

AURIS, AUDIO E AUSCULTO.

REVISIONE ETIMOLOGICA E HISTOIRE DES MOTS

ABSTRACT

*In this paper two etymologies are revisited: Latin audio and ausculto. These verbs are both clearly connected. They remotely derivate their form from the name of the ear, namely the Latin root *aus-. After dealing with the Indo-European comparisons of Latin auris 'ear, I discuss the complex etymology of audio by reviewing all the phonological explanations. For this issue two main possible solutions are reviewed: on the one hand that from *aṛizdijō so that audio < *aṛis + *dh-ie/o- 'to render manifest to hearing. On the other hand that which directly derives from *aus- (i.e. *ausdijō) so that audio < *aus + *dh-ie/o- 'to give/put ear'. Ausculto is traditionally explained as *aus- 'ear' + *cult-ō, reversal for *cluto 'hear' (cf. Latin clueo, inclitus) so that 'hear with the ear, as the analogous formation of Greek ὠτακουστέω 'listen with the ears. Instead of supposing such an improbable collocation of two items, I assume a simpler derivation as an intensive-frequentative verb from the denominative of the diminutive of *aus-, i.e. *aus- 'ear' > dim. *ausculum > denom. *ausculio > int.-freq. ausculto, according to the popular use in Latin of ausculto. In all these cases it is important to underline the productivity in Latin of the root *aus-, which underlie auris, audio and ausculto.*