

# Latin influence

Kron

- Latin is among the major influences on English. Yet it remains difficult to establish which words from Classical or Vulgar Latin entered English during the Continental period.
- What has been believed as continental loanwords range from plants, animals, food, drink, household objects, vessels, coins, metals, and clothing to building materials, military, medical and commercial items. They are mostly nouns.
- After the settlement, we can see the growing influence of words related to missionary activities, since they deal with religion and learning.
- As the importance of the Church grew, the means of Latin words entering the language changed. Whereas the earliest words entered through speech, the later borrowings entered through writing.
- (Crystal, 2004, 59 – 61)

# Some words borrowed from Latin from c. 450 – c. 650 (Crystal, 2004, 62)

Old English word	Modern English gloss	Latin origin
cocc	cock	Coccus
cugle	cowl	Cuculla
cyrtan	to shorten, curtail	Curtus
forca	fork	Furca
fossere	spade	Fossorium
graef	stylus	Graphium
laeden	Latin	ladinus (Vulgar Latin)
leahtric	lettuce	Lactuca
meagester	master	Magister
nunne	nun	Nonna
pere	pear	Pirum
pinsian	to reflect, consider	Pensare
punt	punt, float boat	Ponto
relic	relic	Reliquia
reng	spider	Aranea
seglian	to seal	Sigillare
segn	mark, sign	Signum
stropp	strap	Stroppus
torr	tower	Turris
turl	ladle, trowel	Trulla

- As far as the Latin loanwords are concerned, it is interesting to note that some loanwords were borrowed twice either to poor communication or to differ from previous usage or as a result of pronunciation changes that resulted in the loss of identity of the early borrowing. (Crystal, 2004, 63)
- Some words borrowed twice from Latin during the Old English period
- (Crystal, 2004, 64)

Early loan	Later loan	Modern English gloss	Latin origin
celc	calic	cup	Calicem
cliroc	cleric	cleric, clergyman	Clericus
laeden	latin	Latin	Latinus
leahtric	lactuca	lettuce	lactuca
minte	menta	mint	menta
spynge	sponge	sponge	spongea

- The Ancient Romans were great borrowers.
- The Roman Empire was acquired by dint of a superior fighting force and rigorous military discipline, but it was maintained by Roman law.
- Thus, we should not be surprised that so many Latin legal terms have been carried over into English.
- As an occupying force the Romans did not integrate with the native population to make a notable impression on the language during the centuries-long Roman presence in ancient Britain, even though remains of their civil engineering feats – roads, forts, aqueducts, baths, and walls – still survive in England today.
- The Latin influence on the English language comes primarily through the Romance languages, particularly French and to a lesser degree Italian, as well as through the borrowings associated with the renewed interest in classical sources during the Renaissance.

Not all the following terms are strictly legal, but they suggest the precision and practicality of the Latin mind and will also help you to clarify your speech and writing:

**ad hoc** (ad hok', hōk') for a specific or particular purpose.

**antebellum** (an'tē bel'əm) prewar.

**caveat** (kav'ē ät') a warning or caution; admonition.

**decorum** (di kōr'əm) dignity; proper behavior, manners, or appearance.

**de facto** (dē fak'tō, dā) in fact; in reality; actually existing.

**de profundis** (dā prō fōn'dis) out of the depths of sorrow or despair.

**dementia** (di men'shə) madness; insanity; severely impaired mental function.

**desideratum** (di sid'ə rā'təm, -rā'-) something wanted or needed.

**dolor** (dō'lər) sorrow; grief.

**ex cathedra** (eks' kə thē'drə) from the seat of authority; by virtue of one's office.

**exemplar** (ig zem'plər, -plär) model or pattern; example or instance; original or archetype.

**exigent** (ek'si jənt) urgent; pressing.