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# About Latin *Ecce* ‘Behold! Lo! See! There!’ and Some Ancient Languages Presentatives

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**Abstract:** In this study, which is part of a larger research project on dialogue, the author deals with “little words” (as they are often called). These common and polyfunctional words seldom appear in grammars and are only dealt with within short lemmata in dictionaries. *Presentatives*, such as Fr. *voici / voilà*, Lat. *ecce*, Gr. ἰδοῦ “Here is, lo!”, form an independent grammatical class which needs to be defined, firstly, in a genetic approach. The author starts with the enumeration of ancient languages presentatives, classifies them according to their etymology and goes on to study Latin *ecce in particular*. This classification shows two structures: most ancient language presentatives come from a grammaticalized form of the imperative form of a verb requiring a visual or tactile perception; other presentatives are based on a demonstrative theme or a particle agglutination. Only Latin *ecce* remains unclear in spite of the many assumptions that have already been proposed. In addition, while all the other presentatives are often grammaticalized with a second-person pronoun, the sequence *ecce + tibi* is not attested in archaic Latin and does not even function as a pure presentative: the structure *ecce me* is used for self-presentation. In reality, while all the other presentatives are allocentric, *ecce* is egocentric. The author concludes that *ecce* is related to *ego* ‘I’. This particularity can help us both reconstruct the etymology of this word and define the presentation it expresses, thus enabling us to understand how *ecce* fundamentally illustrates the inscription of the dialogue within morphology.

**Keywords:** Presentatives, Presentation, Grammaticalization, Pragmaticalization, Deixis, Morphology, Dialogue

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## 1. Introduction

Words elsewhere called “presentatives” are sometimes classified as adverbs or prepositions. These words can be attested from the earliest texts, as shown by the use of the Latin *ecce* ‘behold! see! look! there! here’, a particular high-frequency word. Old French *veez ci* and *veez la* (modern French *voici, voilà*) are also attested from the first texts; Romanian *iată* is already attested in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is still frequently used today, as Iiescu [1], p. 143 and 145, has shown.

The presentative *ecce* first allowed a speaker to draw the attention of the co-speaker, either towards an object present in the situation of enunciation, the enunciative space (*ecce me* ‘here I am’), or towards an event (*Ecce autem perii!* ‘Look now, I’m dead!’); *ecce* is then comparable to French *voici/voilà*, known as a “presentative of events”. This presentative ultimately received other functions: it could also work as an enunciative particle, with a conclusive value (*ecce*

‘there you are!’; cf. also *eccere* ‘Lo!, there you are’), or with an affective value (essentially in order to approve or disapprove of something: *ecce* ‘OK!’ or ‘well, oh well done!’). In the history of a language, a presentative that has a deictic value can be changed: *ecce* was challenged by other particles like *em* and *ēn* [2] and it was probably replaced by them in the use of spoken language.

The presentative *ecce* is found in many ancient or modern languages: French *voici / voilà*, Italian *ecco*, Spanish *aquí*, Ancient Greek ἰδοῦ / ἴν, Gothic *sai*, Hittite *kāša / kāšma*. In most forms, the derivational process is visible, as in the Greek ἰδοῦ, which was derived from the old imperative ἰδοῦ of the verb ‘see’ (and involved a change of accent). Nevertheless, the etymological dictionaries do not agree on the origin of Latin *ecce* and no etymon is fully convincing. Does *ecce* come from an imperative form, an agglutination of one, two or three particles, or from anything else? Did (do) these agglutinations make sense? The additional lines *\*h<sub>1</sub>e + \*k + \*kē* or *\*h<sub>1</sub>e + \*de + \*kē* look more like an assembling game to us than solid

reality. However, the very specific way in which the presentative functions could help us restore its genesis: its initial position, the predicativity of its form and its being frequently followed by a second-person singular dative. Moreover, we must take into account both its specific ancient use (i.e., *ecce me* meaning ‘here I am’) and the particular meaning of that presentation, which was not exactly one.

## 2. Structure of Ancient Languages Presentatives

Let us start this study with a description of the origin and the structure of presentatives in ancient languages, a description made complex by the fact that we can not rely on the category of presentatives in modern languages. Indeed, the category is very heterogeneous from an etymological and grammatical point of view: presentatives may come from pronouns, interjections or adverbs; they may be grammaticalized forms of verbs of visual or auditory perception<sup>1</sup>, with an almost unique operation for each one. On closer inspection, however, this heterogeneity of modern presentatives<sup>2</sup> is undoubtedly less important in ancient languages. Indeed we can group them into two categories only, the former being much better represented than the second one:

a) The first category gathers deverbial forms, most often deriving from a grammaticalized imperative, like in Greek, in Latin for the form *em*, in Gothic, in Armenian, in Middle Egyptian, perhaps in Sanskrit (if we are not mistaken in identifying a presentative in the form of *páśya*), in Old Irish<sup>3</sup> and in Tokharian B (if we correctly interpret the form of *palkas*);

b) The second category shows forms based on ancient deictic pronominal themes but it is only represented in Hittite, Hebrew, Aramaic, Etruscan - and in Latin if we accept the traditional etymon proposed for *ecce*.

