DE-PHRASES AND SPECIFICITY IN OLD ROMANIAN

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Abstract: Romanian inherited the Romance *de*-genitive from Latin. In the 16th century, the *de*-genitive had an archaic character and was used in the formal register. The absence of the *de*-genitive from original documents goes to show that it was not used in the spoken language any longer. In the first grammar textbooks of Romanian, from the 18th century, the *de*-genitive was a bookish form.

Keywords: *de*-genitive, functional preposition, definiteness, Old Romanian

1. Introduction

In the marking of the genitive of possession, Old Romanian is known to have preserved traces of the Latin *de* prepositional structure (Bourciez 1956: 588; Densusianu 1938: 143-144).

In Vulgar Latin, the periphrasis *de* + ablative replaced the synthetic genitive in most of the cases (the phenomenon is discussed in the traditional Romance bibliography: Meyer-Lübke 1900, a. o.).

In a study on the Late Latin inscriptions, Gaeng (1977) claims that they testify to the fact that the preposition *de* combined with common nouns of first and second (singular and plural) declension and third (singular) declension. The existence of the DE prepositional structure is attested with definite phrases headed by proper names from the first and second declensions: (1) *de Maria*, for *Mariae*, while proper names of the third declension expressed the genitive case synthetically (Gaeng 1977: 32-36, 55, 73-75, 106, 136-137, 186-187).

The *de* genitive construction has been attested as early as the 4th century in Rome, and since the 5th century in the west of Romània. The distinct periods of attestation of this construction in different areas of Romània indicate that Rome was the source of innovation and the centre, the focal point from where it extended into the western varieties of Latin (Gaeng 1977: 201, 203-204).

(1) de Maria / Mariae
Maria-GEN

Modern Romanian did not preserve the Romance genitive with *de*. The nouns and adjectives in the genitive are marked synthetically and/or analytically in Romanian.

The synthetic markers are:

(i) inflectional endings (in the singular feminine) (2a); the preservation of a binary system of cases from Latin (nominative-accusative/genitive-dative) in the singular feminine is a specific feature of the Romanian (see, recently, Herman 2006: 100, n. 11; Iliescu 2008: 3268; Ledgeway 2012: 333);

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(ii) the enclitic definite article inflected for the genitive (for all gender classes, singular and plural) (2b); Romanian is the only Romance language in which the definite article is placed enclitically; the preservation of the article's case inflection, from Latin ILLE (Densusianu 1901: 176; ILR II: 233-234; Rosetti 1986: 134-135; cf. Renzi 2010: 31, 33), is also a specific feature of Romanian.

The analytic markers are:

(i) the proclitic markers *lui* (2c), *al* (2d) – both of them are innovations of Romanian, related etymologically directly or indirectly to the definite article (Meyer-Lübke 1930: 9; ILR II: 235; Rosetti 1986: 134-135; Sala 2006: 129);

(ii) the preposition *a* (< Lat. AD (2e); the construction is a continuation of the Late Latin AD periphrasis, preserved as a genitive in Old French and to a much more limited extent in Modern French, and as a dative in western Romance languages; see Väänänen 1967: 122; Caragiu Marioţeanu 1975: 237; Gaeng 1977: 67, 106; Iliescu 2008: 3268-3269, and references therein).

(2) a. cas-ă cas-e
house-NOM≡ACC[1] house-GEN≡DAT

b. lup-u-lui
wolf-SG-DEF.GEN≡DAT

c. lui Ion
LUI.GEN≡DAT Ion

d. aceste cărţi ale profesorului
these book.PL AL.F.PL professor.SG.DEF.GEN
'these books of the professor's'

e. (mamă) a trei copii
mother A three children
'mother of three children'

The genitive is syncretic with the dative in Romanian. Romanian has probably preserved the genitive-dative syncretism from Late Latin (Iliescu 2008: 3268, and references therein). This type of syncretism characterizes other Balkan languages as well (Feuillet 1986: 78-82; Mišeska Tomić 2006: 49). Romanian has differentiated the genitive from the dative by means of *ad* in comparison with the Romance languages where *de* was the mark for the genitive (Coteanu 1969: 58). The reflexes of *ad* are represented by *al*, which exclusively marks the genitive, and the preposition *a* which also marks the dative in some cases.

