

#### QUESTION 4

Do the plays reflect the education the boys in the Stratford grammar school received?

Perry Mills

Of course! Lessons at the “*Kynges New Scole*” provided all the Latin (and “less Greek”) he needed to know. He was not just taught to read Latin but to write and speak it. A popular exercise was ethopoeia, or Impersonation – where the student was expected to express himself in the style and voice of someone else, often a woman such as Ariadne or Hecuba; a useful skill for the trainee playwright, no doubt.

And Shakespeare’s men habitually remember Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides*, two central texts on the Elizabethan set-book list, along with the standard textbook Lyly’s *Latin Grammar*.

Perhaps the pupils did not always show the “consistent application” demanded by us teachers. Witness the scene in *Merry Wives* when young Will (nota bene!) is instructed in basic vocabulary by the Welsh pedagogue and windbag Sir Hugh Evans - or should that be Thomas Jenkins, Master from 1575-1579?