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Abstract	In Old French, genitive structures both mirrored and differed from those found in Modern French. Prepositional genitives were found (i.e., *la nièce au duc*, *la nièce du duc* both 'the duke's niece'), but there were also structures without prepositions, the juxtaposition genitive, JG (cf. Arteaga D. On Old French genitive constructions. In: Amastae J, Goodall G, Montalbetti M, Phinney M (eds) Contemporary research in Romance linguistics. J. Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp 79–90, 1995; Arteaga D, Herschensohn J. A phase-based analysis of old French genitive constructions. In Colina S, Olarrea A, Carvalho AM (eds) Romance Linguistics 2009: selected papers from the 39th annual conference of the Linguistic symposium on the romance languages. J. Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, pp 285–300, 2010; Delfitto and Paradisi 2009) type *la nièce duc* or *la/le duc nièce*.). In an analysis focusing on the evolution of the genitive, we propose that the JG in Old French has directly inherited the same structure in Latin, although Latin had no definite article. In later OF, when case endings ceased to be pronounced, case had to be checked by a preposition. At that point, children no longer had the morphological cues (Lightfoot D. The development of language: acquisition, change, and evolution. Blackwell, Oxford, 1999) to assign a genitive meaning to the possessor, the JG was lost. The reason for the narrowing of the *à* genitives can be explained by the fact that dative *à* has always been limited to persons (Herslund M. Problèmes de syntaxe de l'ancien français. Compléments datifs et génitifs. Akademisk Forlag, Uppsala, 1980).

Chapter 2
A Diachronic View of Old French Genitive Constructions

[AU1,2] **Deborah Arteaga and Julia Herschensohn**

[AU3] 2.1 Introduction

[AU4] As noted by Arteaga (1995), Delfitto and Paradisi (2008, henceforth D and P), Arteaga and Herschensohn (2010, henceforth A and H), Old French (OF) and Modern French (Mod FR) shared certain genitive structures, but not others. For example, OF, like Mod FR, had a wide range of genitive structures including those with *à*, (type *un ami à moi* 'a friend of mine') and those with *de (*type *la tête de la femme* 'the head of the woman'). The most important difference between OF and Mod FR genitive structures was the existence of the so-called juxtaposition genitive (JG) in OF but not in Mod FR, which could be either postnominal (type *la niece le duc* 'the niece of the duke'), or prenominal (*la duc niece* or *le duc niece*).

In this chapter, we adopt the general analysis of OF genitive constructions mapped out by A and H and D and P. Unlike these articles, however, we focus on the diachronic evolution of the genitive from Latin to OF and then to Mod FR. We seek to answer the following questions:

1. Why was the JG lost?
2. What explains the change of distribution of the prepositional genitives?
3. How does the evolution of the genitive from Latin to Mod FR broaden our understanding of language change in general?

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In the following sections we first review the genitive constructions of Latin, Late Latin, OF and Mod FR. We next provide background concerning our theoretical framework, the Minimalist Program (cf. Chomsky 1995) and provide accounts of the possessive constructions in Latin, OF and Mod FR. We then consider the development of the various genitive constructions, including the loss of the juxtaposition genitive (both types). We then discuss the change in distribution of prepositional genitives, and finally, how the evolution from Latin to OF to Mod FR informs our view of diachronic change in general.

2.2 Latin Genitive Constructions

Traditional philologists (Jensen 1990; Ménard 1988; Moignet 1988; Westholm 1899) note that Latin genitive structures are the source for those found in OF. The oldest structure found in Latin is the JG. In such structures, the possessor could either precede or follow the possessed without an intervening preposition (e.g., Ménard 1988:27; Anglade 1965:155) and the possessor (in bold) was marked by genitive case[1]:

(1) **Reg**   *fili*
    king--m-sg-gen son-m-sg-nom

    or *fili*   **Regis**
    son-m-sg-nom   king-m-sg-gen

    'the son of the king'

(2) **dei**   *gratia*
    God-m-sg-gen   grace-f-sg-nom

    gratia   **dei**
    grace-f-sg-nom   God-m-sg-gen

    'God's grace'

regis/dei) is in the genitive case. Compare (3)–(4) below (Westholm 1899:2):   [AU5]

(3) *Illic est*   **Philocomasio**   *custos*
    Here is-3sg   Philocomasiu-**genitive**-m- sg   guardian-nom-m-sg
    'Here is Philocomasiu's guardian.'
                    (Plautus Mil 272)

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[1] The following abbreviations are used : m=masculine, f=female, sg=singular, pl=plural, nom=nominative, gen=genitive, dat=dative, obl=oblique, def=definite, spec=specific, 1-2-3=first-second-third person.

(4) *illic   est   **Philocomasii**   custos*   t2.6
    Here   is-3sg Philocomasiu-**dative**-m-sg   guardian-nom-m-sg   t2.7
    'Here is Philocomasiu's guardian.'   t2.8
               (Plautus Mil 1431)   t2.9
                           41

Note that in (3) the possessor, *Philocomasio*, precedes the possessed, *custos*,   42
which is in the nominative case (Ménard). In Later Latin, the possessor noun could   43
also be in the dative case (4). The strong link in Latin between the dative and geni-   44
tive case is particularly important for the evolution of genitive structures in OF.   45

The preposition *de* 'from, of' is also found with a genitive use in Popular Latin   46
(e.g., the works of Platus, Meyer-Lübke 1888) expressing possession (Westholm   47
1899). An example can be found in (5)–(6) below (Jensen 1990:24):   48

(5) *unos   multorum*   t3.1
    one-nom-m-sg of.many-gen-m-sg   t3.2
    'One of many.'   t3.3
                           49

(6) *unus   de   multis*   t3.4
    one-nom-m-sg of   many-dative-m-sg   t3.5
    (=5)   t3.6
                           50

As seen by (5) and (6) above, the genitive *multorum* alternated with the structure   51
de multis (dative).   52

Another genitive structure found in Later Latin (Meyer-Lübke 1888:375), was   53
one construed with *a/ad*:   54

(7) *hic   requiescunt   membra*   t4.1
    here   lie-3pl   remains-nom-neuter-sg   t4.2
                           t4.3

    ad duus   **fratres**   *Gallo et Fidencio*   t4.4
    to two-dative-m-pl   brothers-m-pl Gallo and Fidencio   t4.5
                           t4.6

    qui feor fili   **Magno**   t4.7
    who were-pl the sons-NOM-m-pl   Magno-dative-m-sg   t4.8
                           t4.9

    et   vixerunt   in pace.   t4.10
    and   lived-3-pl in peace-ablative-f-sg   t4.11
    'Here the remains of two brothers Gallo and Fidencio who were sons of   t4.12
      Magnus and lived in peace.'   t4.13
                           55

In (7) above the prepositional phrase *ad duus fraters* indicates possession, despite   56
the fact that *duus fraters* is in the accusative. Note further that the proper noun   57
Magno is in the dative, not genitive, case.   58

To summarize, Classical Latin preferred genitives with no intervening preposi-   59
tion (JG). The head noun could precede the possessor or follow it. In Later Latin,   60
prepositional genitives, in which the dative alternated with the genitive to indicate   61
possession, were also found.   62

2.3 Old French Genitive Constructions

Like Latin, OF evinced several genitive structures.[2] We begin by considering prepositional genitives as described by traditional philologists. We then look at JG genitives, a structure no longer found in Mod FR.