Analytical (prenominal) case marking is a feature that brings Romanian closer to the Romance languages. The synthetic marking (postnominal) is partly a feature inherited from Latin, partly a Balkan *Sprachbund* convergence feature (Guţu 2005: 98-100; Iliescu 2007a: 226-227; Iliescu 2007b: 233; Manoliu 2011: 484, and references therein).

[1] The symbol ≡ marks syncretism.

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2. The analytic genitive with de in Old Romanian texts

The oldest surviving Romanian texts, dating from the 16th century, contain certain structures with the preposition *de* which correspond to the analytic genitive in the Romance languages. Within these structures, *de* was a functional (grammatical) preposition (Pană Dindelegan 2008), namely a functional head (Roberts, Roussou 2003: 17-33, 218-224), a genitive case marker.

The preposition *de* could select a syntactically indefinite NP complement assuming definite reference (3a), in accordance with the general rule of the prepositions in Romanian (see Iliescu 2007a: 229; Ledgeway 2012: 107, n. 33). Constructions like (3a) correspond to an older Romance pattern (Meyer-Lübke 1900: 218-219), preserved in Romansch and Dolomitic Ladin (Iliescu 2007a: 229), and have some Balkan counterparts (Sandfeld 1930: 134); pattern (3a) was probably consolidated in Romanian under the Balkan influence (Niculescu 1965: 64).

The preposition *de* could also select a definite expression, with individual-level interpretation: a proper noun (4a), an inflected common noun with the feature [+specific] (5), (6a, c).

The *de* genitive represented a syntactic archaism in the 16th century; *de*-phrases were replaced by the [+definite] genitive in the corresponding sequences of other contemporaneous texts (see the comparison of the texts in Densusianu 1938: 143-144): (3a) is found in variation with (3b); (4a) is found in variation with (4b). Pattern (4a), with proper names, existed, in an older stage, in Aromanian and Megleno-Romanian (south-Danubian historical dialects of Romanian), being later replaced by genitives proper (Capidan 2005 [1932]: 526-527).

(3) a. calé [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de cetate] (*PS*^{B} 356)
road(-DEF) DE fortress.ACC
'the path of the fortress'

b. calea [cetăţiei] (*PH* 92v)
road-DEF fortress.DEF.GEN
'the path of the fortress'

(4) a. casa [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de Domnulŭ] (*PS*^{B} 424)
house-DEF DE Lord-DEF.ACC
'the God's house'

b. casa [Domnului] (*PH* 110v)
house-DEF Lord-DEF.GEN
'the God's house'

In (5a), the noun *rreulu* (*răul* 'misfortune', in Modern Romanian) overlaps with the general constraint of definite declension, in the presence of a possessive (*mieu* – *meu* 'my' in Modern Romanian).

Nevertheless, the noun declension may be sometimes ambiguous. In (5b), *pământu*, with the inflectional ending *-u*, is an indefinite NP (without the article) or a definite DP; in the second interpretation, the definite article is missing only at the level of the

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phonological expression. In present-day Romanian, the article *-l* is pronounced only in the formal language, but its use is compulsory in the written language.

(5) a. în dzua [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de rreulu mieu] (= răului) (*PH* 12v)
in day-DEF DE misfortune-DEF.ACC my misfortune.DEF.GEN
'the day of my misfortune'
b. împăraţii [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de pământu] (= pământului) (*PH* 1v)
emperors-DEF DE earth.ACC earth-DEF.GEN
'the Earth's emperors'

In most of the contexts, the *de*-phrase was placed after the prepositional structures *pre (pren, în) mijloc* 'in the middle of'. These types of structures were not entirely fused so that the possessive relationship between the noun *middle* and the *de*-phrase was sometimes obvious ((6a), cf. (6b), in Densusianu 1938: 143-144). There were also cases when the *de*-phrases were unitary, as a frozen phrase, and did not have a possessive meaning ((6c), in Densusianu 1938: 143-144).

