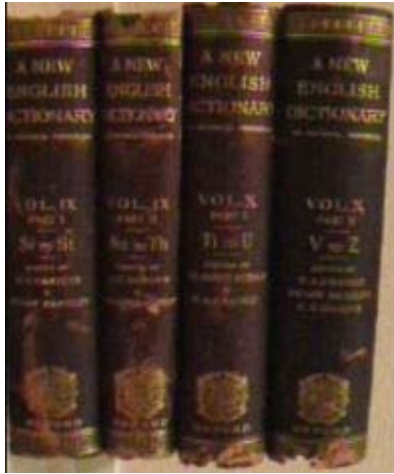


Latin Lovers

By Dónal Thompson



Ten years after Christ died the Romans invaded England. What was merely a political distraction, designed to impress the powerful influences in Rome, had long-lasting linguistic consequences for the peoples of the British Isles.

Status Quo is the only British rock band I can think of who have a Latin name. As their music never changes, it is an appropriate one. When we learn to tell the time we split the day into two halves - *ante* and *post meridiem*. - then abbreviate them to 'am' and 'pm'. Spanish people talk about their 'curriculum' and English talk of their 'CV' - both are referring to their '*curricula vitae*'. No textbook would be complete with out its '*exempli gratia*' (shortened to 'eg'.)

When I forget to include something in a letter I add it after my signature. It's called a 'P.S' from the Latin '*post scriptum*'. Actors *ad lib*, accountants calculate *per capita*, meetings adjourn *sine die* and *ab initio ad nauseum* Latin, *inter alia* is a *sine que non* in our beautifully mixed up language.

Mr Robinson, my old Latin teacher, wore a gown and smelled of chalk dust. He was so old that many of us thought Latin was his mother tongue. Our school motto was '*Fidelitor et Fortitor*' But he wasn't teaching a dead language. Far from it.

We haven't translated those expressions because we haven't found any better ones. Amid the plastic neologisms, fancy French food terms and earthly English we find Latin elegance and precision like marble columns standing in the confused undergrowth of a forest.

People who are intelligent use more Latin words. That has been proven by scientists. Latin means, *ipso facto*, smart.

One of the greatest English poets Wilfred Owen used a Latin phrase in his most famous poem. He condemns 'The old lie: *Dulce et decorum est Pro patria mori* .'

From a personal point of view, having a little Latin helped me when I was learning Castellano. It also helped when I saw the film 'Dead Poets' Society'. Who does not remember '*Carpe Diem*'?

Glossary

Status Quo= The current state

Curriculum vitae = List of life events

Ad lib= Improvise verbally

Sin die = without a formal date

Ab initio= From the beginning

Ad nauseum= Until you're sick of it

Inter alia = Amongst other things

Sine que non = Essential

Fidelitor et Fortitor = Faith and Strength

Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori =It is sweet and fitting to die for your country.

Carpe Diem, quod mimimum credula postero. = Seize the Day and forget about tomorrow

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