La variation et le changement en langue (langues romanes)
La langue peut être considérée comme une architecture fluctuante et évolutive, en interaction avec les individus qui la parlent et avec les sociétés et les cultures dont elle est le support. Cette variabilité, paramétrée selon les axes du temps, de l'espace, de la variation liée au groupe social, à l'enjeu communicatif et au véhicule de la communication (diachronie, diatopie, diastatique, diaphase, diamésie), continue de susciter de nombreuses réflexions.

Le présent volume, dédié à la variation et au changement dans les langues romanes, rassemble les contributions de trente-neuf chercheurs. Le point commun de ces études est d'associer la réflexion théorique et méthodologique sur la variabilité à l'analyse linguistique et au traitement de corpus.
La variation et le changement en langue (langues romanes)

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Abstract

I propose a contribution on the diachronic variation of the Latin demonstrative pronoun – ipse, ipsa, ipsum – from Late Antiquity until the beginning of the Romance languages in the Iberian Peninsula. I begin with the analysis of a specific testimony: one Paleochristian inscription from Mértola (Beja, Portugal) found in archaeological excavations in 2003. This inscription dated from the fifth or sixth century A.D., which records the Latin expression ipsas kalendas/nonas, is one of the most early examples known in the Iberian Peninsula on the use of the pre-article ipse, which later became the definite article in Old Catalan and in Sardinian. The Latin expression ipsas kalendas/nonas is also known in other Paleochristian inscriptions, but not in this province of the Roman Empire. This expression meant chronological precision, but it was already used as a pre-article when connected to the noun (kalendas or nonas). Both epigraphic and other later Latin documents from Hispania give evidence of the use of the Latin demonstrative as a definite (pre-)article.

With this paper I intend to bring new data to the discussion about the diachronic evolution of the demonstrative pronouns into definite articles in Romance languages. This diachronic approach is also connected with the geographical distribution of Latin expressions such as ipsas kalendas/nonas.

Résumé

1 Regarding Mércola’s historical and archeological context in the Late Antiquity, see Alves Dias (Alves Dias: 2007) with its listing of previous bibliography.

2 As Heide Wiese & Horst Simon (Wiese & Simon: 2002: 1-2) have stated: “One of the features that make pronouns a special class of linguistic items is the way in which they contribute to the meaning of sentences (or other constructions in which they occur). On the one hand, they can pick out the same kinds of objects as full lexical nominals when they enter interpretation. On the other hand, they lack a comparable descriptive content. This gives them a borderline status within the linguistic system, between lexical categories like nouns, and functional categories like complementisers. Nominals are like pronouns in that they identify objects, but unlike pronouns they do so based on their descriptive content. Complementisers are like pronouns in that they lack a descriptive content, but unlike pronouns they do not pick out objects in discourse.”

and objects, and the progressive "erosion" of the morphological system associated with nominal inflections\(^4\). During the Classical period, *ille* indicated distance in terms of anaphor and later on gradually replaced *is*. For its part, *ipse* generally exercised an emphatic and contrastive function, placing a stress on some item; when it occurred as an anaphor, it resembled *identem*\(^5\).

During the process involving changes in syntactic functions and semantic values that affected the pronominal system in Vulgar Latin, it fell to the pronouns *ille* and *ipse* to become the definite articles, among their other duties. Although, traditionally speaking, some authors accepted the likelihood of a functional and semantic convergence between the two, which was to end up by overlapping each other\(^6\), more recent studies such as in the work done by Selig (1992) and Nigel Vincent (1997) among others, have demonstrated that *ille* and *ipse* continued to keep their distance from each other and they preserve their semantic differences even during the later age. They would have only converged after they had developed a single but identical functional role, although they would have arrived there by following different paths as Nigel Vincent (Nigel Vincent 1997 : 162) pointed out.