2.3.1 Prepositional Genitives

2.3.1.1 Genitive with *à*

In OF, possession could be indicated with the preposition *à*, such as in the following:

(8) *les   piés   cheval*
    the   feet-OBL-m-pl to the-OBL-m-sg   horse-OBL-m-sg
    'The feet of (literally'to') the horse.'

                                    (Renart 1.1498)
                                    (Herslund 1980:84)

(9) *chastel   as   puceles*
    the castle-NOM-m-sg   to.the-OBL-f-pl   maidens-OBL-f-pl
    'The castle of (literally 'to') the maidens.'

                                    (Queste 46.29)

(10) *fille   ad   un   comte*
     daughter-NOM-f-sg   to   a-OBL-m-sg count-OBL-m-sg
     'She was the daughter of (literally 'to') a count.'

                                    (St. Alexis, 42)

Note that the possessor could be definite, *les* (*à*+*les*) *puceles* as in (9), or indefinite, as in (10) *un comte*.[3] However, in all cases, the possessor is specific

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[2] An anonymous reviewer notes that the JG is relatively rare and that our analysis is not based on a corpus. However, we have culled examples from scores of philologists, so that our analysis is based on empirical data. The relative rarity of JG does not exempt it from investigation; on the contrary, we find this construction sheds new light on the diachronic development of OF. Another anonymous reviewer, noting Kibler's (1984) suggestion that the JG is limited to possessors represented by kinship, rank profession or "God," indicates that "this could already represent a narrowing down of a previously more general construction."

[3] This is contra D and P who argue that the genitive with *à* was normally used with indefinite articles and could not be iterated (p. 298).

[+spec]. The possessor is not necessarily human [+hum], as (8) indicates. This   76
construction is quite common in Modern Spoken French (see Joseph 1988), as in   77
structures like the following: 78

(11)   *L'ami à ma soeur.*   t6.1
       'My sister's friend.' (literally, 'The friend to my sister.')   t6.2
                                                                        79

However, the distribution of *à* genitives is not identical in Mod FR and OF.   80
Mod FR the *à* genitive is limited to [+human] possessors (Grevisse 1993:131–133).   81
Unlike Mod FR, OF also evinced genitive with *à* constructions in which the pos-   82
sessor is animate, but not human, as seen in (8) above. To summarize, then, in OF,   83
à genitives could be used with definite or indefinite possessors, providing that they   84
were animate.[4] We next turn to the genitive with *de*.   85

2.3.1.2   Genitive with *de*   86

It is widely accepted that genitive structures with *de* have the widest distribution in   87
OF. Consider (12)–(13) below[5]:   88

(12)   *la*   *pel*   ***du***   ***lou***   t7.1
       the-NOM-f-sg skin-NOM-f-sg of.the-OBL-m-sg wolf-OBL-m-sg   t7.2
       'The skin of the wolf.'   t7.3
                                                                   t7.4
                              (Renart 10.1622)   t7.5
                                                 89

(13)   *fiz*   ***de***   *sa*   ***sorur***   t7.6
       son-NOM-m-sg of   his-OBL-f-sg sister-OBL-f-sg   t7.7
       'The son of his sister.'   t7.8
                              (Brut 9141)   t7.9
                                            90

(14)   *sor le*   *bort*   ***de***   *la*   ***nef***   t7.10
       on the-OBL-m-sg bord-OBL-m-sg of   the-OBL-f-sg ship-OBL-f-sg   t7.11
       'on board the ship' '(literally 'on the board of the ship')   t7.12
                                                                      t7.13
                              (Queste 100.31)   t7.14
                              (Herslund 1980:84)   t7.15
                                                   91

These structures could occur before any kind of article and with animate and   92
inanimate possessors. In (12) the possessor *lou* is [+animate, -human]; in (13) the   93
possessor *sa sorur* is [+animate, +human], and in (14) it is [-animate, -human]   94

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[4] Philogists (inter alia Togeby 1976; Foulet 1928/1982; Jensen 1990) argue that the genitive with *à*
is found when the possessor is indefinite or plural. However, there are counterexamples from the
literature that illustrate that this is a tendency only.

[5] Examples (17)–(19) are taken from Herslund (1980:84).

95 (*la nef*). Therefore, the *de* genitive differed from the *à* genitive in that it could be
96 used with inanimate possessors (14). The two prepositional structures patterned
97 similarly, however, with respect to the feature [+spec]. We next turn to the JG.

98 ### 2.3.2   The Juxtaposition Genitive

99 **2.3.2.1   The Postposed JG**

100 Like Latin, in OF possession could be indicated by the JG (Arteaga 1995; D and P
101 2009; A and H 2009). Recall that in such structures, there is no intervening preposi-
102 tion between the head noun and the possessor. Yet OF was different from Latin in
103 that it only had two cases (rather than five), nominative (sentential subject) and
104 oblique (all other functions). In OF, while the possessor was obligatorily in the
105 oblique case, the case of the head noun depended on its grammatical function in the
106 sentence. The most common of the JG structures in OF was the DP that was pos-
107 sessed followed by the possessor, as in (15):

t8.1 (15) *la*   *chambre*   **son**   **pedre**
t8.2   the-OBL-f-sg   room-OBL-f-sg   his-OBL-m-sg   father-OBL-m-sg
t8.3   'The room of his father' (Literally, 'the room his father')

t8.4

t8.5   (St. Alexis 75)
108

t8.6 (16) *La*   *niece*   *le*   *duc*   *manoit*[6]
t8.7   the-NOM-F-sg niece-NOM-F-sg the-OBL-M-sg duke-OBL-M-sg remained-3sg
t8.8   'The duke's niece remained.'
t8.9   (La Chasteleine de Vergi 376)
t8.10   (Foulet 1928/1982:14)
109

t8.11 (17) *des*   *chevaliers*
t8.12   some-OBL-m-pl knights-OBL-m-pl

t8.13

t8.14 *le*   *roi*   *Arthur*
t8.15 the-OBL-m-sg king-OBL-m-sg Arthur-OBL-m-SG
t8.16 'Some of King Arthur's knights'

t8.17

t8.18   (Mort 5.6)
t8.19   (Herslund 1980:119)
110

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[6] Cited in Arteaga (1995).