### 2.1. Ancient Imperatives from Verbs Requiring Visual or Tactile Perception

Most of ancient language presentatives come from a grammaticalized form of the imperative form of a verb requiring a visual or sometimes tactile perception, as in the following languages (for modern languages, see French *voici/voilà* and in some uses, *tiens: Voici/voilà le facteur. Tiens, le facteur*):

Greek: ἰδοῦ (Euripides, *Heracles* 1409, Ἴδοῦ τὰδ’, ὧ παῖ ‘Here is what you ask for, my son.’)<sup>4</sup>

Latin: *em* (Plautus, *Amphitryon* 778, *Em tibi pateram: eccam. AM. Cedo mi. ‘ALC.- T Here’s the bowl for you, look..*

AMPH.- Give it to me.’; Plautus, *The Captives* 373, *Em tibi hominem. ‘Here’s the man for you.’)*

Latin: *tenē* (Plautus, *The Captives* 838, ERG. *Cedo manum. HE. Manum? ERG. Manum, inquam, cedo tuam actutum. HE. Tene. ‘ERG.- Give me your hand. HEG.- My hand? ERG.- I’m telling you, give me your hand immediately. HEG.- Take it. = Here’s my hand.’ // Plautus, The Captives 859, ERG. Cedo manum. HE. Em manum. ‘ERG.- Give me your hand. HEG.- Take = Here’s my hand.’)*

Gothic: *sai* (Matthieu, 11, 19, *sai, manna afetja jah afdrugja, motarje frijonds jah frawaurhtaize* (here, *sai* = Gr. ἰδοῦ, Lat. *ecce*) ‘See, a man lover of food and wine, a friend of tax-farmers and sinners.’)

Old Irish: *fil* (*Imram Brain* 7, *Fil and bile* ‘Here is a sacred tree.’)

Armenian: *aha* (Matthieu, 11, 19, *aha ayr keroł ew arbec’oł* ‘See, a man lover of food and wine’; *National Anthem of Armenia: Aha, yeghpayr, kez mi drosh* ‘Here is a flag for you, my brother.’)

Middle Egyptian: *m* / *mk*<sup>5</sup> (masc.); *mt* (fēm.), *mtn* (pl.)<sup>6</sup> (Saqqara, tomb 8.2.2: left, top, *mk w(j) m kw mr.y* ‘Here I am, my darling.’)

Sanskrit: *páśya* (*R̥g-Veda* 8, 100, 4a, *ayám asmi jaritaḥ páśya mehá* ‘It’s me, O singer, here I am.’)

Tocharian B: *palkas* (*Udānālar̥kāra* 23a2, *palkas oko oktacepi saṃvarntse* ‘Behold the fruit of the eightfold saṃvara!’)

It is no surprise that imperative forms, which express a tacit invitation (visible in the etymon) to look at what is presented, should work as presentatives. This is why French *voici le facteur* ‘The postman is coming!’ is not equivalent, from a pragmatic point of view, to the sentence *je dis que le facteur est là* ‘I say that the postman is here’.

If we trace the genesis of the listed presentatives, we exclusively find ancient imperative forms of verbs requiring visual or tactile perception. The imperative may or may not have exactly the same form as the presentative: Gr. ἰδοῦ (ἰδεῖ) originally ἰδοῦ ‘see’ (i.e. root \**ueid-* ‘to see’: Lat. *uīdī*, Ved. *avidat*, Arm. *egit*, etc.), lat. *em* originally *eme* ‘hold’ (i.e. root \**h<sub>1</sub>em-* ‘to take’: O. *el-*, OIr. *-ét*, etc.), old Irish *fil* originally ‘see’ (i.e. root \**h<sub>2</sub>u-el-* ‘to see’: Lat. *uultus*, Got. *wulþus*, etc.), and probably Armenian *aha* ‘see’ (i.e. root? \**peh<sub>2</sub>-s-* ‘to look, to see’: Av. *pišiiant*, Alb. *pashë*, etc.), Gothic *sai* ‘see’ (i.e. root \**sek<sup>h</sup>-* ‘to follow’→‘keep an eye on’?: Ved. *sácate*, gr. ἔπομαι, Lat. *sequor*, etc.), Skr. *páśya* ‘see’ (i.e. root \**spek<sup>h</sup>-* ‘to look, to see’: Av. *spasiia-*, Gr. σκέπτομαι, σκοπέω, Lat. *speciō*, etc.), perhaps Middle Egyptian *m* and most often *m.k/mk* (masc.), *mt* (fēm.) ‘see-you’, *mtn* (pl.) and Tokharian B *palkas* ‘see = let’s see’ (i.e. root \**b<sup>h</sup>leg-* ‘to shine’: skr. *bhārgas* -, Gr. φλέγω, Lat. *fulgō/fulgeō*, etc.).

