This book presents a comprehensive account of “interactional Latin,” that is, expressions that emerge from dialogue: commands and requests, command softeners and strengtheners, statement hedges, interruptions, attention-getters, greetings, and closings. In analyzing these features, Peter Barrios-Lech employs a quantitative method and draws on all the data from Roman comedy and the fragments of Latin drama. In the first three parts, on commands and requests, particles, attention-getters, interruptions, greetings, and closings, the driving questions are: first, what leads the speaker to choose one form over another? And second, how do the playwrights use these features to characterize on the linguistic level? The book then analyzes dramatic dialogue to show how speakers enact roles and construct relationships with each other through conversation. Finally, in discussions of Plautus’ Captivi and Terence’s Eunuch and Adelphoe, Barrios-Lech demonstrates how characters, when assuming a new identity, change their language accordingly. The book will be important to all scholars of Latin, and especially to scholars of Roman drama.

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LINGUISTIC INTERACTION IN ROMAN COMEDY

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For Claudia and Olivia
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In Shakespeare’s play, *Coriolanus*, Rome’s tribunes inform the eponymous hero that the plebs have revoked their endorsement of his consularship. Coriolanus bitterly inveighs against the common people – “mutable, rank-scented meiny,” “the cockle of rebellion,” “measles” he calls them (3.1.88, 92, 103) – all of which provokes the tribune Brutus’ response:

**Brutus (a tribune):**  
You speak o’ th’ people  
As if you were a god to punish, not  
A man of their infirmity.  

**Sicinius (another tribune, to Brutus):**  
’T were well  
We let the people know ’t.  

**Coriolanus:**  
Were I as patient as the midnight sleep,  
By Jove, ’twould be my mind.  

**Sicinius:**  
It is a mind  
That shall remain a poison where it is,  
Not poison any further.  

**Coriolanus (to his patrician friend):**  
"Shall remain"?  
Hear you this Triton of the minnows? Mark you  
His absolute “shall”?

(Shakespeare, *Coriolanus* Act 3, Scene 1, 107–110, 112–120)

In Elizabethan English, “absolute shall” “expresses a speaker’s determination to bring something about, and suggests that the speaker has the power to make it happen.”

By refusing to acknowledge this “shall,” linguistic sign of the tribune’s authority over him, Coriolanus simultaneously rejects Rome’s new constitution whereby tribunes wield power over all, patricians and plebs alike. His refusal to accept the tribune’s new authority, of course, will lead the
single-minded aristocrat to side with the Volsci and ultimately march on Rome. Only Volumnia, Coriolanus’ mother, will avert imminent disaster for Rome by persuading her son to lift his siege of the city.

The tribune’s authoritative “shall” was a piece of language entirely appropriate to the people’s powerful new representative. Coriolanus’ obeisance, however proffered, here and earlier when the tribunes commanded him (3.1.32, 33) was the appropriate response. Such appropriate language – a tribune’s command, for instance, followed by a citizen’s sign of obedience – forges orderly relationships, whether, as here, the proper relationship between a magistrate and a citizen, or later in the play, between mother and son. And orderly relations constituted like these ones, through language, form, in turn, orderly families and societies. The bedrock of a community, therefore, is precisely this language of interaction – linguistic interaction. Its breakdown results in silence, gridlock, or worse, violence.

This is as true of Coriolanus’ Rome and Shakespeare’s England as it is for us, today.

Our linguistic behavior can mark us as part of a group. For instance, were Coriolanus to heed the tribune – which he does not – that would effectively identify him as the equal of any other Roman citizen. But our use of language can also individualize us. Shakespeare renders the hero distinct by making his speech disjointed and repetitive but at times bold and imaginative.

In this book, we shall discuss these aspects of early Latin, namely, early Latin as a medium to reflect or create a certain kind of bond and as a means to individualize character. Scholars define early Latin as the form of Latin written by authors from the late third down to the early first century BCE. We choose this period because surviving from it are texts that make an investigation of linguistic interaction possible: dramas. We employ primarily the Roman comedy of Plautus and Terence and, secondarily, the fragmentary remains of Republican comedy, tragedy, and historical drama (prætexta).

