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Towards a Diachronic Theory of Genitive Assignment in Romance*

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17.1 Introduction

In this contribution, we want to address the theoretical issue posed by some attested cases of prepositionless genitives in Romance for a general theory of genitive case assignment. As is well known, the received wisdom is that the synthetic genitive found in (spoken) Latin was systematically replaced by prepositional case assignment in Romance (see Gianollo 2005 for a detailed overview of the Late Latin and early Romance phases).

However, under a closer scrutiny the alleged complementarity between prepositional genitives and overt synthetic genitive morphology is seriously challenged by significant classes of data concerning both present and old varieties of Romance. In this perspective, there are at least four cases of prepositionless genitive that we would like to consider here:

(A) certain alleged cases of N+N composition that respond positively to important diagnostics for syntactic behaviour;
(B) the so-called Juxtaposition Genitive (JG) widely attested in Old French (OF);
(C) the relatively less appreciated presence of some peculiar forms of JG in Old Italian (OI), attested until the end of the 14th century and partially still surviving in certain Central and Southern Italian dialects;
(D) the construct-state effects attested in Romance and investigated in Longobardi (1995) and subsequent work by the same author.

In terms of a general theory of language change, we aim to show that the (partial or even complete) loss of synthetic genitive morphology does not necessarily involve the recourse to the prepositional mode of genitive assignment. We contend that a comparative theory of genitive assignment reveals itself a useful tool in order to detect some concealed case configurations that arguably underlie the use of prepositionless (functional) genitives even in absence of overt case inflection on nouns. More particularly, the picture that emerges from our investigation involves the presence, in Romance, of a mode of genitive assignment that is arguably dependent on the abstract syntactic structures recently proposed by Kayne in his comparative analysis of possessive constructions (Kayne 1994, 2000). An adequate theory of how genitive may be licensed on possessors or other arguments of the head noun must arguably pay attention to the role played by interpretable formal features such as +Definite and +Human, realized in dedicated functional positions. Although syntax is originally 'inert', it is quickly activated as a consequence of the complex interplay between the morphophonological cues that express the relevant formal features and the shift of structural matrices that underlies language change. Last but not least, we claim that this line of analysis can shed some new light on the intriguing construct-state effects attested in Romance and essentially involving the common noun *casa* ('home').

17.2 On the syntactic nature of a class of N + N compounds

Let us start with the contrast between two classes of alleged N + N compounds found in modern standard Italian, whereby the second nominal corresponds to a genitive complement of the first one. We propose that two distinct classes of compounds can be identified, exemplified in (1) and in (2):

(1) *taglio spese sociali* (cut expenses social, 'social-spending cut'), *ufficio riscossione tributi* (office collection taxes, 'tax-collecting office'), *caduta foglie* (fall leaves, 'leaf fall'), *inizio mese* (beginning month, 'month beginning')

(2) *fondovalle* (bottomvalley, 'bottom of the valley'), *montepremi* (mountainprizes, 'jackpot'), *girocollo* (turnneck, 'neckline'), *centrotavola* (centretable, 'table decoration')

The reasons for keeping members of class (1) apart from members of class (2) have to do with:

(a) phonological independence of the compound constituents;
(b) semantic compositionality;

(c) licensing of ellipsis;
(d) licensing of pronominal anaphora.

As for (a) and (b), we simply emphasize that all the compound constituents in class (1) have independent stress (take for instance *ufficio riscossióne tribúti*) and exhibit a strong compositional meaning, with a maximal degree of productivity. In principle, all phrases involving a head noun and a prepositional genitive complement can be realized prepositionless in modern standard Italian (i.e. as members of class (1)), whereas prepositionless realization generally leads to severe ungrammaticality in all the other Romance varieties we are acquainted with. On the contrary, compounds belonging to class (2) have a strict word-like status, with the primary stress generally falling on the complement nominal (take for instance *centrotávola*), exhibit a highly idiosyncratic meaning and a low degree of productivity (they seem to qualify as lexically 'frozen' variants of the construction under scrutiny). Moreover, the alleged compounds in (1) respond positively to two rather uncontroversial diagnostics for syntactic behaviour. First, they allow ellipsis of the head noun, as shown in (3), whereas ellipsis yields severe ungrammaticity with class (2) compounds, as shown in (4):

(3)   A causa dei tagli in finanziaria, si sono dovuti eliminare due uffici personale e uno __ riscossione tributi
'because of the spending cuts due to the new financial budget, it was necessary to get rid of two personnel offices and one tax collecting __'

(4)   *Ho già preso le misure di due girovita e di un(o) __collo
'I already made the calculations of two waist measures and one neck__'