*Ipse* and *ille* converge on the function as markers of definiteness by two different and complementary routes. *Ipse* is used when an item is mentioned for the second time and is therefore given but is also implicitly contrasted with other items beside which it is singled out. It is thus appropriate as a topic marker and as a tonic form; from the latter come the subject uses and the 'strong' form after prepositions. (...) *Ille*, on the other hand, is used when an item is repeated in discourse, is taken as given and therefore definite, but with no necessary implication of topic-hood.

Opinions have not always been consensual about the distinction between the occurrences in which both took on the function of a demonstrative pronoun and definite article. There is a long list of authors\(^7\) who have undertaken studies on the work of the Classical and the Later/Christian writers in order to identify examples based on the use of *ipse* and *ille* exercising the function of a definite article. Nevertheless, as Rafael Lapesa (Lapesa 1961 : 24–25) noted, at times the examples given were dubious and later on they were identified as examples of the way demonstrative pronouns worked. The work of C. Meader (1901), George Trager (1932), Löffstedt

(1936 and 1942), Aebischer (1948), Fritz Abel (1971) and Bouvier (1972), for instance, are among such studies. The authors have also revealed a common concern about the question of discrepancy between the geographical distribution of specimens showing *ipse* and *ille* used as a definite article in Late Antiquity Latin writers and texts, and the definite articles that were generated in the different Romance languages\(^8\). Normally, almost all the authors refer to the fact that only a very small number of Romance languages have sustained the definite article derived from *ipse*. Such is the case of the Catalan used in the Balearic Islands variety or in the Sardinian language.

Several explanations have been put forward by different authors about the origin of the definite article in the Romance languages as well as about the prevalence of *ille* or *ipse*. We might well add that the variety of explanations almost measures up to the examples cited and the corpora analysed by the authors.

The conclusions that some authors have drawn are likewise very different from one another in their attempts to establish a chronological boundary and pin down geographical areas in which the demonstrative pronouns *ille* and *ipse* took on the functions of a definite (pre)article.

Clarence Meader (Meader 1901 : 183) suggested that the geographical distribution of the use of *ipse* has been clearly identified in North Africa, Southern Gaul, Sardinia, Italy and the Eastern part of the Iberian Peninsula, or in other words the western Mediterranean basin, at least since the 3rd century AD. On the other hand, Paul Aebischer (Aebischer 1948 : 206) recognised that two areas existed, where according to the author:

(...) le premier allant de la Catalogne et de la Gascogne aux Alpes, le second comprenant la Sarclaigne et la moitié sud de l'Italie.

Aebischer nevertheless refused to accept the idea that the Latin of North Africa was connected to the phenomenon\(^9\).

Where the chronology is concerned, opinions also vary widely. For example, Grandgent (Grandgent 1907 : 164) considered that "*ille* and *ipse* were used freely as definite articles from the fourth century on".

G. L. Trager (Trager 1932 : 186) concluded that:

The adjectival uses of *ille* and *ipse* show them both preceding and following the nouns; as the emphaserizer or syntactic accent, both words are found in

---


\(^7\) Lapesa mentions the work of Rönsch, Wolfflin-Meader, Lindsay, Salomius, Woltersstorff, Bourciez, Grandgent and G. Trager, among others.


\(^9\) Cf. Aebischer (1948 : 221).
either position, but *ipse* seems to be little more common before its noun than after. The very fact there is variation between *ille* and *ipse* as the syntactic accent shows that there was no approach to the fixity and regularity of usage required of a real definite article. (...) The Romance definite article could not have developed as such until after the end of the seventh century, as a result of increasingly forceful usage of *ille* (and *ipse*) as a syntactic accent.

Bourciez (Bourciez 1946 : 100), however, defended the theory that:

dès le IIe siècle leur usage s’affaiblit, et devient courant dans le texte de l’Itala: dixit illis duodecem discipulis (Jo. 6, 67).

H. F. Muller (Muller 1929 : 84) believed that the use of these demonstrative adjectives that acted as articles belonged to a later age, the 8th century:

Yet it is not until the later part of the 8th century that the frequent, pleonastic use of pronoun, and principally *ille*, announces the progress of this new development10.

