

Positive response system of Latin

Tomaž Potočnik

University of Cambridge

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In this paper, I discuss the positive response system of Latin, which is generally believed not to have known an equivalent of the word *yes*. Its main positive response strategy was the so-called echo response – repetition of the relevant element of the preceding utterance. However, beside the echo response, several non-echo response strategies seem to have been available to the speakers as well, such as *ita*, *sic*, *etiam*, and others. Several questions emerge, such as: (1) Were these positive response strategies interchangeable or was there a division of labour between them? (2) Are any of these non-echo response strategies candidates for the yes-word, such as we know it from modern languages? Based on data from the Roman comedy, I first discuss the state of affairs in Latin to determine the range of contexts in which these strategies were expected to occur. I then discuss in some detail the concept of the echo response and that of positive response particles, both in Latin and beyond, suggesting, among other things, that the echo response could be thought of as grammaticalized repetition and that the so-called positive response particles tend to start their path as emphatic particles – a phenomenon eminently observable in Latin.