Second, they allow anaphoric resumption of the head noun by means of a pronoun—witness (5)—whereas this is completely impossible with class (2) compounds, as shown by (6):

(5)   Nonostante la rigorosa politica di eliminazione sprechi, questi ultimi rimangono ingenti
'in spite of the rigorous policy of waste reduction, it (= the waste) remains huge'

(6)   *Il centrotavola è grazioso, ma quest'ultima è troppo piccola
'the table decoration is nice, but it (= the table) is too small'

The facts in (3)–(6) are strongly reminiscent of the contrast pointed out in Borer (1988) between construct-state compounds and lexical compounds in Hebrew, exemplified in (7)–(8) with respect to the possibility of a pronominal

element (*one*) referring to the head of construct state ((7)) and lexical ((8)) compounds:

(7) hu   bana   li   shney   *batey*   ʕec   ve-'exad   mi-plastik
     he   built for-me   two   houses   wood   and-one   from-plastic

(8) *hu   bana   lanu   shney   *batey*   xolim ve-'exad   le-zkenim
     he   built for-us   two   houses   sicks and-one   for-old(s)

     (beyt xolim;   beyt zkenim
     house sicks   house olds
     'hospital'   'retirement home')

The presence of the more syntactic mode of composition represented in Hebrew by construct-state compounds (see (7)) was regarded by Borer as an important argument in favour of Parallel Morphology. In a similar vein, we want to argue that the alleged compounds in (1) represent a peculiar mode of prepositionless genitive assignment that should be theoretically clarified. Some additional evidence in favour of the hypothesis that the nominal complements in (1) are in need of case-marking is provided by the observation that these compounds are systematically ruled out in Italian when the head noun is an agentive nominal (taking the derivational suffix –*tore*; see Scalise 1990). A closely related observation is that these cases of composition are perfectly acceptable in Germanic languages such as English and Dutch. The Romance/Germanic contrast is exemplified in (9):

(9) a. romanschrijver ('novel writer') vs *scrittore romanzi (cf. scrittore di romanzi)

     b. projectontwerper ('project designer') vs *ideatore progetti (cf. ideatore di progetti)

It is strongly tempting to propose that this phenomenon manifests within the nominal domain the empirical effects of Burzio's generalization: being inherently agentive, derived nominals in -*tore* do not assign an external theta-role and are thus incapable of marking (the head of) their complement with structural genitive case.[1] The Germanic counterparts of class (1) compounds are clearly not subjected to this syntactic constraint (cf. (9)) and qualify thus as true compounds.

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[1] There exist *prima facie* counterexamples to this generalization, such as *distributore bibite* (distributor drinks, 'drink machine') and *lettore DVD* (reader DVD, 'DVD player'). However, notice that the occurrence of the prepositionless variant is strictly limited, in Italian, to the cases where the 'absorbed' theta-role is marked as—Animate. For instance, *distributore bibite* cannot refer to a person

We tentatively conclude that the alleged compounds in (1) are in fact the result of a mode of genitive assignment that is presently not attested in other Romance varieties. However, if the members of class (1) are built up in syntax, we may expect to find some close correlates of this construction in early phases of Romance syntax. If the closest synchronic correlate is clearly constituted by the prepositionless occurrence of the genitival complement of *casa* ('home') as found in Italian, Catalan, and other Romance varieties (cf. references above to Longobardi's work), the closest diachronic correlates of the variant of prepositionless genitive exemplified in (1) are represented by the instances of JG found in early phases of French and (as we will argue below) of Italian.

17.3 Juxtaposition genitive in Old French and Occitan

As is well known (cf. Gamillscheg 1957; Foulet 1968; Togeby 1974; Jensen 1986, 1990; Gianollo 2005), the JG was quite common in OF and Occitan. Some examples are provided in (10):

(10) a. Cupido,   li   filz   Venus
         Cupido   the   son   Venus
         'Cupido, the son of Venus'   (*Rose* 1586)

      b. la   niece   le   duc
         the   niece   the   duke
         'the niece of the duke'   (*Vergi* 376)

      c. el   lit   Kex
         in the bed   Keu
         'in the bed of Keu'   (*Charrete* 4833)

      d. La   Mort   le   Roi   Artu
         the   death the   king   Arthur
         'King Arthur's Death'   (title *Mort Artu*)