[AU6]   (18) *et   cil   a   prise   et*   t8.20
           and this.one-NOM-f-sg has-3sg taken-NOM-f-sg and   t8.21
                                                                                                                 t8.22

           recëue   sa   fame   t8.23
           received-NOM-f-sg his-OBL-f-sg wife-OBL-f-sg   t8.24
                                                                                                                 t8.25

           des   mains   un abé   t8.26
           from.the-OBL-f-sg hands-OBL-f-sg an abby-OBL-m-sg   t8.27
           'And this one took and received his wife from the hands of an abbot.'   t8.28
                                                                                                                 t8.29

                          (Guillaume   )   t8.30
                          (Herslund 1984:85)   t8.31
                                                                                                                 111

   In (15), the possessor *son pedre* is in the oblique case; the nominative would be   112
ses pere(s). In the example (16), the possessor *duc* is in the oblique case (nominative   113
li ducs). In (17), *le roi Artu* is also in the oblique case (nominative *li rois Artus*), and 114
in (18) *abé* is oblique. Note that while the possessor is invariably specific, the DP   115
that is possessed can be either be [+spec(ific)] or [-spec(ific)]. Evidence that the   116
crucial feature is [+specific], rather than definite or indefinite comes from examples   117
such as (18) above, where *un abé* has the sense of *un tel abé* 'one such abbot'.[7] We   118
next co   tructure.   119

2.3.2.2   ition Genitive   120

Another genitive construction was possible in OF, one in which the possessor pre-   121
ceded the DP that was possessed. This form is thought by philologists to be older   122
than the postposed JG discussed above (*inter alia* Jensen 1990; Ménard 1988;   123
Moignet 1988; Tobler 1921; Anglade 1965).[8] Consider the following: 124

(18) *Mes ne tocha   la   deu   merci*   t9.1
       but   not attained-3sg pro the-OBL-f-sg God-OBL-m-sg grace-OBL-f-sg   t9.2
       'But he never attained the grace of God.' (literally 'The grace God')   t9.3
                          (Tobler 1921:70)   t9.4
                          (Ch. Lyon 5063)   t9.5
                                                                                                 126

---

[7] D and P claim that the DP that is possessed is always definite in the JG structure. However, coun-
terexamples abound. See Herslund (1980) for discussion. As for the possessor, an anonymous
reviewer confirms that there are isolated cases in which it may be indefinite. However, we note that
it is always [+specific]. Proper names do not usually show determiners although they are [+spec],
as *Dieu* in *l'Hotel Dieu.*

[8] An anonymous reviewer points out that this genitive was far less common in OF (Foulet
1928/1982:18; also Buridant 2000: 95). This is accounted for by our analysis because the structure
contains a defective phase, which is necessarily marked, and perhaps less stable for that reason.
See Section 3.2.3 for details.

t9.7 9) *Car il   fut   ja*
t9.8   since he-NOM-m-sg was-3sg already
t9.9

t9.10   *de   son   pere   maisnie]*
t9.11   from his-OBL-m-sg father-OBL-m-sg   household-OBL-f-sg
t9.12

t9.13   'He was already part of the household of his father. (Literally 'the household his
t9.14   father.')
t9.15   (Tobler 1921:70)
t9.16   (Ch Lyon 948)

127   In (18), the article is not that of *deu* (masculine), but rather the one corresponding
128 to *merci*, which was feminine in OF. However, in (19), the possessive adjective is
129 masculine oblique, indicating that it belongs to *pere*, and not *maisnie* (feminine). In
130 both cases, the possessor is in the oblique case (cf. nominative *deus*, *ses pere(s)*).
131 Previous analyses have noted that the JG is used with [+human] possessors, and
132 have ed that the possessor must be [+def], which cannot account for examples
133 like (18) above. We therefore propose that the essential feature is specificity [+spec].
134 The JG is usually gle p ssed-possessor, but there are instances of multiple
135 instantiations, as (19) and (20) show.[9]

t10.1 (20) *le   prei*
t10.2   the-OBL-m-sg meadow-OBL-m-sg
t10.3

t10.4   *les   oirs   le   Pelletier*
t10.5   -OBL-m-sg heirs-OBL-m-sg the-OBL-m-sg Pelletier-OBL-m-sg
t10.6   'Pelletier's heirs' meadow' (literally 'The meadow the heirs the Pelletier')
t10.7   Lanher (1975:117.5)
t10.8   Holman (1992:142)

137   To summarize, in Old French, four genitive structures were found, two which
138 are not found in Mod FR, namely the preposed and postposed JG (cf 15–20). In the
139 JG, the possessor could precede or follow the possessed without the use of a prepo-
140 sition. The two other structures, the genitive with *à* and with *de*, are found in Mod
141 FR, although the distribution of the former is now limited to [+human] possessors,
142 as opposed t animate nouns, as was the case in OF. In the discussion that fol-
143 lows, we will to the research questions outlined in Sect. 2.1 above:

144 1. Why was the JG lost?
145 2. What explains the change of distribution of the prepositional genitives?

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[9] Contra D and P's claim (p. 297) that "multiple instantiations are excluded."

3. How does the evolution of the genitive from Latin to Mod FR broaden our understanding of language change in general?

We next turn to the theoretical framework that we assume in our analysis, as well as earlier analyses of genitive structures in OF.

2.4   Theoretical Framework

2.4.1   Minimalism

The program that we adopt is that of Minimalism (Chomsky 1995, 2001), a framework that has grown out of the Principles and Parameters approach (Chomsky 1981), but differs in that it advocates a streamlined computational system. Both frameworks propose an account of syntactic structures of a given language in terms of a grammar capable of generating its sentences. The current program assumes a minimal number of operations, Merge (the combination of two syntactic items) and Move, procedures that are very often triggered by feature-matching. Syntactic categories may carry interpretable (necessary for semantic interpretation to give meaning to the sentence) or uninterpretable (strictly grammatical) features. The latter represent links that are syntactically required but meaningless; they must be "valued" and then eliminated (checked off) during the course of the syntactic derivation.

For example, verbs carry person/number features that are grammatical (hence uninterpretable), while nominative subjects carry those same features as interpretable characteristics of the noun. In this case, the uninterpretable features must "look for" syntactic categories that carry interpretable features to match, value and check off the uninterpretable ones. The result is subject verb agreement, with the verb carrying person-number features that are only interpretable in terms of the subject NP. Another example of uninterpretable features includes case on nouns. Prepositions, on the other hand, which can syntactically determine case, carry the interpretable feature of case. Finally, determiners carry an interpretable [def] feature, while nouns may carry an uninterpretable [*u*def] feature that must be valued by the determiner (Lin 2008). This feature is crucial to the GJ in OF.

2.4.2   Previous Analyses of OF Genitive Constructions

Recall that the genitive constructions include possessors marked à and *de* as in Mod FR (21, 22) as well as postnominal (23) and prenominal (24–25) JGs.

(21) *chastel as puceles* (=9 above)

(22) *la pel du lou* (=(12) above)

(23) *la chambre son pedre* (=(15) above)

(24) *mais il ne tocha la deu merci* ((16) above)

(25) *Car il fut ja de son pere maisnie* ((19) above)

The prenominal genitive must be preceded by a definite article, but this definite determiner may relate either to the possessor or the possessed as the two examples show.

