

Latin *ecce*: arguments in favor of its development from a PIE demonstrative

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The Latin particle *ecce* has been extensively studied from different perspectives and, yet, it is not easy to reach a consensus as regards its etymology, due to the obscurity of the morphological formation, the scarcity of cognates in related languages, and the diverse uses found already in Archaic Latin (and its continuing stages). As alternative etymologies, it has been claimed that *ecce* derives from the combination of demonstrative roots (e.g. Dunkel 2014: 2011, de Vaan 2008: 185, and Fruyt 2011: 750). Also, it has also been claimed that it may derive from an imperative verb form (Julia 2020). Among the different proposals, the one that considers the demonstrative origin is probably the most widely accepted. However, attempts to connect this morphological formation with an explanation at other linguistic levels: syntax, discourse-pragmatic (e.g. why preceding accusatives? Or with which meaning exactly?) have not been convincing. The aim of this talk is to argue in favor of a derivation from PIE **h₁éd=k'e*, by offering a proposal for its original meaning and for its derivation towards Latin *ecce*, considering the data found in Archaic Latin.

To reach our goal, we classify the total number of cases with *ecce* in Plautus (as representative of Archaic Latin) according to the three possible syntactic contexts in which it appears: with no syntactic integrity to its context (type a), preceding a pronoun (type b1) or a noun phrase (type b2), and preceding a sentence (c). Results show that the most frequent use is 1st person pronoun, this is type (b1), where all referents are evidently animate. Following Diessel's (1999) analysis of demonstratives as elements that call joint attention, the possibility of considering type (b1) as most ancient let us claim that the etymology **h₁éd=k'e* can be explained as the combination of an exophoric demonstrative with ablative marking and the clitic of a here-deictic exophoric demonstrative. This univerbation may have had a meaning close to 'from that', which would explain the original combination with accusatives (*ecce me* 'from that towards me'). Such an original form-meaning construct would be an appropriate starting point for a later grammaticalization process towards an interjection or a discourse marker, as it is better interpreted when preceding sentences and in cases of no integrity with its syntactic context.

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