who sells drinks on a beach and *lettore manoscritti* (reader manuscripts) cannot refer to someone who reads manuscripts. Theoretically, one might naturally claim that the trait +Animate belongs to the prototypical manifestation of the Agent theta-role, to the effect that Burzio's generalization does not apply when the absorbed theta-role is marked as −Animate, explaining the distributional pattern under scrutiny. In fact, this line of analysis also explains the limited occurrence of prepositionless forms like *abitatori le terre* (inhabitants the lands 'inhabitants of the lands') found in literary Italian texts: 'abitatore' is clearly assigned a −Dynamic +Stative interpretation according to which it does not qualify as a prototypical manifestation of the Agent theta-role (cf. Pasquali 1985). Certain residual cases that cannot be accounted for along these lines, such as *istruttore reclute* (instructor recruits, 'recruit instructor') (G. Longobardi, p.c.), are somehow lexically frozen (one does not find **istruttore soldati* ('soldier trainer') besides *istruttore reclute*, and English expressions like *football trainer, dance trainer*, etc. are systematically translated into prepositional expressions in Italian: *istruttore di calcio, istruttore di danza*, etc.) and may genetically correlate with the manifestation of a special syntactic register (even *domatore leoni* 'lion tamer' becomes acceptable as part of a newspaper headline).

e. al   cumand Deu del   ciel
   at the order   God of the   heaven
   'at the order of the Lord of Heaven'   (*Alexis* 53)

f. Li   Coronements Looïs
   the crowning   Louis
   'Louis' Crowning'   (title *Couronnement*)

g. puis   le   tens Paris de Troie
   after the time Paris of Troy
   'since the time of Paris of Troy'   (*Dole* 1605)

h. pel   cap   sanh   Gregori
   by the head Saint Gregory
   'by Saint Gregory's head'   (Guillaume IX 8.17)

The genitive complement is marked with the *cas-régime* (a label subsuming syncretic morphological realization of accusative and oblique case; for oblique case the label *cas-régime absolu* is also frequently used), with very limited phonological realization, essentially confined to masculine nouns and to some feminine nouns stemming from the Latin third declension class, as is shown in (11) below:

(11)

Masculine Noun	Singular	Plural
cas-sujet	-*s* (li) murs < MURUS	Ø (li) mur < MURI
cas-régime	Ø (le) mur < MURUM	-*s* (les) murs < MUROS

In a nutshell, the properties of the JG on which we would like to concentrate here are those illustrated in (12):

(12)   A. The JG instantiates all arguments of the noun, with a predominance of possessive relations and R-relations (in the sense of Higginbotham 1983, subsuming all cases where the relation between the head and the genitive element is looser than a strictly thematic one; cf. also Giorgi and Longobardi 1991). Since multiple instantiations are excluded, the JG seems to involve genitive realization in a single dedicated syntactic position and thus apparently qualifies as an instance of a functional genitive;

B. In JG constructions, both the head noun and the genitival possessor are +Definite;

C. The genitival possessor is marked as +Human, i.e. it obligatorily refers to human beings or to entities that are conceptualized as human;

D. The JG alternates with two kinds of prepositional phrases:

- *a*+DP (normally limited to indefinite or kind-referring genitival complements, typically but not exclusively interpreted as thematic possessors)
- *de*+DP (unconstrained).

Besides not being subjected to any specific interpretive constraint, the standard prepositional construction involving *de* can be freely iterated, as is the case in Modern French and the other Romance languages, contrary to the construction involving the preposition *a*, which is limited to single occurrences and arguably qualifies, on a par with the JG, as an instance of a functional genitive.

As stated at the onset, we believe that a principled analysis of the JG and a principled derivation of the class of properties illustrated in (12) can be obtained by capitalizing on Kayne's seminal work on the syntax of possessive constructions. More particularly, Kayne proposes that in *John's two pictures* the English possessive morphology is insufficient for genitive assignment, to the effect that an abstract +Def Determiner-head must be present in the structure, as indicated in (13b) below:

(13)   a. John's two pictures
       b. D° [John ['s [two pictures]]]
       c. [two pictures]$_i$ [[$_D$ of][John ['s [e]$_i$]]]

It is this D°-head that accounts for the definite interpretation 'the two pictures of John' that is normally assigned to the DP *John's two pictures*. Kayne contends in fact that the interpretively related DP *two pictures of John's* is derived from the same underlying structure as *John's two pictures*: by hypothesis, the syntactic trigger is constituted by the fact that D° may be marked as -Def and may thus not qualify as a case-assigner in (13b). As a consequence, the NP *two pictures* moves to spec-D° and 'lexicalizes' D°, which is turned into the case-assigning preposition *of*, as shown in (13c). There is a rather natural extension of this analysis to Romance constructions such as *la voiture de Jean* (cf. Kayne 2000), along the lines represented in (14):

(14)   a. la   voiture   de   Jean
          the   car   of   Jean
          'the car of Jean'

       b. la [$_{D/PP}$ voiture$_i$ [de [$_{IP}$ Jean [AGR° [e]$_i$ . . .