How can we consider that the imperative form has no longer a verbal value and has been grammaticalized, and that the preventatives stand at the end of a process retaining the initial

<sup>1</sup> See, most recently, Iliescu [1], p. 141, and [3], p. 211; Petit [4] and [5]; Julia [2], p. 124-128.

<sup>2</sup> That the category seems so heterogeneous may also result from a confusion between the grammatical class and the use of these forms, which are very flexible and have unique pragmatic effects.

<sup>3</sup> See Thurneysen [6], § 780.

<sup>4</sup> All Latin and Greek translations are reproduced as they appear in Loeb volumes. The others are mine.

<sup>5</sup> Middle Egyptian *mk*: funnily enough, this word is transcribed by an owl, which can twist its head 270 degrees...

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the different etymologies proposed for the Egyptian *mk*, see Oréal [7], p. 329-330.

predicativity of the form but transposing this same form within the presentative class? Thanks to the previous list, we are able to highlight seven or eight characteristics of transcategorization, which can be combined within a same form (characteristics C, D and E are often combined):

A. The first characteristic (and the most obvious one) is morphological and prosodic: the Greek presentative ἰδοῦ no longer has the circumflex accent of ἰδοῦ, which is the aorist imperative form of the suppletive Greek verb 'to see' (present ὁράω/aorist εἶδον), and which favors the middle voice (emphasizing the speaker's personal experience). The accentual difference between ἰδοῦ 'to see' and the fixed form ἰδοῦ 'here is, well' can be explained by the change of form category. The pragmaticalization process at the origin of the transfer from the meaningful verbal form into the desemantized fixed form found in a pragmatic use ('well' marking here irony, indignation, etc.) can also perfectly explain the change in accentuation: the transition from the modulation (represented by the circumflex accent) to the elevation of the voice (represented by the acute accent) or the absence of intonation (represented by the grave accent) enhances the final intonation of the word, either when it is used alone (ἰδοῦ having in such case an often ironic interjective value) or when it requires a word immediately following it and which brings into focus (ἰδοῦ is often used to take up a word from a previous statement).

B. The second characteristic is morphological and phonetic, as attested by Latin *em*, the apocopic form of *eme* 'hold, take'; this apocope can be explained by the frequency of the form in everyday language or as the result of the pragmaticalization process: *em* has pragmatic functions and means in such case 'here then = really?', a meaning which could further distance the form from its verbal origin.

C. The third characteristic is syntactic: while the fully semanticized verbal form always takes a complement in the accusative case, the corresponding presentative form can also accept a nominative form; so Greek ἰδοῦ + accusative 'see something', unlike ἰδοῦ + nominative 'here is something' (Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 925, Ἰδοῦ ψίαθος 'Here is a mat').

D. The fourth characteristic is both syntactic and prosodic: the grammaticalized verbal form always occupies the initial position of the utterance (or the proposition), which is most often absolute (sometimes after a vocative or a connector), unlike the verbal form with the full meaning.

E. The fifth characteristic is semantic: the apparition of a presentative may lead to a change in the base verb's meaning. In Latin, Plautine comedies already showed cases where *em* worked differently from *eme* (initially 'take') which has probably undergone a semantic specification in the sense of 'to buy' as a result of the grammaticalization of *em*:

Plautus, *Curculio* 212-213,

PLA. *Em, istoc uerbo uindictam para; / Si amas, eme.*

'PLA.- There you go, because of what you've just said secure my freedom: if you love me, buy me.'