H. Mihaescu (Mihaescu 1978 : 256) was in agreement as to this chronology although he warned that restrictions ought to be placed as regards written sources owing to the fact that they are very conservative when it comes to this particular aspect:

Toutefois il faut tenir compte de la tendance conservatrice manifestée dans les sources écrites et de la répugnance de celles-ci à entrer dans le système linguistique établi; elles ne peuvent donc offrir que des arguments ex silencio, qui ne sauraient exclure entièrement la présence antérieure de l’article dans le langage parlé.

In his study on the appearance of the definite article in French, Michel Banniard (Banniard 1998 : 319) considered that it only really came to light in the 9th century.

In speaking about recent times, the work of Maria Selig in Die Entwicklung der Nominaldeterminanten im Spätlein (1992) deserves special attention. She has studied a fairly comprehensive corpus of texts11 that includes legal texts, epigraphs and private notary texts. From her analysis of the way various demonstrative pronouns have occurred in this corpus, the author reached the conclusion that *ipse* tended to be used more frequently than *ille*12. She also dealt with the question of the geographical distribution of the definite article formed on the basis of *ipse* within the Romance language space and discovered it was in use: during the Middle Ages in Gascoigne and Provence, and in the Modern Age in dialects spoken in the Alpes-Maritimes and in the Centre and South of the Italian Peninsula apart from Sardinia and the Balearic Islands in the Catalan area. The discrepancy between the large numbers of *ipse* occurrences in written texts and the limited geographical area that preserved the definite article in the Romance languages should be interpreted, so the author says, as a result of the difference between the written and the spoken language13.

The difference between using the written and the spoken language and in particular, the habit of writing legal and notary texts that were littered with formulaic expressions and locations and repeated over and over again through time in Latin documents, is highly relevant when studying the *ipsas kalendas/nonas/dius* location in the epigraphic texts of Late Antiquity. Although they deal with funeral texts, they are on a par with legal and notary formulaic language as they are sufficiently removed from the spoken language and generally appear in written discourse used in the formal, religious settings of the urban or rural necropolises14.

---

10 E. Löfstedt (1942 : 374) came to the conclusion that "[h]öchstens könnte man sagen, dass die demonstrative Kraft ziemlich geschwächt ist, aber von einem wirklichem Artikelgebrauch darf man m. e. noch nicht sprechen, obwohl die Entwicklung in vollem Gang ist". Also regarding this question see a more recent study written by Christian Schmitt (1984 : 94–125).


13 Cf. Selig (1992 : 134) – In some regions, the use of *ipse* as a definite article may be common in writing but it is not widely used in the spoken form; the most common use in the spoken form would have been an important factor in disseminating and developing the definite article in the Romance languages that were in progress. Bauer (2007:119) also noted that "there is no precise information as to the distribution of *ille* and *ipse*, foretelling their grammaticalization in Romance. We know where *ille* and *ipse* survived, but we do not know why."

3. The documents – analysis

Now let us look at the first text:

[--- requievit]
[--- in pace die ter-]
[nob ---- Ipsas (signacula)]
[kal(endas) vel nonas --- era-]XXIV\textsuperscript{15}

This may be translated as: “rested in peace on the third day (before) the Calends (or the Nones / Ides) in the age of...” Dating: ±AD 5th to 6th century.

What we have here is an incomplete epitaph found in Mértola and re-used when building a house during the Islamic period although without a doubt, it comes from one of the Paleochristian necropolises existing in the town's urban network. Despite the wear and tear suffered by the material, a part of the epigraph may still be deciphered and once the chance of making a reconstruction of the inscriptive formula has been assessed, we may take the locution to read *Ipsas + kalendas/ nonas*, which is also documented in formularies dating other inscriptions of the same period in different regions of the ancient Roman Empire:

- In Germania, in Carden (*CIL* XIII n. 7660 = *ILCV* n. 53 = *AE* 1991 n. 1278):

  Conditum hic / tumulom (sic) requi/escent me(m)bra / Reginae (sic) / Rasnehildi fr/min (sic) qui (sic) uixit in se/colum (sic) annus (sic) / XX uiginti et mensis / VI sex uixit (sic) in pace / *ipsas Kal(endas) lun(ias) (sic) et uir ipsius fr/min (sic) titulom (sic) / posuit (íquence) in pa/ce.