It goes without saying that in this case, NP raising to spec-D° and lexicaliza-tion (by means of preposition insertion) is motivated by the fact that the possessive morphology is completely silent in modern French. Notice also that the underlying structure of *la voiture de Jean* exhibits an interesting similarity with the structure underlying *Jean a une voiture*, possibly revealing a common syntactic structure for the expression of possession with *have* and the expression of possession within DPs (see Kayne 1993).

Let us now briefly consider how this analysis can shed new light on French JG. Under Kayne's proposal, the example in (10b) (*the niece the duke*), reproduced below as (15a) for the reader's convenience, gets associated with the syntactic structure in (15b), involving NP-raising to Spec-D^c:

(15)   a. la niece le duc

b. la $[_{D/PP}$ niece$_j$ $[$ D° $[_{IP}$ le duc $[AGR/K°$ $[e]_j$ ...

c. la $[_{D/PP}$ niece$_j$ $[[AGR/K°_k$-D°$]$ $[_{IP}$ le duc $[e_k$ $[e]_j$ ...

The explanatory power of Kayne's hypothesis has to do with the independ-ently motivated observation that D° must be marked as +Def for the purposes of genitive assignment.[2] We should notice that in (15b) this result can be easily achieved by means of abstract incorporation of the agreement/case morphology associated with the possessor constituent (the *cas-régime absolu*) into D°, as indicated in (15c). Under incorporation, if the *Agr*-head is marked as +Def, so will D°. This nicely accounts for the definite interpret-ation of possessors in the JG: the *Agr*-head inherits this feature from the possessor DP under spec-head agreement and transmits it to D° under incorporation. In a nutshell, it is the +Def interpretation of the possessor *le duc* that ensures that D° is correctly provided with the +Def required for genitive case assignment.

As for the +Hum characterization of possessors (cf. 12C above), the natural question that arises is whether there is any correlation between human possessors and the visibility of the AGR/K° morphology for the

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[2] Some qualifications are needed here. Strictly speaking, the presence of a +Def D° for the purposes of genitive case assignment is required only for languages like Hungarian (cf. Kayne 1994) and Old French (cf. the discussion below in the main text). For languages such as English the requirement can be loosened, since genitive can be assigned even in configurations where D° is identified as −Def (by means of abstract Agr/K incorporation into D°), as shown by the perfect grammatical status of *An old man's house*. In this case, Agr/K agrees with the indefinite subject and arguably transmits the −Def feature to D°, turning it into a genitive case-assigner. In Old French (as well as in Hungarian) expressions like *une niece un duc* (a niece a duke) are ungrammatical, showing that genitive assignment requires not only that D° is identified as −Def but also that it is turned into a case-assigning preposition (i.e. *a*) when indefinite. The reasons for this cross-linguistic difference concerning the properties of indefinite D° are presently unclear to us, but they are arguably related to the strenght of Agr/K (stronger in English than in Old French).

purposes of genitive assignment. In effect, English provides some intriguing evidence that this might be the case, as shown by the grammaticality contrasts in (16), recently observed by Kayne (cf. also Giorgi and Longobardi 1991):[3]

(16)   a. John's car
       b. *the car of John
       c. the dreams of my youth
       d. *my youth's dreams

It seems that in English the –Hum interpretation of the possessor (*my youth* in (16c)) is a necessary prerequisite for the AGR/K° morphology to be evaluated as syntactically inert, to the effect that D° must be lexicalized by resorting to preposition insertion. In this way, it does not really come as a surprise that the +Hum feature is exploited in OF in order to syntactically activate the AGR/K° position associated with the possessor argument, triggering AGR-into-D incorporation.

Crucially, this analysis also accounts for the cases of alternation of JG with the *a*-genitive (cf.12D above). If the possessor is indefinite, the *Agr*-head will inherit its -Def characterization and will transmit it to D° under abstract AGR-to-D raising. This is arguably the reason why the D° position is turned into the preposition *a* under Kayne's analysis of Hungarian (essentially borrowed from Szabolcsi), where dative case is also manifested in indefinite contexts (cf. Szabolcsi 1983). As for the possibility that the *a*-genitive is triggered by the presence of kind-referring possessors, we will simply assume, for the purposes of this contribution, that kind-reference also involves lack of definiteness (cf. Zucchi 1995 for relevant remarks on the semantics of definiteness).

In this way, three of the main properties of the JG in OF—as listed in (12)—have been derived in a principled way. Moreover, we can successfully combine the insights of Pesetsky and Torrego's minimalist re-analysis of case assignment in terms of valuation of unspecified case features (cf. Pesetsky and Torrego 2004) with Longobardi's and Kayne's insights concerning the requirement that the structural case-checking configuration responsible for genitive licensing should coincide with the internal domain of a dedicated head.