Furthermore, the presentative form is not equivalent, from a semantic point of view, to the imperative form. It is easy to demonstrate that Latin *em* 'here' does not have the same

semantic (or pragmatic) value as *uidē* 'see', nor does the Greek ἰδοῦ 'here' means the same as θέασαι 'see':

Plautus, *Curculio* 623-624,

THER. *Seruom antestari? Vide!*

CUR. *Em, ut scias me liberum esse: ergo ambula in ius.*  
<TH.> *Em tibi.*

'THER.- A slave acting as witness? Watch out. CUR.- Here, so that you know that I'm free! (*hits him*) Go to court then. THER. Here, one for you! (*hits back*)'

Aristophanes, *Knights* 997

ΠΑ. Ἰδοῦ θέασαι, κοῦχ ἅπαντας ἐκφέρω.

'PA.- Look at these, and that's not all of them!'

F. The sixth characteristic is based on the informational value of the grammaticalized form: it can work on its own, without any other elements of proper information, and only aims, in such case, at communicating the speaker's state of mind. Therefore the presentative no longer expresses any perception or any input but is used as the final term of an answer often given by a character leaving the stage:

Aristophanes, *Knights* 972,

ΠΑ. Ἰδοῦ. ΑΛ. Ἰδοῦ νῆ τὸν Δί? οὐδὲν κωλύει.

'PA.- OK! SELLER.- OK it is! What are we waiting for?'

Plautus, *The Ghost* 314,

... *Em, tibi imperatum est.*

'There! You've got your orders. (*Exit Phaniscus*).'

G. The seventh characteristic is provided by the spelling of the presentative sequence: the orthographic unit of *veez ci* and *veez là* in ancient French in the form *veci* and *vela*, testifies to the grammaticalization of the expression; similarly, in Middle Egyptian, the spelling of *mk* is more common than the spelling of *m.k* and we assume that the form was grammaticalized, fixed.

H. The eighth and last characteristic can be defined by the level of usage: in Romanian for example, *uite*, which is the imperative of the verb *a se uita* 'to see', is used as a presentative in a more colloquial level of speech than the usual and old presentative *iată*; the less formal level indicates a process of grammaticalization which remains incomplete when the imperative form fails to completely eliminate the usual deictic form; nevertheless, if we look at the characteristics shown by the texts, it seems that in Latin the old imperative *em*, then *ēn* (in which one might recognize an old imperative form) have replaced *ecce* in its deictic presentative value in the everyday language spoken by ordinary people and literate people, at least from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC onwards.

## 2.2. Demonstrative Theme or Particle Agglutination

Other presentatives are less easily interpreted: two forms, that of the Hittite and of the Etruscan, probably come from the proximal demonstrative theme \**k-*; others, in Indo-European and Semitic languages, are based on a particle or an agglutination of particles (the phonological proximity, however, between Latin *ēn*, Greek ἦν and Biblical Hebrew *hēn* is perplexing).

Hittite: *kāša / āšma / (kāšma)* (*KUB IX 4 II 5 kāsa-tta ēsharuil* KUŠ-an *kāsa-tta suppis* <sup>UDU</sup> *īyanza* 'lo, for you a

blood-red skin, lo, for you a pure sheep.’; *KBo XXII 86 + KUB XXXVI 2c III 4-6 āsma-wa-[za]* DINGIR.MEŠ GAL-TIM LÚ.MEŠ ŠU.GI *tuēl* [...] *huhhis* ‘lo, the greats gods, the old men your grandfathers’<sup>7</sup>.

Etruscan: *eka/eca* (Buffà 985), *eca:šuqi:neaznas:arnqal: neš[l]*... ‘Here is the grave of neazna, son of arnq nesl...’)

Latin: *ecce* (?) (Plaute, *The Casket Comedy*, 283, *Ecce me*. ‘Here I am.’)

Latin: *ēn* (?) (Catullus, *Poems* 61, 149-150, *En tibi domus ut potens/et beata uiri tui* ‘See how mighty and rich for you is the house of your husband.’)

Greek: ἦν (?) (Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1390, ἦν ἰδοῦ ‘Reday!’)

Biblical Hebrew: *hēn* / *hinnēh* (?) (*Genesis* 22, 1, *hinni* ‘Here I am’ = Septuagint Bible, ἰδοῦ ἔγω; Vulgate, *adsum*).

Old Aramaic: *h*? (Aramaic from the Egyptian Empire, Judeo-Aramaic but not Biblical Aramaic) / *kh* / *lkh* ‘for you + here’ (?) (4QTob b4.1.16=06:11, *h*? *ḥh* ‘Here I am.’; Sfiré I C, l. 1, *kh ḥmrn* ‘Here’s what we said’.)

Some languages have presentatives which are based on the proximal demonstrative theme. As Petit [4] pointed out, p. 153, in synchrony, these forms are associated with the paradigm of locative adverbs or demonstrative pronouns: Hittite *kāša*, *kāšma* ‘here, here is’ is associated with the proximal demonstrative *kā-* ‘this (one)’. The deictic theme *\*kē*, dating back to the Proto-Indo-European, which might on its own have given rise to a presentative (as in the Baltic languages), is found in the second element of the Latin *ec-ce* in its form *\*kē* rather than *\*kī*.

