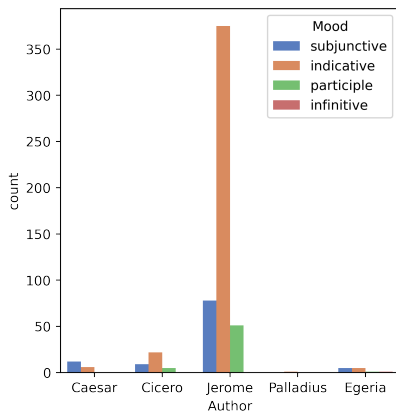
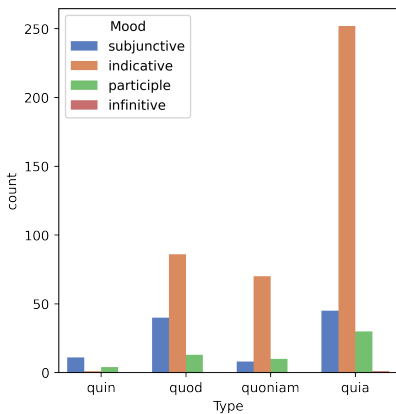


## Tense by type





# Mood by type and author



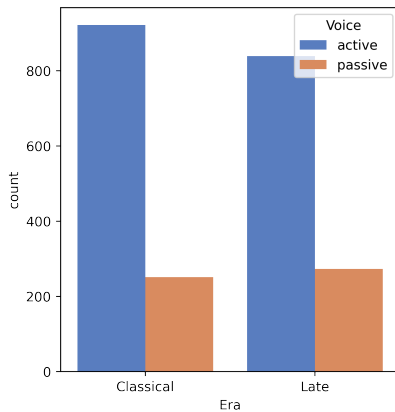
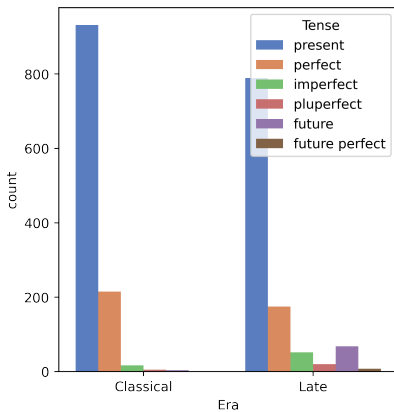
## Tense and voice by era

In modern Romance languages, the future tense and passive do not survive

(In most Romance languages, the future tense derives from fusion of the infinitive with the verb *habeō* 'I have')

Are these forms less frequent in later works?

## Tense and voice by era



## Tense and voice by era

Perhaps even the 'late' texts predate this development  
Possibly the effect of a written register

## Facienda – what must be done

Look more into the 'problem with Jerome'

Finish up analysis

Look into introductory verbs – if there is time