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[3] A full discussion of the relevance of the +Human feature for genitive assignment would involve the construction of minimal pairs whereby one could control for factors such as the use of the same thematic relation, the same degree of 'heaviness' of the complement etc. in the two structures to be compared. This task exceeds the limits of the present contribution. However, minimal contrasts such as *the shape of John* vs *the shape of Boston* or *the leg of my cousin* vs *the leg of my table* seem to point exactly in the direction we indicated in the main text (thanks to G. Longobardi for some preliminary discussion of this issue).

In a nutshell, this result can be achieved as follows. In Longobardi's analysis, prepositionless postnominal possessors in Romance (*casa mia, casa Rossi*) are unified with the 'construct-state' construction in Semitic. In the relevant configuration, the genitive possessor finds itself in the *spec* of a dedicated *Agr*-head, while being at the same time in the internal domain of a second dedicated head (i.e. D°). We contend that this is exactly the case-checking configuration that is at stake in the occurrences of prepositionless genitive under scrutiny here. Given Pesetsky and Torrego's analysis, the possessor must be endowed with *valued* genitive features. The case features on AGR/K° are weak, that is, also *unvalued,* so they cannot induce *valued* genitive on the possessor through feature checking under a *spec-head* relation. In this perspective, abstract AGR-to-D incorporation is the syntactic device adopted in order to provide AGR/K° with *valued* genitive features, under Kayne's suggestion that definiteness (and possibly other related interpretable features) on D° is relevant for genitive case licensing. In fact, incorporation ensures that the chain AGR°- D° is endowed with the requested *valued* genitive features. Under *spec-head* agreement between AGR/K° and the possessor, the required *valuation* of the genitive features on the possessor can finally take place. In this way, the structural matrices relevant for genitive assignment are shown to interact in a non-trivial way with the role played by the formal features + Def and + Hum for the purpose of genitive case valuation. Moreover, we have the prospects of a successful unified analysis of prepositionless postnominal possessors in Romance, the construct state in Semitic, and the cases of prepositionless genitive in OF and OI that constitute the main topic of the present contribution.

17.4 Juxtaposition genitive in Old Italian and in modern Italian dialects

Let us now consider the variety of JG that is found in OI and in some Central and Southern Italian dialects. An exemplification of the data that we have collected is given from (17) to (20) below:

(17) a. Anchises   lo   padre   Enea
          Anchises   the   father   Aeneas
          'Anchises, Aeneas' father'   (Brunetto Latini)

      b. la   moglie   Menelao
          the   wife   Menelaus
          'Menelaus' wife'   (Brunetto Latini)

c. il   nodo   Salamone
the   knot   Solomon
'Solomon's knot'   (Dante and other Tuscan authors)

d. il   porco   sant' Antonio
the   pig   saint Anthony
'Saint Anthony's pig'   (Dante)

e. lo   canto   san   Simeon
the   song   saint   Simeon
'Saint Simeon's song'   (Pietro da Bescapè, Lombardy)

f. per   la   Iddio   mercè / al   Dio   iudicio[4]
for   the   God   mercy / at the   God   judgement
'for God's mercy' / 'at God's judgement'   (Tuscany, 14th century)
[Examples from Rohlfs 1969: 630]

(18) a. la   figliuola   Puccio   da   Monte   Spretoli
the   daughter   Puccio   from   Monte   Spertoli
'Puccio from Monte Spertoli's daughter'
(Tuscany, 1300; NTF, 267.11–2)

b. dale   rede   Bertino   d'   Aiuolo
from the   heirs   Bertino   from   Iolo
'from Bertino from Iolo's heirs'   (Tuscany, 14th century; TPr, 215.24)

c. lo   prode   Puccio   Sinibaldi
the   interest   Puccio   Sinibaldi
'Puccio Sinibaldi's interest'   (Tuscany, 14th century; TPt, 289.1234)

d. a   nome   messer   Eustagio
at   name   sir   Eustagio
'in the name of Sir Eustagio'   (Tuscany, 14th century; Sercambi)

(19) a. Rosa   łu   síndichə
Rosa   the   mayor
'Rosa, the servant of the mayor'
(Southern Latium; cf. Rohlfs 1969: 630)

b. łə   fiłə   łə   tabbakkarə
the   son   the   tobacconist
'the son of the tobacconist'   (Castro dei Volsci; cf. Vignoli 1911)

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[4] For these formulaic expressions (most typically involving the name of God), where the genitive complement occurs in prenominal position, we simply assume that the genitival expression does not move to spec-D°: in this archaic phase movement is arguably not required (in Old French and in Old Italian) in order to lexicalize D°.