The first element of the presentative *ecce* is less obvious and has been explained by various hypotheses since the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century: it has been interpreted as an old imperative *oc-ce* ‘see here’, equivalent to the Greek ἔχε; or as a form based on the root of *oc-ulus* ‘eye’<sup>8</sup>; or as resulting from the agglutination of at least two particles, *\*ed* + *\*kē* or *\*et* + *\*kē* or *\*ek* + *\*kē* or *\*h<sub>1</sub>e* + *\*k* + *\*kē* or *\*h<sub>1</sub>e* + *\*de* + *\*kē*; or as the agglomeration of *en* ‘here, here is’ and *-ce*<sup>9</sup>. All these etymologies are however problematic: for example, *ēn* was not attested until the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.; the agglutination of these particles, which is almost randomly organized, cannot be compared to any other similar chains and does not seem motivated. In addition, if we admit that *\*ed-kē* is not the expected form in tonic position, we would expect *\*icce* instead of the initial timbre of *e*. The etymon *\*ed-kē* indeed raises the problem of preserving the timbre *e*, which is not compatible with its evolution, as observed in *\*ed* > Lat. *id* in tonic position<sup>10</sup>. For Berenguer Sánchez [13], p. 414, this phonetic disagreement could be explained by a different chronology: Lat. *id* would proceed from the pronominal theme *\*h<sub>1</sub>e-* or from its tonic variant *\*h<sub>1</sub>i-* with the ending *\*-d*, itself probably derived from the particle *\*de* in a pre-Anatolian period (cf. Hittite *-at*, old Irish *\*-ed*), while *ecce* would come from a conglomerate of three particles: *\*h<sub>1</sub>e* (comparable to the verbal augment in Greek or Vedic) + *\*de* (pronominal

ending preserving its core value, *i.e.* reinforcing particle or sentence particle) + *\*kē* > *\*ed(e)-ce*, with the initial meaning of *\*‘and then here’*; the univerbation of this conglomerate would have occurred at a time when the change from *\*CéC* to *\*CiC*, which concerned *id*, had not started to happen.

Proposing, for the first part of the word, *ec-*, a particle *\*ed* or *\*et* or *\*ek* or *\*h<sub>1</sub>e* + *\*k* or *\*h<sub>1</sub>e* + *\*de*, does not make sense: why *\*ed* rather than *\*el*, or anything else? Of all the pronominal chains that were proposed until now, the least senseless would be the one based on a reduplication of *\*kē*, ‘here here’, with a prefixed pronominal particle *\*h<sub>1</sub>*, but there is no other example of such a reduplication in Indo-European or Semitic languages (apart perhaps from the Italic languages, Paelignian *ecuc*, Oscan *ek(ík)* ‘this’).

### 3. *Ecce tibi*

Whatever the morphogenesis may be, the presentative structure is always allocentric<sup>11</sup>, either explicitly (when the forms are based on the imperative), or implicitly (when the particles are based on deictic themes). This perspective is further demonstrated by the possible grammaticalization of the *presentative* + *the second-person singular dative* structure<sup>12</sup> as frequently found in many Indo-European or Afro-Asian languages: Greek ἰδοῦ σοι, Latin *em tibi*, *ēn tibi*, Hittite *kašat(t)a*, Armenian *aha... c’jéz*, Aramaic *lkh*, Middle Egyptian *m.k* and *mk*, probably borrowed by the Ugaritic *mk*<sup>13</sup>. Most of the time the second-person pronoun is used in the dative case, indicating the destination (also called “ethical dative”). This pronoun explicitly states what the dialogical exchange structurally achieves. In Tokharian, the process is different: the dialogic duad speaker/co-speaker is underlined by the choice of a second-person plural imperative (cf. also old French *veez ci*, *veez la*), which, in Tokharian, can have an adhortative meaning, “incluant explicitement une exhortation à ‘nous’”<sup>14</sup>, therefore a pronoun ‘us’ trying to be inclusive and meaning ‘me’ + ‘you’, both seeing who is coming. The presentative does not merely have an informative function<sup>15</sup>, but *con-voques* (convokes, calls in) the co-speaker by inciting him to see an object, to make acquaintance with it in an active way. The dialogical situation is so structural that one may wonder if it has not caused the morphogenesis of these words.