- On the Italian Peninsula where two examples have been acknowledged:

  + hic requiescit in pace Apollonioua (sui) uixit pl(us) m(inus) annos LXX / et cum uxor e sua Dulcia an/nos XL et defunctus est *Ipsas kal(endas) Maias*. Hic pos morte / ipsius mortua est nepus / eius nomine Pascasia et XVIII / reposita est super pec/tum abunculo suo in pace / et cum marito suo uixit mensis / novem qui demisit luctum sem/piterum patri vel matri et ab(iae)

\textsuperscript{15} "... descansou em paz no dia trezes (antes) das calendas (ou Nones) da era de...

---

B. in Rome (cf. *ICVR* VI, n. 15811 = *ILCV*, n. 2881):

Dating: Second half of the 4th century AD.

Mater Pia titulu / posuit Glegorio / filio suo uixit / in saeculo annum VI mensibus V diebus VI / exuit *ipsas Kal(endas) Octobres*.

We may even see a certain similarity between the locution *ipsas kalendas/ nonas* / *ibus* and the use of the of the pronom *ipse* in other locutions that mention *die(s), mensae et annos/annis*, which also indicate the precise time of the datings. Let us look at the following examples from Rome:

*ICVR*, IX 24385 = *ILCV*, n. 4376C

Date: AD 4th century

titulum scripsi fratri m/eo Eventiano q(ui) uixit anis L[---] / d(ies) d[---] / d[---] / n[---] et merenti e(cit) eo *Ipso so die* Dibus Septembris in pace

*ICVR* VIII, n. 21904

loannes Lucill[i]anus et Proculus nepotes Maximiano q(u) e(o) c(n)e(m) (erenti) in pace / pater et e(t)ilia cognatus *ipso me[n]se VII Kal(endas) Mai(as)*

*ICVR* V, n. 14093

Date: AD 5th century

hic [ae]let q[---] ossi[---] / na innoc[---] / annus [---] / de qui[---] / [---] an/[---] / [---] / in par[ad]iso habitari qui [---] / in tene[ris al]mis constitut[---] / runt [---] / Bonifatius / v(ir) p(erfectissimus) [---] / sec(u) / se(xus uixit annis [---] / adque in [his] quattuum ann(is [---] / v(ir) in *ipsiss annis re[---] / [an]nos rece[ss]it mat[e]r[---]

In the Mértola inscription, as in the other inscriptions mentioned above, *ipse* represents a precise dating in the chronology\textsuperscript{16}, which ties in with its emphatic, identifying function characteristic of the Classical period. Let us see for example the use of the same locution in Tacitus in the *Historiae*, 1, 52, 1: *Sub ipsas superiortis anni kalendas Decembris Aulus Vitaliulus inferiorem Germaniam ingressus hiberna legionum cum cura adierat*.\textsuperscript{17} In my opinion, in cases such as


\textsuperscript{17} Moralez Alvarez (1990) has translated this as “Precisamente en torno al primero de diciembre del año anterior (a. 68 d.C.) Aulo Vitelio, tras entrar en la Germania.
these, it is unquestionable that the etymological meaning of the pronoun *ipse* lay at the basis of its choice at the same time that it acted as a pre-article\(^{18}\) attached to the noun (*kalendas* or *nonas*).

According to H. Lausberg (Lausberg 1981 : 350):

the identifying function of the definite article, on the one hand, makes the identifying pronoun *ipse* particularly suitable for use as an article. In Romance, the Latin *ipse* represents the very oldest form of the article which continues to be used in Sardinian and in the Catalan of the Balearic Islands.