   c. la   kasa   la   mammana
      the   house the   midwife
      'the house of the midwife'
         (Veroli; also attested in Castro dei Volsci; cf. Vignoli 1911, 1925)

(20) a. con   zò   sia   cosa   que   ogni   homu
         with   it   be-PRS.SBJV.3SG thing   that   every   man
         disiyassi   la   morti   Dyonisiu   tyranpnu
         want-PST.SBJV.3SG the   death   Dyonisius tyrant
         'even if everyone wanted the tyrant Dyonisius' death'
         (ed. Ugolini: ...la morti [de] Dyonisiu...)
                         ...the death [of] Dyonisiu...
                        '...Dyonisius' death...'
                       (Sicily, 1337; *Valeriu Maximu*, 69.11–12)

     b. Et   havendu li   armi   Diana   alcuna volta li
        and   having   the   weapons Diana   some   time   the
        Latini   eranu   sicutati...
        Latins   were   followed
        'and as they had Diana's weapons, sometimes the Latin people were
        followed...'
        (ed. Folena: ...li armi [di] Diana...)
                       ...the weapons [of] Diana...
                       '...Diana's weapons...'
                       (Sicily, 1337; *Istoria Eneas*, 200.2–3)

The main properties of this construction are briefly illustrated in (21) (to be compared with (12)):

(21) A. JG instantiates all the arguments of the head noun
     B. no multiple occurrences of JG attested
     C. in JG, both the head noun and the genitival possessor are + Def
     D. the arguments of the head noun are not case-marked (no *cas-régime*)
     E. the possessor is always a proper name (but need not be a proper name in the dialects)
     F. no alternation with *a*+DP genitives (for a predicative use of *a*-genitives in Central and Southern Italian dialects, cf. Loporcaro and Limacher-Riebold 2001)

While (21A–C) suggest that the Italian JG might also qualify as an instance of a functional genitive involving raising of the head-noun projection to the *spec*

of the case-assigning D°, there are some important reasons to keep the Italian JG apart from the French JG. First, the agreement/case projection—that correlates with *cas-régime*—is syntactically inert, since there is no overt oblique case manifestation in the Italian varieties under scrutiny (cf. 21D). Second, there is no limitation of possessors to +Hum constituents, as witnessed by the extension of the JG-construction to all sorts of proper names (crucially involving many cases of toponyms, which are rare in OF); a case in point of –Hum reference (from the dialects, where the possessor need not be a proper name; cf. 21E) is provided in (22):

(22)   lu   filo   la   škiina   (= spina dorsale)
       the   line   the   back
       'the line of the back'   (= 'backbone')
       (Veroli; also attested in Castro dei Volsci and Amaseno; cf. Vignoli 1911,
       1920, 1925)

Given the properties in (21D–E), we propose that abstract AGR-to-D incorporation is unable to provide D° with the set of formal features required for case valuation: in fact, what we have in OI is an extremely weak mechanism of genitive case valuation based on the fact that *Agr* is marked with definiteness (cf. 21C). In these conditions, it is tempting to propose that D° is not easily recognized by the language learner as a case-assigning head, and that this fact explains why JG is substantially less robust in OI than in OF (with the prepositional *di*-genitive rapidly emerging as the default option, cf. also 21F) and why it only sporadically survives in the dialects.

Suppose further that this situation gives rise to a transition phase where D° lexicalizes as preposition *di* in order to yield genitive case valuation and only marginally qualifies as a case-assigner when it is phonologically empty. Interestingly, in OI we find some evidence of a construction in which the prepositionless genitive systematically expresses one of the internal arguments of a deverbal head noun. Significantly, these instances of prepositionless genitive are not limited to proper names or even to definite constituents, as shown by the examples in (23)–(25):[5]

(23)   a. facitura   e   cocitura   lo   detto   pane
         making   and   baking   the   mentioned   bread
         'making and baking of the above-mentioned bread'

(Tuscany, 14th century; TPr, 255.5)

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[5] For similar examples involving event nouns, drawn from a practical text (Tuscany: Siena; 13th century), cf. Pasquali (1985: 130–1).

b. per   scrivitura   la   sentençia   contra   Saracione
   for   writing   the   sentence   against   Saracione
   'for the writing of the sentence against Saracione'

                   (Tuscany, 14th century; TPr, 290.21)

c. reghatura   una   chassa   da   Mungnese
   transportation   a   box   from   Mugnese
   'transportation of a box from Mugnese'

                   (Tuscany, 14th century; TPr, 223.26)

(24) a. reghatura   lengname
     transportation   wood
     'transportation of wood'   (Tuscany, 14th century; TPr, 222.9)

    b. per   raconciatura   ferri
     for   repairing   iron-M.PL
     'for the repairing of iron instruments'

                   (Tuscany, 14th century; TPr, 291.75)

    c. aburattatura   farina
     selection   flour
     'selection of   flour'   (Tuscany, 14th century; TPr, 417.62)

    d. Gosstommi   portatura   letame tra   due volte...
     cost to me   transportation   manure in   two times
     'the double transportation of manure cost to me...'

