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**REMOTENESS MARKERS IN KALAJDŽI ROMANI AS SPOKEN IN MONTANA
(BULGARIA)**

Abstract: Romani imperfect and pluperfect are built by the agglutination of the same morpheme to the inflected forms of the present and the perfect, respectively. This morpheme, labelled as “remoteness marker” (Matras 2001:35) by the literature on Romani varieties, conveys a temporal value of distance towards a determined point of reference excluding at the same time any overlapping with the moment of speech, and thus its meaning approaches the “temporal discontinuity” highlighted by Plungian and Van der Auwera (2006). The remoteness marker is quite homogeneous in Romani varieties and the main recorded forms in the different dialects (-*as/-a/-e/-s/-ys/-ahi*, cf. Matras 2002: 152) allow to reconstruct a single Proto-Romani form **asi* (cf. Bloch 1932, Bubeník 1995) or **sasi* (Scala 2020), both going back to the Old Indo-Aryan *as-* ‘to be’, maybe through the third person Middle Indo-Aryan form *āsi* or *āsī* ‘he/she/it was’. Nevertheless, some dialects show a greater complexity and a certain level of internal variation, and suggest that the general uniformity displayed by Romani varieties may have been preceded by a more composite situation. In particular, the paper analyses the remoteness markers of Kalajdži Romani of Montana (Bulgaria). Besides the widespread *-as*, this dialect shows the previously unnoticed remoteness markers *-asa* and *-asta*, which have the same distribution of *-as*, but a different origin. The objective of the study is to propose a reconstruction of the genesis of the two variants. While the remoteness marker *-asa* can be explained as the outcome of recent internal innovation of Kalajdži, the remoteness marker *-asta* seems to be connected to the OIA root *sthā-* and, pointing to a more ancient phase of the language, suggests a higher complexity of the Proto-Romani strategies to build the imperfect and the pluperfect.

Keywords: Romani; Kalajdži; remoteness marker; imperfect; historical morphology; synchronic variation

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