2.4.2.1 Arteaga (1995)

Within the Government and Binding framework, Arteaga (1995) considers OF genitive constructions. Her conclusion is that their derivation can be explained if the presence of an agreement (AGR) projection in DPs is posited. This lexical AGR (Contreras 1992) assigns a case to genitive complements in the JG without the need for a preposition. She argues that the two JGs in OF have the same base structure. The prenominal JG is explained, in this view, by movement out of the lower NP, after which it adjoins to the AgrP of the higher DP. She further claims that if the lower D is null, the definite determiner is that of the DP that is possessed, whereas if it is the higher D that is null, the definite determiner is that of the raised possessor.

Summing up the views of traditional philologists, Arteaga (1995) notes that the three types of genitive in OF are essentially a function of lexical selection. In the case of the genitive with *à*, it was typically found when the complement noun was plural or lacked a definite determiner. The genitive with *de* was preferred when the possessor was not a person, when a whole class of individuals is designated, with proper nouns, or before a personal pronoun. Finally, the JG occurred when the possessor was human and the article definite or a proper noun. She explains the loss of the JG by the fact that AGR ceased to be available in Middle French, as the language was no longer pro-drop by the fifteenth century. She does not address the evolution of prepositional genitives, i.e., the fact that *à* came to be used with [+human] only.

2.4.2.2 Delfitto and Paradisi (2008)

D and P provide an analysis of genitive structures in OF, Old Italian, and general Romance.[10] They note that in OF, the possessor in genitives may be preceded with the prepositions *à* or *de* (cf. (8–14) above), which assign case (oblique in OF) as one of their lexical properties. The structure of possessive *de/à* constructions that they

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[10] See d'Alessandro and Roberts (2   ) for discussion of past participle agreement in defective phases, and Hartman and Zimmerman on adnominal genitives.

assume is as in (26), in which the head noun *voiture* 'car' moves from an IP to a position in spec D/PP.[11]

(26)   la[_D/PP_____ [[_IP Jean [AGR° [voiture]_j … →

la[_D/PP voiture_j [de [_IP Jean [AGR° [e]_j … 'Jean's car' (literally, 'the car of Jean')

Following Kayne (1993, 2005), D and P assume preposition insertion of *de* in the above structure to assign case to *Jean*. In fact, as an anonymous reviewer notes, the structures proposed in (26) are not clear. The movements are primarily based on Kayne's earlier proposals and do not correspond to recent assumptions within the minimalist framework (see Arteaga and Herschensohn 2010 for extended discussion). Furthermore, they provide no motivation for adopting the structure in (26) where the possessor is base generated between the D *la* and the head noun *voiture* (an order that looks similar to the prenominal JG that they do not discuss).

They deal mainly with prepositionless genitives, and limit their discussion to the postnominal JG (cf. (15)–(17)), relating it to similar genitives in other Romance and Semitic languages. They adopt Kayne's (1993) antisymmetric structure for DP in which the possessor precedes the head noun and in English can raise to spec DP (from complement of D to specifier of D), giving the Saxon genitive as *the king's horse* (cf. Adger 2003:257–258). For the OF JG, D and P (2008:299) propose the structure in (27) whereby the head N raises from IP, as does AGR/K, the "agreement-case morphology associated with the possessor constituent" into D°.

(27)   la [_D/PP [[_____ -D°][_IP le duc [AGR/K_k° [niece]_j …

→

la [_D/PP niece_j [[AGR/K_k° -D°][_IP le duc [e_k [e]_j … 'the duke's niece'
(literally, 'the niece the duke') = (16)

The most important points are that D and P assume an AGR/K phrase that assigns objective case to the possessor in the OF JG and that the possessor and possessed leapfrog one another to be placed in the correct order. While their account is a serious attempt to link genitive structures in various Romance languages, both synchronically and diachronically, it has limitations (see A and H 2010 for detailed discussion). A major problem is that their analysis does not extend to the prenominal JG, as in (18)–(19), a shortcoming addressed in A and H.[12]

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[11] Kayne (1993:102) uses the symbol D/P "to represent a prepositional determiner *de* (comparable to a prepositional complementizer)."

[12] Furthermore, many of their claims, such as the lack of iteration of JG or genitive with *à*, the notion that *à* genitives are almost always indefinite, and their observation that the possessor in the JG is almost always masculine, can simply not be reconciled with the data, as there are counterexamples. Discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this paper.

237   A and H propose the same structure for all genitive structures (prepositional and
238 JG) in OF, (28):

239   (28) $[_{DP}$ D $[_{nP}$ … $[_{NP}$ N $[_{KP}[K/P$ $[_{DP}$ D $[_{nP}$ … $[_{NP}$ **N-possessor**]]]]]]]]

240   They argue that in OF genitive structures, the possessor nouns in question carry
241 interpretable gender and number features (e.g. [+f, -pl], cf. Bernstein 1991;
242 Longobardi 1994; Mallén 1997) and uninterpretable case and definite features (per
243 Lin 2008) as [*u*case], [*u*def]. The D carries interpretable [def], and there are addi-
244 tional functional projections such as NumP, SpecP between D and *n*P which like-
245 wise carry interpretable features that can value and delete the *u*features (Lin 2008).
246 The gender, number, and case features are the same as in Mod FR. They assume that
247 in OF prepositional genitive structures, the relational character of *à/de* carries an
248 interpretable feature [K] (a case assigning feature) that can value and delete the
249 [*u*case] feature of the oblique N. The head of this "possessor" complement phrase is
250 K/P, a grammatical head that is overt, appearing as a preposition (P, *à* or *de*), or else
251 null, appearing as K, a genitive case assigning interpretable feature that grounds the
252 possessor referentially in time and space (Bittner and Hale 1996).[13] In prepositional
253 genitive structures, as we have seen in (8–14), the possessor may be definite or
254 indefinite, in which case D carries an interpretable [+/-def] feature. The [*u*def] fea-
255 ture of the possessor N may be valued by [+/-def] on the D, while the SpecP pro-
256 vides interpretable [+spec]. We assume that unlike some languages which allow in
257 situ checking of features, OF DP requires a c-command relationship for case check-
258 ing (e.g. the case assigning K c-commands the possessor DP embedded under it).
259 Recall that the possessed N receives its case from a higher source (nominative
260 through Tense or oblique often from the verb).

261   For the JG, on the other hand, A and H propose that the K/P head here has no
262 overt reflex (as in overt P), but must also carry the features [*u*hum], [*u*def], [*u*spec]
263 since those features of the JG possessor provide sufficient reference to "ground" the
264 DP complement (cf. Pesetsky and Torrego 2004, 2009). The [hum], [def] and [spec]
265 features of the K/P projections and the features of the possessor DP check and
266 delete, while the interpretable case feature of the null K head deletes the [*u*case]
267 feature of the possessor DP (cf. Pesetsky and Torrego 2004). For the postnominal
268 JG (*la niece le duc* type), A and H adopt the structure of (28), proposing that the K/P
269 head here has no overt preposition, but must carry the features [*u*def], [*u*hum],
270 [*u*spec] to ensure the referentiality of the DP complement. These features of K/P are
271 valued by the [+def] determiner and the necessarily [+hum, +spec] possessor noun
272 *le duc*, while the null preposition of K/P deletes the oblique case of the possessor
273 DP. According to their account, the postnominal JG construction is obtained by the
274 feature checking and valuing of [+def], [+hum], [+spec] of the possessor DP.