Thanks to the expressivity of the *presentative* + *second-person dative* structure, which powerfully connects the co-speaker to an object to be presented to or a conclusion to be drawn about a co-observed fact, the relationship between speaker and co-speaker is particularly activated.

<sup>11</sup> See Rabatel [16], p. 113.

<sup>12</sup> We can add that it is almost always the second-person singular dative (the plural of *ez vos* is explained by the importance of this person in old French).

<sup>13</sup> The Italian presentative *ecco* still has a variant *eccoti* ‘here’s to you’; see also old French *es vos*, Russian *vot tebe*, Polish *oto ci*, Lithuanian *tè tau, vò tau*, Latvian *še tev*; see Petit [5], p. 19-21.

<sup>14</sup> Pinault [17], p. 161. See also Krause and Thomas [18], p. 183.

<sup>15</sup> Oréal [7], p. 308, very well defines this particularity about the Egyptian presentative: “*mk* indique que le contenu de *p* doit être considéré par le destinataire comme un objet en quelque sorte préexistant au discours ou existant en dehors de lui”.

<sup>7</sup> Translation of Puhvel [11], p. 312 and 216.

<sup>8</sup> See Köhler [12], p. 221-222.

<sup>9</sup> See Fruyt [14], p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> See IEW [15], p. 609.

Plautus, *Pseudolus* 754, *Em tibi omnem fabulam.*

‘There, that’s the whole story for you!’

Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 470, Ἀπολεῖς μὲν. Ἴδού σοι. Φροῦδά μοι τὰ δράματα.

‘You’ll destroy me! Here you are. Gone are my plays!’

This allocentrism is easily understood if we consider the dialogic duad: even if the co-speaker cannot stop himself from looking in the direction designated by the speaker’s presentative, this presentation is only validated by the former’s observation. It is necessarily a co-observation. The dative of destination or the ethical dative emphasizes the presence of the co-speaker, who is invited to feel concerned by the presentation (of an object, an action, an event). And if (s)he does not feel sufficiently concerned, the Latin has the expression *em tibi*, which the speaker often accompanies with gestures. Simple and effective, this structure explicitly marks the language-action relationship in morphology:

Plautus, *Casina* 405, <OL.> *Em tibi.* CLE. *Quid tibi istunc tactio est?*

‘OL. (PUNCHING CHALINUS) TAKE THAT! OL.- What did you touch him for?’

However, in its first attestations, the presentative *ecce* does not seem to correspond to this implicit or explicit allocentrism displayed by *tibi* ‘for you’. In Plautine comedies, only the masculine singular “inflected” presentative *eccum* is used with the second-person personal pronoun, the structure conveying what must be a proverbial animal metaphor in which it is probably necessary to dissociate *tibi* from the presentative *ecce*:

Plautus, *Stichus* 577, *Atque eccum tibi lupum in sermone; praesens esuriens adest.*

‘And look, here you have the wolf in the fable: he’s present, hungry.’

The absence of the *ecce tibi* structure in Plautus is perhaps accidental, fortuitous. We rather interpret it as resulting from the self-referential dimension enacted by *ecce* (as in the case of the French presentative *j’ai* showing explicit self-presentation). Unquestionably, *ecce* is an ego-centered presentative (cf. § 4). In order to present a third-person, the Latin speaker does not use *ecce* but *em* or *eccum*, strangely formed on the base of *ecce* – even if we admit that it comes from \**ekk(e)-hum* or from an agglutination (with elision) of \**ecc(e) eum*, or believe that it is simply an inflected form of what originally was an uninflected demonstrative<sup>16</sup>. It is not impossible that these presentatives *eccum*, *eccam*, *eccos*, *eccas*, *ecca*, which received the marks of gender and number of the presented object (thus following the usual flexion of first class adjectives), fulfilled the need to go beyond the genetic egocentricity of *ecce*. Which they did in denoting the presentation of a third-person (man/woman or men/women) or of an external object to the actors involved in the dialogue. In fact, whereas the presentation of a first-person is performed by the structure *ecce me*, that of a third-person is realized by the inflected presentative *eccum*, sometimes alongside the name of the third-person, *eccum Amphitruonem*:

Plautus, *The Pot of Gold* 177, *Sed eccum.*

‘Oh look! I can see him.’

Plautus, *The Casket Comedy* 697, *Certe eccam.*

‘Look at her, it certainly is!’

Plautus, *Amphitryon* 1005, *Sed eccum Amphitruonem: aduenit.*

‘But look, Amphitruo’s coming.’

