

Harvard GSAS Indo-European and Historical Linguistics Workshop

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Time: Friday November 22 @ 5 PM EST

Location: Boylston 335 (Linguistics department, third floor)

Title: No country for old-*minō*? On the different forms of the Latin future imperative

Abstract: In addition to the present imperative, Latin had a so-called ‘future imperative’ (sometimes called ‘imperative II’ or the ‘imperative in *-to*’). See example (1) where the future imperative **redito** takes place after the present imperative *abi* (transl. by de Melo 2011):

(1) *Abi* quaeso hinc domum ... **Redito** huc circiter meridie.

‘Please go home ... Return here around midday’ (Pl.Mos.578–9).

I will briefly outline the function of this verbal category before focusing in detail on an aspect of deponent/passive usage of future imperatives in Latin. Throughout the history of the Latin language, we see a competition between the three different singular endings that could be used for 2/3p. deponent/passive future imperatives: *-tō*, *-tor* and *-minō*; the last of which has been referred to by Ringe as ‘one of the stranger products of “analogical change”’ (Ringe 2007:301). By comprehensively examining the usage and distribution of these endings in Latin texts, I will provide new suggestions about their chronology and register. Further, I will consider how the absence of evidence may in itself be telling for language change. I do so by showing how Latin authors largely avoided using the future imperative of deponents and passives altogether, and how eventually, all three forms disappeared.