Abstract Stefan Schumacher

'Aorist-perfect syncretism and subsequent replacement strategies in Celtic and Albanian'

My contribution will deal with Celtic and Albanian (the main connection between the two being the fact that I have occupied myself with the verbal systems of both branches).

In Celtic, syncretism between the inherited categories of aorist and perfect happened at an early stage; the resulting tense was a perfective preterite. After this, there was for a long time no category that could be labelled a perfect. Some characteristics that are typical of a perfect could be expressed by adding an aspect preverb to the perfective preterite, but this so-called 'augmented preterite' is polysemous and has various functions. Only in early modern times were periphrastic perfects developed in Irish and Welsh. This happened independently in Welsh and Irish, and the constructions used are similar in both languages but largely differ from typical SAE perfect constructions. A further peculiarity is that both languages developed two different perfects: While one of the two perfects simply describes an attained state, the other describes an attained state immediately following a completed action.

In Albanian, syncretism between aorist and perfect also occurred in the distant past; here, too, the two categories merged in a perfective preterite. At the time of our oldest written sources (16th century AD), the new, periphrastic, perfect is already a well-established category; as in Italian, it consists of the auxiliary verbs 'have' and 'be' plus past participle. The peculiarity of this perfect is that it forms a major subsystem of the TAM system: apart from the 'present perfect tense', there are two aspectually different pluperfects, one of them formed with the imperfect of the auxiliary and the other with the aorist of the auxiliary. Moreover, there is also a perfect of the perfect (used for states attained a long time ago) and a pluperfect of the perfect, which enables the speaker to distinguish between different levels of anteriority. Finally, a completely new category has developed out of the perfect, the so-called admirative. The admirative (which also has several tenses, including present, imperfect and perfect) 'is used to express reality accompanied by the speaker's sense of surprise at an unexpected action which has taken place in the past or is taking place at the moment of speaking' (Newmark, *Standard Albanian*, Stanford 1982: 76), but it can also express the speaker's doubt, dissent or irony related to what someone else says (Newmark l.c.). The latter characteristics entail that the admirative can also be used as (some sort of) an evidentiality mood.