

THE FINE PRINT – PROCUREMENT LAW REVIEW
Header phrases in Latin – Collection and Translation

Many of the Latin phrases in the banner of The Fine Print are borrowed from The Routledge Dictionary of Latin Quotations – The Illiterati’s Guide to Latin Maxims, Mottoes, Proverbs, and Sayings, by John R. Stone. (See below for publication information). Others are from the depths of my turbulent mind. The majority of translations are by Michael Ireland, who bids me apologize in advance to learned Latinists who might find her translations proletarian, reserved, even, dare I say, erroneous.

Enjoy!

Regards, Robert Worthington

- **actus Dei nemini facit injuriam:** An Act of God does no one injury.
- **actus non facit reum, nisi mens sit rea:** An act does not make an accused person guilty, unless their mind is guilty.
- **actus reus:** Guilty act
- **addere legi justitiam decus:** It is fitting for a man to add law to justice.
- **aliquis non debet esse iudex in propria causa:** No one should be his own judge.
- **ambiguum pactum contra venditorem interpretandum est:** An ambiguous contract is interpreted against the vendor (i.e., the one who wrote the contract).
- **amicus curiae:** A friend of the Court.
- **animus hominis est anima scripti:** Literally: The spirit of the man is the spirit of what he writes, i.e., “What a man writes is what he means to write.”
- **bonus atque fidus iudex honestum praetulit utili:** (Horace) A good and faithful judge prefers virtue over advantage.
- **cave quid dicis, quando et cui:** Be careful what you say, when and to whom.
- **culpa sua damnum sentiens non intelligitur damnum pati:** He who suffers by his own fault is not deemed a sufferer
- **damnum absque injuria:** No remedy without injury.
- **de minimis non curat lex:** The law does not concern itself with trifles.
- **donation mortis causa:** A gift after death.
- **dormiunt aliquando leges, nunquam moriuntur:** Sometimes the law sleeps, never does it die.
- **dura lex, sed lex:** The law is hard, but it is the law.
- **ex malis moribus bonae leges natae sunt:** Good laws are born out of bad behaviour. (Coke)
- **experto crede:** Trust the expert (Virgil).
- **expressio unius est exclusio alterius:** Articulate one thing, exclude the other.
- **habeas corpus:** Free the body.
- **ignorantia juris non excusat:** Ignorance of the law is no excuse (for breaking the law).
- **illegitimi non carborundum:** (Loosely): don’t let the bastards get you down.

- **impossibilium nulla obligatio est:** (Cicero) No one is obligated to do what can't be done.
- **inde datae leges ne fortior omnia posset:** At the beginning the law was given so the strongest do not possess everything.
- **inter alia:** Among other things.
- **intestate:** Without a will.
- **judicis est jus dicere non dare:** A judge is to speak the law, not make it.
- **justitia est constans et perpetua voluntas jus suum cuique tribuens:** (Justinian) Justice is the constant and perpetual wish to give to everyone what is due to him.
- **leges sunt inventae quae cum omnibus semper una atque eadem voce loquerentur:** (Cicero) Laws are invented so they speak in the same voice to everyone.
- **lex loci:** Location of the law, i.e., jurisdiction.
- **lex prospicit non respicit:** Law looks forward, not backward.
- **mal grammatica non vitiat chartam:** Bad grammar does not invalidate a contract.
- **mens rea:** Guilty mind.
- **nemo plus juris in alium transferre potest quam ipse habet:** In law no one can transfer to someone else more than that which he has.
- **nisi pariter, non pugnant:** (Seneca) Unless there are two, there is no fight.
- **nullus commodum capere potest de injuria sua propria:** No one can take a benefit from one's own injury.
- **omne actum ab agentis intentione (est) judicandum:** All acts are judged by the intention of their agent.
- **qui facit per alium facit per se:** (Coke) He who acts through another, indeed it is just he did the act himself.
- **res perit suo domino:** The thing lost is its masters, i.e., the loss falls to the owner of the thing lost.
- **rex non potest peccare:** The King can do no wrong.
- **ubi jus, ibi remedium:** Where there is law, there is remedy.
- **verba volant, scripta manent:** Spoken words fly, written words remain.



For a delightful collection of Latin sayings and quotations, we recommend: Stone, John R. [The Routledge Dictionary of Latin Quotations – The Illiterati's Guide to Latin Maxims, Mottoes, Proverbs, and Sayings.](#) Routledge. New York. 2005. ISBN: 0-415-97431-3. Mr. Stone is also the author of [Latin for the Illiterati](#) and [More Latin for the Illiterati.](#)

If you wish to comment upon the translations given here, Michael Ireland can be reached at michaelireland@shaw.ca Michael apologizes to Cicero, Virgil, Coke, Seneca, Horace and all Classicists, ancient and modern, and promises to be studious in her undertaking to learn this wickedly complicated language.