While no presentative, in any other Indo-European language, carries gender nor number marking, Latin attests the two marks in the presentative of a third-person built on *ecce* (leaving unmarked the other two presentatives available). We interpret this flexion as the obvious indication of the transition from an ego-centered presentative (*ecce*) to an allo-centered presentative (*eccum*, *eccam*, etc.). No deictic presentative must have existed at the beginning of Latinity (unless we retain *em* which presents objects that we can take in hand); however, from this reinterpreted *ecce*, Latin must have created the presentation of a third-person, *eccum*, etc., which will be eliminated in classical Latin in favor of *en*, a unique, shorter and more dynamic form.

However genetically self-centered it may be, “la production de l’énonciateur, as Berthoud writes [21], p. 12, est toujours contextuellement orientée vers l’interlocuteur”. The co-speaker is not present in the form of *ecce* but it is noticeable in the ostensive value of the deictic *-ce*. Also, from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC onwards, the texts attest the *ecce tibi* structure, which is characterized by a more frequent use in narration than in dialogues and thereby corresponds to a situation of deferred enunciation. Indeed, the enunciative situation of the speaker and that of the receiver (the author and the listener or the reader) are distinct: the receiver cannot see the objects presented by *ecce tibi* but becomes the potential and fictitious witness to the related facts, exactly as in the case of the ancient French *ez vos* (<*ecce* + a second-person personal pronoun in the plural, assimilated to an ethical dative), which only functions as a narrative presentation in *The Song of Roland*:

Cicero, *Pro Sestio* 89,

*Ecce tibi consul, praetor, tribunus plebis noua noui generis edicta proponunt.*

‘Then, lo and behold, a consul, a praetor, a tribune of the commons published new edicts of a new kind.’

*The Song of Roland* v. 1989,

*As vus Rollant sur sun cheval pasmet.*

‘See how Roland has passed out astride his horse.’

This is why the *ecce tibi* structure may present nothing at all to the co-speaker, but on the contrary refer to an event that affects the speaker himself. The following first two examples might show uses of real second-person, but *ecce* has here a propositional value and not a purely presentative one (cf. also Cicero, *In Pisonem* 48 et *De Oratore* 2, 22, 94):

Cicero, *Academia* I, 121,

*Negas sine deo posse quicquam: ecce tibi e transuerso Lampsacenus Strato, qui det isti deo immunitatem magni quidem muneris.*

‘Lo, here you have Strato of Lampsacus cutting in, bent on bestowing upon your deity exemption from exertion on any extensive scale’.

Cicero, *De officiis* 3, 21, 83,

*Ecce tibi qui rex populi Romani dominusque omnium*

<sup>16</sup> See de Vaan [19], p. 185.

*gentium esse concupiuerit idque perfecit.*

‘Behold, here you have a man who was ambitious to be king of the Roman People and master of the whole world.’

The co-speaker is not directly required to take part in the exchange, although his attention remains focused on the reference object that arises in the “context” or the speech. The main function of this *ecce tibi* is therefore to solicit the attention of the co-speaker/reader, even if the one person concerned by the reported event is the speaker himself:

Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 13, 42, 3,

*Scripseram iam: ecce tibi orat Lepidus ut ueniam.*

‘I had just finished, when up comes a message from Lepidus, begging me to come over.’

It is therefore necessary to remain cautious if we want to compare the presentatives followed by an ethical dative in different languages. If Latin *em tibi* and gr. ἰδοῦ σοι designate the co-speaker as the receiver of the presented object (most of the time a fist for *em* in Plautine comedies), Latin *ecce tibi* and old French *ez vos* are employed to actively involve the co-speaker or the reader in the narration of the related events<sup>17</sup>.

#### 4. *Ecce* and *egō*

We have seen how the presentatives of ancient languages presented in §2 are morphologically allocentric, specifically centered on the second-person singular, the person of the co-speaker, which can be marked by the second-person singular pronoun in the dative case. However, it appeared that the Latin *ecce* was highly ego-centric: the presentation which is made seems motivated by and for the speaker. It is never used in archaic Latin to introduce a person different from the speaker himself or anything else than a personal judgment of the speaker (as underlined by the use of the first-person singular pronoun in the second example):

Plautus, *The Merchant* 132-133, *Ecce me, / Acanthio, quem quaeris.*

‘Here I am, Acanthio, the man you’re looking for.’

Plautus, *The Little Carthaginian* 352, AG. *Ecce odium meum.*

‘Look, my nuisance!’