                   (Tuscany, 14th century; TPt, 181.266)

(25) a. capogallo
     head-cock
     'cockscomb'   (DEI: name of a mushroom sort; Standard Italian; cf. *cresta di gallo* in some dialectal varieties of Liguria and Calabria)

    b. cuvuàlp
     fox-tail
     'fox tail'   (Beccaria 1995: phytonym *Verbascum*; attested in some dialectal varieties of Piedmont, cf. dialectal French *coua d renart*)

The learning cues for the existence of an empty case-assigning D° are not robust enough and this construction—in the general form attested in (23)—quickly disappears. However, we contend that there is a way to make these acquisition cues strong enough to support the existence of a case-assigning prepositionless D°: when the genitive complement is a bare noun receiving a kind-level interpretation (cf. the examples in (24)), the language learner has

access to a structural matrix in which the bare noun is raised to D° as a result of the presence of valued genitive features in D° (cf. Longobardi 1996 for genitive as a trigger for N-to-D raising in Semitic construct state).[6] The relevant structural cue is shown in (26) below:

(26)   D° [N° ... [N°$_j$-D° ... t$_j$ ...]]

Arguably, it is this mode of genitive assignment—with concealed N-to-D raising within the genitive complement—that gives rise, in modern Italian, to the class of alleged N + N compounds exemplified in (1) at the onset. In this perspective, it is interesting to notice that the true compounds of class (2) also developed very early as lexicalized variants of the prepositionless structures under discussion, as shown by the examples in (25) above.

If this analysis is essentially correct, it is the fact that the JG in OI is based on less robust morphological cues (overt case inflection, definiteness, humanness)

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[6] In modern Italian, the kind-level interpretation of bare nouns does not depend on a (covert) mechanism of N-to-D raising (for a detailed discussion, cf. Longobardi 2001*b*; Delfitto 2002). However, what we are proposing here is that in Old Italian the situation was different, with common nouns raised to the D-level as a consequence of the presence of 'concealed' genitive features in D°, and on analogy with the Semitic construct state. Consider the contrast illustrated in (i) below:

(i)   a.   *elenco ultime novità*
        list   last   news
        '(a/the) list of the last news'

   b.   **elenco novità ultime*
        list   news   last

The ungrammaticality of (ib) shows that the compulsory kind-level interpretation of the prepositionless genitival complement cannot be a consequence of overt N-to-D raising: otherwise, the noun should be allowed to cross over the prenominal adjective, yielding the word order in (ib). However, we propose that what moves is the whole complement (phrasal movement of the NP-complement to spec-D°). In this way, the phrasal nature of the complement in these alleged compounds ceases to be a problem: in particular, the possibility that the non-head constituent undergoes modification simply stems from obvious properties of syntactic structure. Moreover, there is a reasonable account for the fact that the head of the compound tends to resist modification, as shown in (ii):

(ii)   *produzione*   (??*accurata*)   *scarpe   estive*
     production   (accurate)   shoes summer
     '(accurate) production summer shoes'

The hypothesis is that prepositionless genitive case can be correctly checked only under strict adjacency between the head noun and the genitival phrase in the *spec* of its DP-complement. In effect, the observation that the head noun cannot be modified in structures such as (ii) exactly parallels the adjacency requirement detected in other prepositionless genitival structures like (iii) below (Longobardi 1996: 11):

(iii)   a.   **Casa nuova   Rossi...*
        Home new   Rossi...

    b.   *Casa   Rossi   nuova...*
        Home   Rossi   new...

than the JG in OF that triggers the presence, in OI, of a 'structural' cue for covert genitive features in D° that is not available in French. The unique status of the constructions in (1) within Romance is thus elegantly clarified.

17.5 On CASA and construct-state effects in Romance

Let us now take into consideration the construct-state effects involving the common noun *casa* in Romance (Longobardi 1996, 2001a). It is fair enough to assume that the analysis of expressions like *casa Rossi* (see 27b below) should be assigned the same analysis proposed by Kayne for *la voiture de Jean* in (27a). The question is of course why there is no determiner and no preposition insertion in (27b):

(27)   a.   D° [$_{D/PP}$ voiture$_j$ [de [$_{IP}$ Jean [AGR° [e]$_j$...
        b.   D° [$_{D/PP}$ [casa$_j$ [$_{IP}$ Rossi [AGR° [e]$_j$...