Indeed, the geographical distribution of these epigraphic texts seems to suggest the idea of a widespread area throughout which *ipse* was used as a definite article. In this event it would have been favoured over *ille*. We may consider the Mértola inscription to be a testament of this first form of the pre-article which would have been in keeping with the ancient space of Romania owing to the fact that the same construction is documented in other Paleochristian inscriptions coming from Germania, Etruria and Rome.

Going back to Selig's work (Selig 1992 : 177ss.), as regards the 'competition' between *ipse* and *ille*, the author has concluded that the common use of *ipse* as an 'articoloide' was mainly due to the dissemination of the written form, in particular, when transmitting some habits or cults and the formulares in notary writing throughout the far-flung spaces of Romania. The progress of the written language to the more generalised spoken use would only have been accomplished in restricted places, particularly in areas where *ipse* had sustained its function as a definite article in the Romance languages. Therefore, owing to the fact that the Mértola Paleochristian inscription is the only known epigraphic example on the Iberian Peninsula using the formula *ipsas Kalendas/Nonas*, and due to its dating which makes the location the oldest use known, we may venture that in the western area of Hispania, it resulted merely from being contaminated by the writing conventions of other documents, especially legal and notary texts.

During the Paleochristian period, the location was used in writing as if it were a 'fossil' both for those writing and for those reading the epigraphs. *Ipse* was to preserve its identifying function regardless of whether its semantic value was fully upheld. Furthermore, it is worth noting that this location was invariably formed by resorting to *ipse* and never *ille*, which corroborates the above-mentioned hypothesis that the two never really fully overlapped each other even in the later stage of Latin.

The inscriptions given earlier on have to do with examples of the use of *ipse* already undergoing a grammatical process\(^{19}\) during an intermediate stage where a new grammatical class, the definite article, was in the making. Indeed, I believe that we can only see this process happening in the examples collected from the Leonese legal documents in Latin and the documents written in Catalan and produced as from the 10\(^{th}\) century.

Out of all the Romance languages on the Iberian Peninsula, Catalan was the only language that kept the definite article composed on the basis of the pronoun *ipse*, where the masculine form is *es* while the feminine form is *es*. Juan Bastardas Parera (Bastardas Parera 1953 : 68) reached the conclusion that:

El uso de *ipse* en función de artículo está fuertemente arraigado en las cartas catalanas del siglo X. La prueba de ello es la frecuencia con que aparece unido a nombres geográficos; en este caso, la debilitación de su significado demostrativo ha llegado a un grado maximo.

The same author noted that in the Catalan documentation produced before the 12th century, the pronoun *ipse* is predominant in serving a definite article function although it was being gradually replaced by *ille*\(^{20}\).

Nevertheless, in the Latin texts coming from the Asturian-Leonese kingdom where the pronoun *ille* was imposed as a definite article in what H. Lausberg (Lausberg 1981 : 350) called a 'second layer of the article form', the pronoun *ipse* continued to be used as a definite article\(^{21}\). I shall not be analysing all the *ipse* occurrences in these documents but I would like to point out in first place that the location *ipsas kalendas / nonas / idas* persisted in being used in the datings up to the end of the 11\(^{th}\) century. Among the documents coming from the depositions of the Leon Cathedral Archives and the Sagunto Monastery\(^{22}\), 133 dated specimens were

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18 Inferior, había visitado con gran interés los cuarteles de invierno de las legiones”.


22 Owing to their large numbers, not all the specific examples where this location was used in the datings are referred to – see the texts that have been edited in the Collection “Fuentes y Estudios de Historia Leonesa”, Leon, Centro de Estudios e Investigación “San Isidro”, Caja España, Archivo Histórico Diocesano.
found bearing the locution *ipsas kalendas / nonas*, where the oldest document was dated AD 904 and the most recent 1090. In these cases, the feminine gender of the nouns associated with the feminine form of the article *ipsas* was preserved. In the examples that are constructed with the noun *idus*, we found 24 specimens where the oldest document is dated 971 and the most recent 1071. The noun *idus*, which in Classical Latin was the feminine form (*idus, idiæm f. pl.*), clearly appears to belong to the masculine form in these documents; the gender change and reinterpretation was, without a doubt, the result of the development that vulgar Latin’s morphological system was undergoing where the termination –*us* was being progressively reinterpreted and associated with the masculine gender (in the singular). As such, we find the following combinations: *ipsos idus, ipsus idus* and *ipsus idus*.