Can etymology account for this unique egocentrism among the presentatives of ancient languages? Like the French presentative *j’ai*, does *ecce* initially bear a mark of the first-person? The second element, *-ce*, which replaces the locational deictic with a proximal location, might be sufficient in itself to designate the first-person. *-ce* is based on the Proto-Indo-European deictic *\*kē*. Those defending the thesis of the original indifference of pronominal themes with regard to near and far location (whose opposition built the binary then the ternary system) relied in particular on the realizations of *\*kē*: *\*kē* would have marked distance as proved by the Greek κεί, or proximity as proved by Hittite *kā*, Latin *ce-do*, Oscan *ce-bmust* ‘uenerit’. This initial indifferenciation to the near or far deixis is probably an illusion: in oral speech we tend to prefer the distal deictics to the proximal ones: French *voilà* is much more

frequent than *voici* in oral speech, as *là* on *ici* (cf. *Viens là!*, etc.). In reality, *\*kē* did not specialize in expressing proximal deixis but always had this meaning. Expressing distal deixis in using proximal deictics happens in our conversations on a daily basis. Taking such conversations into account would allow us to explain the uses of distal deictics where we would expect proximal deictics: French *ici* necessarily focuses on the speaker’s space, while *là*, interpreted as ‘here’, might tend to focus on *you*, the co-speaker, specifically including him in the realization of the dialogical exchange

In addition, the postposition of *\*kē* in *ec-ce* corresponds to the one observed in the majority of the pronominal chains presenting this theme. It also responds to a logic which is also that of French presentatives *voi(s)-ci*, *voi(s)-là*, or sentences called “presentatives”, with a postposed deictic:

*est ibi*: Pacuvius, *fig* 87, *Est ibi sub eo saxo penitus strata harena ingens specus* ‘There is beneath that rock a mighty cavern, Sand-strewed<sup>a</sup> and reaching far within’; *est hic*: Plautus, *The Menaechmuses* 441, *Est hic praeda nobis* ‘There’s booty in here for us’.

*est* + place phrase: Caesar, *The Gallic War* 1, 7, 2, *Erat in Gallia ulteriore legio una* ‘There was in Further Gaul no more than a single legion’.

We have already highlighted the properties of this type of sentence: the initial position of the verb and the final position of the subject. This order of presentation corresponds to the logic of a syntagmatic association which itself responds to the image resulting from the cognitive association of the discourse objects. However, in the case of *ecce*, this presentation is particular: what I, as a speaker, am aiming at, it not to introduce myself in a place which would be close to me, but to confirm my presence to a co-speaker who is looking for me and at whose disposal I remain. Indeed Latin *ecce* almost works as *adsum*, or Greek ἰδοῦ like πάρεμι ‘I am here / there = here I am / here’:

Plautus, *Amphitryon* 956,

SO. *Amphitruo, assum; si quid opus est, impera, imperium exsequar.*

‘SOS.- Amphitruo, here I am. If you need anything, command me, I’ll carry out your command.’

Aristophanes, *Peace*, 1041-1042

TP. Ἐμοὶ μελήσει ταῦτά γ’· ἄλλ’ ἦκειν ἐχρῆν.

OI. Ἰδοῦ, πάρεμι. Μῶν ἐπισχεῖν σοι δοκῶ;

‘TR.- I’ll see to this. (calling into the house) You should have been back by now! SLAVE.- Look, here I am. You don’t think I was taking my time, do you?’

Like the other presentatives, *ecce* works as an enunciative signal given by the speaker and marks an operation preceding the perception of an object whose existence does not yet belong to the visual or cognitive field of the interlocutor. However, unlike them, it does not really present an object (which might only be the speaker himself, and a speaker always known by the co-speaker), but it confirms his presence to a co-speaker who has sent for him<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> According to Benveniste [23], p. 85, “ce qui en général caractérise l’énonciation est l’accentuation de la relation discursive au partenaire”.

<sup>18</sup> The following example explicitly explains it: *Bible, 1 Samuel*, 3, 6, *ecce ego quia uocasti me* ‘Here am I; for you certainly said my name’.

## 5. Conclusion

The study of *ecce* has shown the great scientific interest offered by taking into account the presentatives, which are little words often left aside by linguists, but whose very high frequency in language can be checked on a daily basis. First, it has led to two new conclusions regarding these forms. First of all, they draw their strength from their verbal origin: in almost all ancient languages, presentatives are based on the pragmatization of an imperative verbal form. Second, they correspond to a fundamentally dialogical formation, as evidenced by the grammaticalization of the *ecce tibi* structure, with an ethical dative. Lastly, our analysis of *ecce* has led us to note its initial ego-centrism: *ecce me* 'Here I am', which is not a pure presentation, but the affirmation of a presence expected or requested by the co-speaker. *Ecce* might be etymologically inscribed within a *morphology of dialogue*, a perspective which it seems necessary to adopt here or elsewhere.

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