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[13] An anonymous reviewer questions this notion, as s/he claims that a possessor may be generic. We
have found no examples of generic JGs. However, articles do not appear in Old French generics.
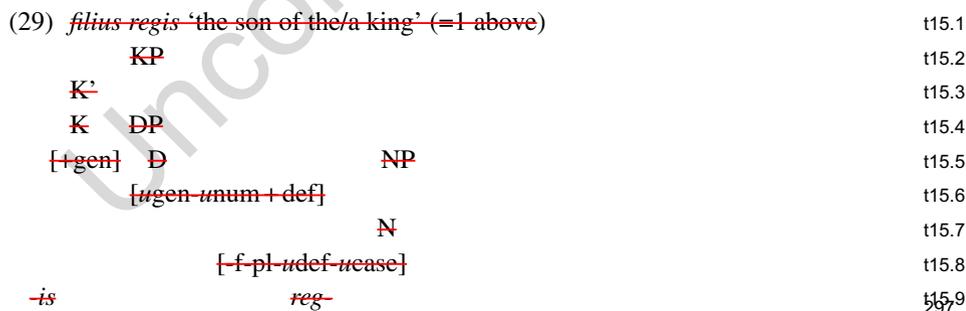See A and H (2010) for discussion.

For the prenominal JG, A and H assume that ~~one of the~~ either the possessor or the DP that is possessed, is defective, in that it lacks D, and is thus a bare *n*P. It is an incomplete DP functional shell that requires a D to check off the uninterpretable features of the *n*P. In other words, if there is no D in the lower possessor NP, it must raise to prenominal position, as *la deu merci* or *la duc niece* using the [+def] feature of the higher D to check the [*u*def] feature of both the DP that is possessed and the possessor. Recall that in such structures, it is the definite article of the upper DP that is expressed.

In A and H's proposal, when the determiner is that of the lower DP, as *son pere maisnie* or *le duc niece*, it is the upper NP that has no D.[14] In that case, the entire lower possessor DP fronts to check off and value the uninterpretable [*u*def] feature of the upper N as well as that of the originally lower possessor noun that has been subsequently raised. This in turn explains examples like *son pere maisnie*, in which the entire lower possessor DP has fronted.

2.5   New Proposal

2.5.1   Latin KP

While neither A and H nor D and P discuss Latin genitive structures, we believe that generally speaking, their analyses regarding case assignment apply to Latin as well. Pereltsvaig (2007) argues for the universality of DP whether or not a language has overt determiners or not. As noted by A and H (2010) a special case phrase (KP) is needed for case assignment in Latin within a minimalist framework. The structure we propose is the following:

(29) *filius regis* 'the son of the/a king' (=1 above)

```
                 KP
             K'
             K    DP
           [+gen]  D                    NP
                  [u-gen-u-num + def]
                                   N
                            [-f-pl-u-def-u-case]
            -is                 reg-
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[14] An anonymous reviewer asks why the [*u*Def] feature of the upper N can't probe down to enter into a checking relationship with the possessor DP, that the order could remain *maisnie son père*. This is explained by our analysis because the upper phase is defective and therefore cannot enter into a checking relationship with a lower D in situ, given the c-command requirement.

In the above structure, K carries the interpretable feature of genitive which will match and delete the [ucase] of the possessor noun. The determiner, which is often null in Latin (except for demonstratives, possessives, quantifiers and the like), carries the uninterpretable features of number and gender and the interpretable definiteness that are not realized overtly (cf. Lin 2008 for null D in Chinese). The D feature may be either [+/-def] for it to delete the [udef] feature of the noun. The noun, in turn, carries the interpretable features of gender, number, [ucase] and [udef].[15] To generate the correct morphology, *reg-* will raise to precede the genitive suffix *–is* as part of the spelling out of morphology.

In later Latin, however, as noted above, the prepositions *ad* and *de* were also found, suggesting that a PP alternated with KP in Proto Romance, as proposed for OF by A and H (2010) and D and P. We therefore provide the following structure for the example in (7) above:

(30)   ~~*ad duus fraters* 'of two brothers':~~

~~KP/PP~~

~~P'~~

~~P~~   ~~DP~~

~~[+gen]~~   ~~D~~   ~~NP~~

~~[ugen-unum + def]~~   ~~N~~

                    ~~[-f + pl-udef-ucase-uspec]~~

ad   *duus*   *fraters*
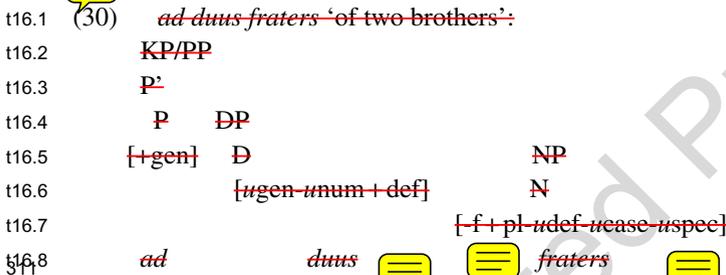
In the derivation of both (29) and (30), contra D and P ~~and A and H's~~ analysis of OF, we assume that in Latin genitive structures, the nouns in question carry interpretable gender and number features and uninterpretable case. Note that (29) can mean either 'the son of the king' or 'the son of a king.' This illustrates the fact that the crucial uninterpretable feature is not [+def] but rather [+spec] (cf. 2004), a feature that is determined by the discourse and speaker intent. In (30), the determiner is overt, checking and deleting [uspec] on the noun which, in turn, deletes the uninterpretable features of D. The overt preposition *ad* is able to check [ucase] of the noun.

As seen by the examples above, one difference between the determiner system in Latin and OF was that the determiner in the former language could be null, yet could nonetheless express [+/-spec] and/or [+def] (Gamillscheg 1957). We therefore assume, following Lin's (2008) analysis for Mandarin Chinese, that a null definite feature could check off [udef] in Latin. In later Latin, demonstratives,

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[15] We adopt the broadly accepted terminology of [gender] as an interpretable feature of the noun (cf. Carstens 2000, 2003) although it is clearly a grammatical one with semantic interpretation only in terms of animate nouns. See also Bittner and Hale (1996).

including *illi* (Classical *ille*, f *illa*, neuter *illud*), the source of Romance articles,   326
came to be used as definite articles expressing specificity, as in (31):   327

(31) *Cito*   *proferto*   *mihi*   *stolam*   t17.1
      right.away offer-IMP-2sg to.me   shawl-OBL-f-sg   t17.2
                                                                                     t17.3
      illam   ***primam***   t17.4
      that-OBL-f-sg   first-OBL-f-sg   t17.5
      'Offer me right away the (literally, that) first shawl.   t17.6
                          (Luke 15 v 22)   t17.7
                          (Grandgent 1934:36)   t17.8
                                                                                     328

   In the example in (31), demonstrative article *illam* modifies *stolam*, matching it   329
in both gender (feminine) and case (accusative). We interpret this to mean that in   330
later Latin a null determiner was losing its ability to check off and value the feature   331
[+spec]. As the Latin demonstrative lost its deictic value and became grammatical-   332
ized into the definite article in OF, it also eventually evolved into a distinctive mark   333
of the JG. The KP case phrase that could license genitive case in Latin evolved into   334
what we designate as K/PP in OF. As argued above, the JG allows a null preposition,   335
but carries the [*u*def] and [*u*spec] features that require a definite article and a [+spec]   336
DP. We will see that by Middle French the [*u*spec] and [*u*hum] features of the K/P   337
and null preposition are no longer sufficient to indicate the possessor relationship,   338
thus leading to the requirement of overt prepositions (*à* or *de*).   339

2.5.2   Old French KP/PP   340

2.5.2.1   Prepositional Genitives   341

As noted above, A and H propose that in OF genitives, the case assigner could either   342
be an overt P (*à* or *de*) or in the juxtaposition genitive constructions, a null preposi-   343
tion. In prepositional genitives, the possessor could be [+/-def] or [+/-hum], but for   344
the JG the possessor had to be [+/-def], [+hum],[+spec] to sufficiently identify the   345
reference of the possessor using a null P.[16] There is independent empirical evidence   346
for A and H's proposal that null prepositions were possible in OF. As noted by   347
Herslund (1980), Togeby (1974), Jensen (1990), among many others, dative verbs   348
may be construed with or without *à*, which is required in Mod FR.[17]   349

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[16] Most frequently the JG is [+def], but there are attested cases of [−def] [+spec].

[17] When dative verbs are construed with an object pronoun, it is invariably the dative that is used, except in North-Eastern and Anglo-Norman varieties, as pointed out by an anonymous reviewer.

(32) *et   le   dist   **le**   **roi***
and it-OBL-m-sg   said-3sg pro   the-OBL-m-sg   king-OBL-m-sg
'He said it to the king.' (literally, 'he said it the king')
(Herslund 1980:25)
(Didot E 1789)

(33) *Droit   **a mon**   **oncle**   le   dirai*
directly   to my-OBL-m-sg   uncle-OBL-m-sg   it-OBL-m-sg   will.tell-1sg pro
'I will tell it to my uncle directly.'
(Togeby 1974:56)

In (32) above, no preposition introduces the dative complement *le roi*, whereas
the preposition *à* marks the dative in (33). If, however, the dative complement takes
an object pronoun, it is invariably the indirect (as opposed to the direct) object, as
illustrated by (34):

(34) *De   moie   part   **li**   dites*
from   my-OBL-f-sg   part-OBL-f-sg   to.him   say-imperative-2sg
'Tell him from me'
Herslund (1980:25)
(Barbastre 3611)

The fact that in (34) above, only the dative pronoun in francien *li* is possible
(as opposed to the accusative pronoun *le*) further demonstrates that dative verbs
took a dative complement in OF whether or not an overt preposition (*à*) intro-
duced the full lexical DP.[18] The complement of dative verbs is usually [+human]
in OF as in Mod FR.

We assume, therefore, that the OF prepositional genitives were structured as in
Latin and Mod FR with *à* and thus continuing the Proto Romance alternation of
a PP with KP. We provide in (35) the structure for the example in (10) above:

(35)   *fille ad un comte* (=10)

               KP/PP
               K/P'
       K/P   DP
[+obl-*u*spec]   D   NP
              [*u*gen-*u*num + spec]
                  [-f-pl-*u*spec-*u*case]
          ad   *un*   *comte*

In (35) the uninterpretable features (number and gender) of the D match and are
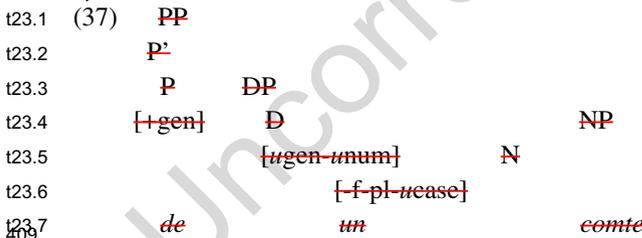deleted by the interpretable features (masculine singular) of the N, whereas the

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[18] An anonymous reviewer notes that Anglo-Norman continued to have the JG even after the
decline of the case system. Due to space limitations, we are unable to address dialectal variation in
this paper.

uninterpretable feature of N (specific) is matched and deleted by the interpretable counterpart of D.

2.5.2.2   Juxtaposition Genitives

For the JG, we assume then—continuing the KP structure seen in late Latin—that OF allowed possessors to be complements of the head (possessed) NP, introduced by either a an overt or null preposition in K/PP. When the P was overt, it could assign case to the possessor; if P were null, the additional stipulations of the human-definite-specific features were required, excluding indefinites such as *[ad] un comte*. The JG had a structure similar (=35), but further required that the possessor be [+spec], [+hum] as illustrated by (36):