Despite the swing between *ipsos / ipsus* (and here I think that the opposition *o/h* would not have been phonetically important as it would have merely meant alternative graphic forms), I believe that the definite article *ipse* leaves no room for doubt as regards its gender and number – in these cases, it is masculine singular. The use of *ipsis* is interesting and indeed somewhat surprising because here it is only used as yet another graphic variation of *ipsus* and it has no connection with the Classical form of the pronoun in the genitive singular.

In the documents from Leon during the 10th and 11th centuries, the locution has been recorded as having the following characteristics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feminine / plural</th>
<th>Masculine / singular</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>ipsas kalendas</em></td>
<td><em>ipsus idus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ipsas nonas</em></td>
<td><em>ipsus idus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>ipsis idus</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Changes in the morphological paradigm of the noun and the way in which the definite article conforms to this morphological system clearly shows how the grammaticalization process had already been effected or rather, how the function and grammatical class of *ipse* had been completely changed. Also worth mentioning is the continued use of the locution with *ipse* in the datings of documents originating from an area where, in terms of the spoken language, the use of *ille* and its derivatives as a definite article would have already been common and predominant.

Apart from this, the presence of this locution in the datings of these notary texts allows us to conclude that it would have always been present in the written language in these sorts of document right from the beginning until they disappeared.

4. Conclusions

The inscription that was found in Mértola bearing the locution *ipsas kalendas/ nonas* in its dating formulary, caused some surprise as to its reading due to several reasons: it was the first known specimen among the Iberian Peninsula’s Paleochristian epigraphy testifying the use of such a locution; it was located in the western part of the Peninsula where Romance languages are found (such as is the case of Portuguese) and where the definite article originated in *ille*; on account of the approximate date that placed it, it is also one of the oldest testimonies known in Hispania in terms of the use of *ipse* where it worked as a definite pre-article.

Be that as it may, and as I have tried to show, the locution fits perfectly into the framework of what we have managed to learn today about the development process and the grammaticalization of the Latin demonstrative pronouns *ipse* and *ille*. Indeed, it allows us to conclude that:

1. The *ipsas kalendas / nonas / idus* locution preserved its use over a broad chronological spectrum extending from the Classical period to Medieval Latin because it was generally used in the sphere of legal and notary texts where a record of precise dates was needed. This being the case, we should link it to the use of written language which was also shared by texts coming from funereal Paleochristian epigraphy.

2. The habit of using this locution in the written language allowed it to preserve its use in a fossilized form until much later on, at least until the 10th century, where it gave no sign of the changes that were occurring in the spoken language, more concretely where the development and geographical distribution lying ahead for the *ille* and *ipse* definite articles were concerned.

3. The connection of the locution with the written tradition rather than with the spoken language also explains that it may have been used over a wider geographical area and even in Romance spaces where the *ille*, not the *ipse*, definite article prevailed.

4. In my opinion, in the Mértola inscription we may take it that *ipse* would have exerted a pre-article function (or an ‘articloide’ as Aebscher called it) associated with its emphatic function.
In conclusion, I would further like to note that only in the Leonese documentation of the 10th and the 11th centuries is the 'fossilized' hold of the locution broken owing to the fact that the inflected forms of the old demonstrative pronoun – *ipsus* / *ipso* / *ipsa* – appeared although only in the singular masculine form. This change in the morphosyntactic system meant that the peak of the process formation had been reached involving the definite article, I believe that at this point it had clearly lost its emphatic function and merely acted as a definite article tagging a noun that also underwent gender and number changes (from plural feminine > singular masculine).

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**Corpora epigraphica**


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