The scripts of Plautus and Terence in particular are well suited for our investigation because in them we find time and again characters interacting verbally: negotiating and renegotiating relationships, asserting, advising, directing, persuading, entertaining, and influencing each other. Even monologue speakers in comedy routinely interact with individual spectators or the entire audience.

In this book, I investigate linguistic interaction in these texts using tools from two relatively recent subfields of linguistics: sociolinguistics and pragmatics. I intend it, however, not just for linguists but also for
Preface

anyone interested in Latin generally and Roman comedy particularly. With the latter group of readers in mind, I have tried to make the book user-friendly as follows. First, I show how the findings can enrich our appreciation of the playwrights’ verbal artistry by applying them to readings of particular scenes and plays. Second, I avoid linguistic terminology whenever possible. Third, I sometimes illustrate a Latin expression with an analogous one drawn from Shakespeare, news talk shows, novels, and magazine articles. To find suitable contemporary English expressions, I have used the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA), maintained by Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. I want to stress that I provide an analogous English phrase to help the reader gain an intuitive grasp of the early Latin expression under discussion. The reader should not infer that I am arguing for some kind of relationship between the two expressions, whether etymological or otherwise. I beg the patience of the linguists who use the book, since they may not be satisfied with the presentation. I still hope they find useful at least some of what they read here.

In the first third of 2015, I counted at least three books on Roman comedy (one with a linguistics focus), an overview of linguistic variation in Latin, and an article on words for “please” in imperial Latin, all of which had just come out or were forthcoming. Unfortunately, they appeared too late for me to take them into account, but they do testify that this is an exciting time for students of Roman drama and the sociolinguistics of ancient languages. I hope this book can contribute in some way to both fields.
Acknowledgments

This book, like many first books, is based on a dissertation, but its origins go back further than that, to a spring evening I spent in the dark bowels of the “Rock” (Brown’s Rockefeller Library). There, while browsing the stacks, I stumbled across Eleanor Dickey’s book on Latin vocatives, which would provoke an interest in the questions tackled here and inspire my approach to them. It led me, through its bibliography, to some of the classics of sociolinguistics and pragmatics: Brown and Gilman’s 1960 article on the pronouns of power and solidarity, Brown and Levinson’s textbook on politeness and, for classicists, Adams’ 1984 article on female speech.

From that evening in the Rock, to the time of this writing, I have accrued many debts, which it is a pleasure to record here. To begin, I cannot adequately express my gratitude to Adele Scafuro. Suffice it to say that without her incisive criticisms and patient direction, I could never have produced the PhD thesis that eventually became this book. Throughout the process of writing the dissertation and afterward, she, René Nünlist, and David Konstan gave invaluable help, not least by sharing with me their extensive knowledge of Greek and Roman drama.

Not long after submitting the dissertation, I sent it to Eleanor Dickey, whose work had inspired me to write it in the first place. I hoped she would cast a glance at it and offer some criticisms, but never actually expected a response. About a month later, and much to my surprise, I received an email from her with an attached document, containing 11 pages of comments, single spaced. Without these comments, which were as encouraging as they were forthright in addressing the weaknesses of my work, I never would have dared undertake the thorough revisions required. Through those remarks and her comments on parts of a later draft, Eleanor has held me to her own impeccably high standards, from which I have doubtless fallen short. No words could express my gratitude for Eleanor’s generosity and her belief in this project. May all scholars starting out in their careers have such expert guidance!

