Going away in Ancient Greek and Latin. A corpus-based quantitative approach to Source preverbs and motion verbs

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Preverbs are common to many Indo-European languages (Booij and Van Kemenade, 2003; Haverling 2003; Papke 2010) and frequently attach to motion verbs, including in Ancient Greek and Latin. Several studies have examined how spatial relations are encoded in preverbed motion verbs in both languages, focusing on different types of preverbs, such as Source preverbs (e.g., Acedo Matellán 2021 on Latin; Zanchi 2019 on Ancient Greek). However, most of these studies are synchronic (e.g., Van Laer 2019 on Latin) and qualitative in nature, though corpus linguistics has made some progress in evaluating diachronic shifts in the encoding of complements expressing spatial relations (e.g., McGillivray 2014).

In this talk, I will present a corpus-based diachronic analysis of the Source preverbs *ab-* 'away' and *ex-* 'out' in Latin, and *apo-* 'away' and *ek-* 'out' in Ancient Greek. After analyzing the frequency of these Source preverbs in both languages, I will address the following questions: How are Source complements syntactically encoded in Ancient Greek and Latin motion verbs preverbed with *apo-/ek-* and *ab-/ex-*? Does this encoding change over time? And what does this reveal about the degree of grammaticalization of Source preverbs in the two languages? The corpus for this study, manually annotated across different linguistic parameters (Farina 2024), contains over 540,000 tokens and includes 19 Greek and 16 Roman texts. Spanning from Early Greek (8th century BCE) and Latin (3rd century BCE) to the 2nd century CE, it covers six major literary genres: poetry, historiography, theatre, oratory, philosophy, and the novel. The study focuses on eight motion verbs across various domains of movement (e.g., AGr. *eîmi*, Lat. *eo* 'go'; AGr. *pléō*, Lat. *navigo* 'sail'; AGr. *pétomai*, Lat. *volo* 'fly').

References

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