(36)   ~~la chambre son pere (=23)~~

~~KP/PP~~

~~K/P'~~

~~K/P DP~~

~~[+OBL-*u*hum-*u*spec]~~

~~D~~   ~~NP~~

~~[*u*gen-*u*num + spec]~~

~~N~~

~~[-f-pl- + hum-*u*spec-*u*case]~~

son   *pere*

In (36) the uninterpretable features of the D (gen, num) are valued and deleted by the interpretable gender and number of *pere*, while its [*u*spec] feature is matched by the definite determiner. The noun's [*u*case] is matched by the interpretable oblique feature of K/P that is licensed by [+def, +hum]; the uninterpretable K/P feature [*u*human] is valued by the noun.

For the prenominal JG, recall that either the possessor or possessed is defective, lacking D, which is needs to check off *u*features, as in (37):

(37)   ~~la deu merci (=24)~~

~~KP/PP₁~~

~~K/P'~~

~~K/P~~   ~~DP₁~~

~~[+OBL-*u*hum-*u*spec]~~

~~D~~   ~~[*u*gen-*u*num + def + spec]~~

la   *n*P₂

~~[-f-pl- + hum-*u*spec-*u*case]~~

~~N₂~~   ~~NP₁~~

deu

~~N~~

~~[++f-pl- + hum-*u*spec-*u*case]~~

merci

387 If there is no D in the lower possessor NP$_2$, it must raise to prenominal position,
388 as *la deu merci*, using the [+def] feature of the higher D to check the [*u*def]
389 feature of both the possessed and the possessor. Recall that in such structures, it
390 is the definite article of the upper DP that is expressed. If the higher NP$_1$ is defec-
391 tive, the non-defective DP$_2$ raises to furnish the features [+def + spec] as in *son*
392 *pere maisnie*.
393 Our analysis can account for the fact that the prenominal JG is older, because it
394 is part of a defective phase, which is marked as it is not the norm. Our analysis
395 differs from both D and P and A and H, in that the possessor must be [+spec]; it may
396 be either [+-def]. What is crucial to our analysis is that the [*u*spec] feature may be
397 valued by [+spec] on the D. We next turn to our diachronic analysis from Old French
398 to Mod FR.

2.5.3 Modern French

400 With the loss of the OF dual case system, possessors could no longer be oblique
401 complements of the head (possessed) NP, introduced by a null preposition. Either
402 the preposition *à* or *de* was now required, and their distribution became more spe-
403 cialized. No longer was there a definiteness restriction (as for the JG) on the pos-
404 sessor, and *de* became the general all-purpose genitive marker. The preposition *à*
405 now became limited to [+human] possessors as in *un ami à moi*. In our view, the
406 Mod FR prepositional genitives are structured as in Latin and OF with *à* and *de*,
407 although they only continue the PP. We provide in (37) the following structure for
408 the example *fille d'un comte* 'daughter of a count' (cf. 10 above):

t23.1 (37) ~~PP~~
t23.2 ~~P'~~
t23.3 ~~P~~ ~~DP~~
t23.4 ~~[+gen]~~ ~~D~~ ~~NP~~
t23.5 ~~[ugen-unum]~~ ~~N~~
t23.6 ~~[-f-pl-ucase]~~
t23.7 ~~de~~ ~~un~~ ~~comte~~
409

2.6 The Evolution of the OF Genitive as a Window
into Language Change

412 The changes exemplified by the evolution of genitive structures from Latin to
413 Mod FR show from one perspective the development of analytic morphosyntax
414 from synthetic nominal declensions and from another perspective the interplay
415 of morphology, phonology, and syntax. We see these changes as a gradual

replacement of minimal features as native speakers reanalyze the underlying   416
structure of their changing language. In the case at hand, the KP case phrase in   417
Latin began sharing its function with PPs with overt prepositions in Late Latin,   418
thus giving the prepositional and juxtaposition genitives found in Classical Latin,   419
Late Latin and OF. The JG of OF, with its requirements of [+spec + hum] pos-   420
sessor, gave way to only the prepositional genitive once case morphology eroded   421
in Middle French. In Mod FR, only prepositional genitives can license possessor   422
complements. Crucial to our analysis, discussed below, is the proposal by   423
Lightfoot (1999) of cue based language change (Lightfoot 1999) in the evolution   424
of genitives in French.   425

2.6.1   426

2.6.1.1   Loss of the JG   427

In our view, there are several reasons for the loss of the JG. Recall that while   428
Latin had five nominal cases, these were reduced to two in OF, nominative and   429
oblique. The case difference was not usually seen in the feminine (except in   430
imparisyllabic nouns whose nominative and oblique forms had differing num-   431
bers of syllables, and in nouns ending in consonants, Pope 1934:312–313), but   432
rather was evident in the masculine whose nominative singular and oblique plu-   433
ral were distinguished by final –*s*. Consonants (especially [s/z]) were effaced in   434
final and preconsonantal positions certainly by the end of the Middle Ages (in many   435
cases thus rendering the case marking of nominative and oblique masculine inef-   436
fective). This, in turn, resulted in the breakdown of the OF case system, at around   437
the time that the JG was lost (Arteaga 1995). Isolated examples of the JG may be   438
found after that time, but they are considered to be archaisms (Grevisse 1993;   439
Herslund 1980; Palm 1977).   440

The loss of the case system in nominals related to the morphological leveling   441
that resulted in part from the loss of final consonants and in part from a shift   442
from synthetic grammatical marking (inflections on nouns and verbs as in Latin)   443
to more analytical indication of grammatical function (prepositional phrases   444
and word order). As Pope (1934:313) notes, "The gradual effacement of final *s*   445
in pre-consonantal position and even elsewhere rendered the flexional system   446
often inoperative; the increasing fixity of word order made it unnecessary." In   447
our view, the fact that the case system was no longer functional meant that null   448
prepositions were not possible: the generalization of oblique case to both nomi-   449
native and accusative functions—distinguished now exclusively by word order   450
except in the pronominal system—excluded the use of oblique as the marker of   451
possession.   452

Thus a native speaker could no longer determine the relationship of a noun   453
adjacent to another noun or as a verbal complement without an intervening preposition.   454

This is confirmed by the fact that null *à* after dative verbs was no longer possible at the same time (Herslund 1980). The features [+spec], [+hum], [+oblique case] no longer sufficed to identify a juxtaposed possessor, so the K/P head could no longer carry a null P with the features described earlier. The overt P, either *à* or *de*, became obligatory to indicate possession, and the order of the possessor with respect to the possessed became fixed to follow the possessed NP (as was the case for all nominal complements). Finally, these changes obviated the restriction of the JG to human definites, and the distribution of prepositional genitives necessarily changed as well.

Our proposal also accounts for the earlier loss of the prenominal JG. Recall that in such structures either the definite article of the upper DP or that of the lower DP is expressed. We have argued that in such cases, the phase is defective. We would expect, therefore, that such a marked structure would be lost earlier than the postnominal JG that followed the same word order as prepositional genitives.

2.6.1.2 Change in Distribution of Prepositional Genitives

As noted above, from OF to Mod FR there has been a change in the use of genitive *à*, namely that it generally refers to [+human] in Mod FR. Grevisse (1993:531–533) provides ample examples of human pronouns and nouns, suggesting that the usage with à may be a reduction of *appartenant à* 'belonging to.; Only two non-human examples are given, *l'écurie à la vache* 'the cow's stable' and *la faute à la guerre* 'war's fault.' Our explanation for this has its roots in the dative structure. According to Herslund (1980), the indirect object has always been animate and human. Consider the following example:

(38) *Dist la pucele au chevalier*

Says the-NOM-f-sg maiden-NOM-f-sg to.the-OBL-M-sg knight-OBL-m-sg

'The maiden said to the knight.'

(Lancelot 1044)

Historically, *à* has usually been used for [+human] as an indirect object, a practice that is almost exclusive in Mod FR (Herschensohn 1996). The dative can exceptionally be used to individuate/personify inanimate objects and animate beings as in *donner à manger aux animaux or donner le nom de Joseph à l'épée*. But generally, speakers came to associate indirect object and possessive constructions headed by *à* with [+human]. The loss of JG in the fourteenth century necessitated the adoption of a preposition, and the default genitive marker for [+/-human] became *de* since it was already positioned to apply to [+/-hum, +/-def]. The preposition *à* was not simply limited to human possessors, but became lexically restricted as well in Mod FR.