Suppose we exploit Longobardi's observation that *casa* manifests 'rigid designation effects' (cf. Longobardi 1996 for some relevant empirical evidence) and contend in fact that *casa*, contrary to the other common nouns, behaves semantically as a rigid designator. A way to technically implement this basic idea might consist in assuming that the lexical content associated with *casa* involves the presence of two free variables, whose interpretation can be syntactically or pragmatically governed (as proposed by Jackendoff and Culicover 1995), something along the lines of 'x where y *actually* lives' (cf. Stanley 1997 for the hypothesis that descriptive expressions endowed with indexical elements referring to fixed parameters of a context, like *actually* in the present case, amount in fact to a specific class of rigid designators). If we take this assumption for granted, we would be allowed to adjoin *casa* directly to D° instead of raising it to spec-D° (as is normally the case), as shown in (27b) (Longobardi 1994). Once in D°, *casa* lexicalizes this position turning it into a case assigner (in Longobardi's terms, the possessor will find itself in the internal domain of a lexicalized designated category, that is, D°). In this way, *casa* ends up filling the syncretic D/P head that is normally turned into preposition 'of' for the purposes of case assignment. It thus does not come as a surprise that *casa/chies* is turned into preposition 'chez' under the conditions investigated in Longobardi (2001a) (essentially, the loss of *chiese* as an independent noun in the lexicon of French). Given the analysis above, the rise of *chez* is simply a manifestation of the general phenomenon investigated by Kayne, that is, succinctly, preposition insertion in determiner position.

There are some interesting empirical consequences. In OI there are in fact many more cases of N-to-D raising. Some of them are exemplified in (28) below:

(28) a. appè   la   vigna
         at foot the   vineyard
         'by the vineyard'

      b. a   riva   un   fiume
         at   bank   a   river
         'on the bank of a river'

      c. in   boccha   la   porta
         in   mouth   the   door
         'at the entrance of the door'

      d. in   piede   la   finestra
         in   foot   the   window
         'close to the window'

      e. in   capo   la   scala
         in   top   the   stair
         'at the top of the stair'

The apparent requirement to be satisfied for this construction to be allowed
is that it must be introduced by a preposition. The question is why this
should be the case. Here is a possible answer. Remember that only *casa* is
semantically licensed in $D°$ (qualifying as a rigid designator). If we adjoined
other common nouns to $D°$, the resulting structure would not be semantic-
ally licensed. But there is a way out: incorporation of the N-D complex into a
superordinate preposition. In this way, $D°$ is lexicalized but the raised N need
not be interpreted in $D°$. This rescue strategy is illustrated in (29) below and
arguably gives rise to an entirely new set of complex prepositions (*appè*, lit.
'at foot', tends in fact to be seen as a complex preposition by traditional
philologists):

(29)   a. $P°$ [$D°$ [[la vigna] [pè]]]
       b. $P°$ [[pè$_j$-$D°$] [la vigna t$_j$]]
       c. [[a-pè$_j$-D]$_k$ [t$_k$ [la vigna t$_j$]]]

Empirically, an interesting correlation has thus been detected between the
rise of *chez* in French and the origin of a peculiar class of complex preposi-
tions in Italian (cf. also the discussion in Longobardi 1997). Theoretically, the
conclusion to be drawn is that the construct-state effects detected in Ro-
mance by Longobardi should be considered more as a side-effect of the JG
than as a marked manifestation of the Semitic construct-state syntax. *Casa*
overtly moves to $D°$—due to its referential properties—as a sort of marked
alternative to the generalized movement of the head-noun projection to spec-

D°. There is thus no valued genitive feature in D° overtly attracting the complement noun, counter to what is arguably the case in Semitic construct state.

17.6 Conclusions

In this contribution, we examined some important aspects of the path of change from synthetic genitive morphology in (Late) Latin to prepositional genitive assignment in (early) Romance. We have proposed that this kind of change involves a specific mode of structural case assignment giving rise to a peculiar class of prepositionless genitives. More specifically, the availability of this mode of case assignment hinges on a subtle form of interaction between a well-defined configurational matrix and the realization of certain interpretable features (crucially including definiteness) in the determiner position. The present analysis confirms and significantly extends Kayne's and Longobardi's insight that the case-checking configuration responsible for genitive licensing may coincide with the internal domain of a dedicated head. This strengthens the prospects of a principled unification of superficially different classes of phenomena (including Semitic and Romance 'construct state') and paves the way for a syntactic analysis of a class of (deverbal) nominal compounds in (standard) Italian that are not attested in other Romance varieties and represent a serious challenge to the Lexical Integrity Hypothesis.

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