

Origin and development of the Albanian demonstratives

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Albanian has a binary demonstrative pronoun system, with proximal *ky* m., *kjo* f. 'this' contrasting with distal *ai* m., *ajo* f. 'that'. The distal pronouns double as personal pronouns of the third person. In the Old Albanian period (16th to 18th century), the system was basically the same, with the addition of the then still productive neuter gender.

As opposed to the relative ease with which the synchronic morphology can be described, the grammaticalization path leading up to both pronouns is not yet completely understood. Both demonstratives arose from the composition of two deictic elements. The second of which (nominative masc. *-i/-y*, f. *-jo*) is the same for both pronouns and probably continues the PIE demonstrative **so*, **to-*, although the nominative singular forms have not been fully explained yet. The origin of the first elements *k-* resp. *a-* is disputed. In proximal *k-*, scholars have recognized PIE deictic **k-*, PIE interrogative **kw-*, or Romance *(ek)ku-*; distal *a-* has been argued to contain, for instance, PIE **so-u-* 'that one' or PIE **h₂eu-* 'yon'.

In our talk we will first sketch the morphology and the syntactic behaviour of the two demonstrative pronouns in Old Albanian, and then proceed to a re-evaluation of the etymological scenario's that may explain the rise and grammaticalization of *ky* and *ai*.

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