2.6.2   Broader Implications: Cue Based Evolution

How does the diachronic change described in this study contribute to our more general understanding of how languages change and what the implications may be for synchronic language variation and acquisition? In order to consider these broader implications, we examine the proposals of Lightfoot (1999). He has argued that children are the vehicles of language change in that they may modify the input they receive in creating what turn out to be "new" grammars of their native language. For example, sixteenth century English, as French, used to be a language in which the inflected verb raised above negation and adverbs as in *thinks not* (cf. MF *pense pas*) instead of *does not think*. Modern English allows raising of only auxiliaries, leaving the main verb *in situ*. Lightfoot argues that young children scan their input for cues to the grammar that they are building, and if they perceive variability, they will select cues that sometimes generalize to a grammar that differs from that of their parents—a non-raising pattern for verbs in English, for example. Why would children construct "new grammars"? According to Lightfoot (1999:202), "children need evidence to establish the category that a lexical item belongs to. That evidence might be distributional, inflectional or paradigmatic." We next explore each of these characteristics with respect to the genitive structures we have examined in the earlier sections, most particularly the total displacement of JG from OF by the prepositional genitive of Mod FR.

In terms of distribution, the JG already had competition from *à* and *de* in late Latin and in OF, so children were exposed to variable input, first in terms of JG and prepositional, but also in terms of the post- and prenominal JG and its variable determiner. The JG was further limited to [+hum+def+spec] DPs, reducing further its generalizability, while *à* genitives were limited to [+animate]. If we look at salience, one must conclude that overt prepositions are more salient than null ones, and the obvious winner in the competition would probably be the most generally used P, *de*. A final note on distribution is that the definite article—along with oblique case, which is the principal overt morphology indicating possession for the JG—was not used in OF for generic (43) and abstract noun phrases (44), both of which are [-spec]:[19]

(43)	*Pechie*	*le*	*m'*	*a*	*tolut*	
	sin-NOM-m-sg	him	to.me	has-3sg	taken.away-NOM-m-sg	t25.1
	'Sin took him away from me' (cf. Mod FR *Le peché*)					t25.3
			(Saint Alexis 108)			t25.4

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[19] Although see Gamillscheg (1957:90) who argues that with abstract nouns, the definite article is present from the earliest texts when they refer to "concrete cases." He cites three examples, in all of which the definite article has a possessive function. For example, *Guardez, de nos ne turnez le curage* (Roland 650) 'Watch that you do not turn away from your courage. '

(44) *Galois   sont   par   nature*
      Gauls-NOM-m-pl are-3pl all-NOM-m-pl by   nature-OBL-f-sg

      plus fol   que bestes   an   pasture
      more crazy-NOM-m-sg than beasts-NOM-f-pl at   pasture-OBL-f-sg
      'The Gauls are all by nature crazier than animals at pasture.'
          (cf. Mod FR *Les Gaulois*)
                              (Perceval 241–242)
                              (Foulet 1928/1982:51)

(43), the abstract noun *Pechiez* is unaccompanied by articles. Similarly, in (44), there are three generics that are not introduced by a definite article, *Galois*, *bêtes*, and *nature*.[20]

The use of the definite article spread to generics around the fourteenth century, thus eliminating the link between specificity and definiteness. The increased functional load of definite articles in Middle French would further reduce the interpretability of definite articles, making the JG a poor cue for children learning the language.

In terms of inflection, we have already noted that the inflectional systems first of Latin and later of OF experienced morphological erosion that represented a shift from synthetic grammatical marking to analytical (separate grammatical words and fixed word order). The exclusive use of the genitive case with free word order JG in classical Latin was supplemented in later Latin with the prepositional genitives using *ad* and *de*. These same constructions were used in OF, which had two cases (reduced from five in Latin), with oblique serving as direct object, indirect object, and genitive object, all of which permitted null prepositions.

The loss of final consonants in late Old French (cf. Chap. 9 by Schøsler, Chap. 7 by Lindschouw, Chap. 5 by Gess, this volume) led to several changes that influenced the cues that children would have received. Speakers no longer made the distinction between nominative and oblique for masculine and consonant final feminine nouns, since the final –*s* was lost. Similarly, the loss of –*s* obviated the distinction between singular and plural for all nouns so that the burden of marking plurality fell to the determiner (see (43)–(44) above). Partially due to this shift, determiners became obligatory, and thus grammaticalized, in French, and the null determiner which had formerly signaled [-spec] generic DPs gave way to the definite article. The JG then experienced two factors that contributed to its non-distinctness as a means of marking possession by a juxtaposed DP: oblique case was no longer distinctive as an indication of case, and definiteness was no longer a distinct mark of referential specificity. Objective case, the non-nominative case, had to be assigned by either a verb (direct object) or by an overt preposition; the option of a K/PP with a null preposition was lost.

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[20] In Mod FR either *par la nature* or *par nature* is found, the latter of which is a fixed expression.

Finally, considering paradigmatic data, we see that the converging tendencies described above contributed to paradigm leveling, which in turn further marginalized the JG. The loss of the two case nominal system resulted in the domination of the objective form (generalized to both masculine and feminine as no marker in singular and –s in plural for orthography) for nouns and articles. But because the orthographic –s was lost in spoken French, it was only the articles (e.g. *le/la* singular, *les* plural) that distinguished number. Imparisyllabic nouns—the most saliently marked nouns case-wise—were eliminated since usually only the oblique form survived. Paradigm leveling is not a primary factor in the loss of JG, but it is definitely concurrent. If paradigm identification helps learners to master morphological alternations, then the leveling could be seen as effecting change. Lightfoot's criteria seem to hold, for it certainly appears that the converging morphosyntactic changes engendered by phonological evolution provided children with at first variable and then non-existent cues that led them to restructure the genitive marking of possessor nouns in Middle and Mod FR. Alternately, the same forces might be seen as affecting teenagers or adults in their use of the language; the mechanisms of past language change cannot be known for sure.

2.7   Conclusion

In this paper, we have considered the evolution of genitive structures from Latin to OF. We first introduced Latin data, followed by a presentation of the dative in OF. Our analysis differs from earlier ones in that we argue that the possessor in all genitive structures in OF must be [+spec], not merely [+def], as an indefinite article could occasionally introduce the possessor, provided that the latter was specific. We then proposed an analysis of case marked genitive and dative in Latin and then showed how the KP case phrase of Later Latin evolved into K/PP. It is this structure which OF inherited, using a preposition, null or overt, to mark genitive and oblique case. In our view, null prepositions, which checked the case of the juxtaposition genitive and certain datives, ceased to be possible in Middle French (MidF).

We then discussed genitive structures from a diachronic viewpoint. We argued that once final consonants ceased to be pronounced, leading to the loss of the case system and the concomitant paradigmatic leveling, a child would no longer receive unambiguous input. The upshot of this is that speakers ceased to use the JG. This also explains the fact that the dative pronoun *à* not only became obligatory, but was almost exclusively limited to [+human] complements, meant that the distribution of the à genitive followed suit.

Finally, we addressed the evolution of genitive structures from Latin to OF, discussing how this diachronic development has implications for language change in general.

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