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Many others helped me to write the best book that I could. Without the help of Milan Mathew, the project surely would have foundered. He first suggested that I use inferential statistics to make my results more persuasive and taught me the basics. He and Eni Halilaj patiently and with admirable clarity answered my many questions about statistics, while their work ethic and rigorous approach to data analysis inspired me as I conducted the research. Dorota Dutsch generously set time aside to comment on parts of the manuscript and pointed me to useful scholarship I certainly would not have known about otherwise. Rolando Ferri let me see some of his unpublished work and corresponded with me about Donatus’ observations on pragmatic aspects of Latin. I have benefitted from correspondence with Mike Fontaine on the *sermo comicus*. Giada Sorrentino and Evert van Emde Boas kindly shared their forthcoming work with me. Audiences at APA 2011, 2012, Santa Clara University, and Bucknell University offered candid criticisms of some earlier versions of the sections on attention-getters, imperatives, and what has now become Part V.

For sections 4.3, 8.3, and 12.3.4, I have expanded on in parts and condensed in others material which has appeared in *RhM*, *Mnemosyne*, and *Hermes*. I wish to thank the editors of those journals for securing me permission to reuse parts of that previously published work. Warm thanks go to the anonymous readers of Cambridge University Press, who, in their comments on the manuscript, saved me from embarrassing errors, pointed me to useful primary and secondary sources, and pushed me to consider questions I would not have thought of on my own.

I finished the manuscript while at University of Massachusetts Boston, where I have been fortunate in having great mentors. Emily McDermott has offered incisive and honest critique of my work which has improved my writing considerably. Jacqui Carlon has always given generously of her scant free time and her prodigious energy, and especially when I most needed a boost. Ken Rothwell promotes an unpretentious and open environment that makes the department a pleasant place to work and exchange ideas. At a critical moment, Ken read through the entire manuscript for this book and offered many useful comments.

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It is especially pleasant to acknowledge here debts of a more personal nature. For encouragement and support while working on this project, warm thanks go to Prasanth Ambady, Debbie Boedeker, Eva Cieloszyk, Lourdes Costa, Jeri Debrohun, Bill Greenwalt, John Heath, Jamie Lederer, Molly Lederer, Robin McGill, Erin Moodie, Pura Nieto-Hernández, Tim Moore, David Morgan (1959–2013), Tim Pernini, Joe Pucci, Tiago Rodrigues, Jason Schlude, Leander Schneider, Carrie Thomas, Wendy Teo, Chris Trinacry, Daniel Turkeltaub, Johanna Vanto, Goran Vidović, George West, and Edwin Wong.

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While I was in the midst of writing this book, my daughter Olivia came into the world, much earlier than anticipated. In her first three months at Boston’s Brigham and Women’s Hospital, she remained under the ever-watchful care of the NICU’s heroic staff of nurses and doctors. During my family’s lengthy stay at the hospital, I had the honor of observing daughter and mother not only endure a set of life-threatening conditions, but triumph over them. Let this book stand as a small tribute to two awe-inspiring women.
Note on texts and translations

The edition used for Plautus is Lindsay’s 1910 Oxford edition, although I have also consulted the editions of Ritschl et al. (1878–1902) and Leo (1895–1896). For the text of Terence, I have used the second edition of Kauer and Lindsay (1958). For fragments of Republican Roman drama, I used Ribbeck’s third edition and regularly consulted more recent editions; departures in the citations from Ribbeck’s third edition are appropriately signaled. Abbreviations for ancient authors are those found in the OLD and LSJ. Unless otherwise noted, I have used texts of ancient authors that are cited in these dictionaries. For titles of journals, the abbreviations of the Année Philologique are used. All translations are my own except where noted. For translations of Plautus and Terence, I have consulted the Loeb editions of de Melo (2011–2012) for Plautus and Barsby (2001) for Terence. All quotations from Shakespeare are drawn from the Folger Shakespeare Library editions.
Abbreviations

Barsby

Donatus

Keil GL

K.-St.

H.-Sz.

HLL 1

Leo

Lindsay

LLF

LU

NP

OLD

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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Abbreviations</th>
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<tr>
<td>TLL</td>
<td><em>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</em>. Leipzig. 1900–.</td>
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