(6) a. pre mijlocŭ [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de casa me] (*PS*$^{\text{B}}$ 324-325; cf. CP^{1} 272)
through middle DE house-DEF.ACC my
'in the middle of my house'
b. în mijlocul caseei meale] (*PH* 82v)
in middle-DEF house-F.SG.DEF.GEN my-F.SG.GEN
'in the middle of my house'
c. pre mijlocŭ [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de maţele méle] (*CP*^{1} 52)
through middle DE intestines-DEF.ACC my.PL
'through my intestines'

3. The Church Slavonic influence

In the old translations, the *de*-phrases correspond sometimes to the construction with *o(t)* from the Slavic:

(7) [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de Iovu] bunră-rrebdare (*CV* 54v; see Costinescu, in *CV*: 157)
DE Iov.ACC good-patience
'Iov's standing patience'

These formulas that include titles and place-names (8a) may also have a Slavic pattern with the preposition *ot*(*ŭ*) (Vasiliu, in Avram 2007: 87). Nevertheless, the patterns also existed in Late Latin, interpreted as an analytic genitive (Gaeng 1977: 33-34, 73).

In (8a), the non-articulation constraint after the preposition affects the toponym *Bistriţa,* which incorporates the definite feminine article *-a* (Niculescu 1965: 64): *Bistriţa* has a form ending in *-ă,* on the model of articleless common nouns (*casa* 'the house' – *casă* 'house'). But structure (8a) alternates with (8b).

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The Romanian patterns (8a-d) are still different from (3a), (4a), (5), (6a, c) and (7): in (8) *de* also expresses the separative feature, the origin 'from'. There are more Romanian examples in the documents from the 16th century (8a-c), but they also appear in later texts – documents, historic or legal writings, forewords, etc. (8d):

(8) a. birăul [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de Bistriţă] (*LRB*, 3, Câmpulung, Bucovina, 1595:48; 4, Suceava, 1595: 49)
mayor-DEF DE Bistriţa
'the mayor of Bistriţa'

b. birăul [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de cetatea Bist<r>iţeei] (*LRB*, 3, Câmpulung, Bucovina, 1595: 47)
mayor-DEF DE city-DEF Bistriţa-GEN
'the mayor of the city of Bistriţa'

c. papa [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de Roma] (*DÎ*, XXVI, [Ţara Românească] *Transilvania [1600]: 249v)
Pope-DEF DE Rome
'Pope of Rome'

d. domnii mazâli [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de Moldova] (*NL* 846)
princes-DEF dismissed DE Moldova]
'the dismissed princes of Moldova'

4. The analytic *de*-genitive in old Romanian grammar texts

The *de*-phrase is not explicitly recorded as an equivalent of the genitive in the first grammar books of Romanian, written at the end of the old period, namely in the second half of the 18th century. What we are referring to are the oldest grammar textbook of Romanian written by Dimitrie Eustatievici at Braşov, in 1757 (EG 53/36r, 137/78r-138/78v) and the first grammar textbook of the Romanian language written in Latin, *Institutiones linguae valachicae,* by an anonymous author from the north-west part of Transylvania, around 1770 (ILV 8; Chivu, in ILV: 16-34).

As far as we know, the fact that the grammar textbook of Dimitrie Eustatievici contains a few old structures with the functional preposition *de* followed by a definite noun (i.e. a DP) in the chapter about the syntax of the adjectives has not been discussed in the Romanian bibliography yet. *De*-phrases (9a), (10a) are syntactically dependent on deverbal adjectives in a syntactic position in which we find the *al*-genitive in a later period (9b), (10b). The structures to which I am referring are the following:

(9) a. cel ce împlinitori este [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de poruncile
the one obeyer is DE commandments-DEF.ACC
dumnezeieşti] (*EG* 139/79r)
divine-PL.ACC
'the one who obeys the God's commandments (lit. the one obeyer is of God's commandments)'

b. împlinitor [$_{\text{AL-phrase}}$ al poruncilor] (Modern Romanian)
obeyer AL.M.SG commandments-DEF.GEN
'obeyer of the commandments'

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(10) a. tânărul necunoscător este [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de lucrurile care
young-def inexperienced is DE things-def.acc that
se întâmplă] (*EG* 139/79r)
CL.REFL.ACC.3SG happening
'the young one is inexperienced in the things that are happening'
b. necunoscător [$_{\text{AL-phrase}}$ al lucrurilor] (Modern Romanian)
inexperienced AL.M.SG things-DEF.GEN
'[he is] inexperienced in the things'

5. Conclusions

In the end, I would like to make a few diachronic and typological remarks.

Romanian inherited the Romance *de*-genitive from Latin. In the 16th century, namely the earliest attested period of Romanian, attested by written documents which have been preserved up until the present-day, the *de*-genitive (3a), (4a), (5), (6a, c) was found especially in translations, where the patterns ware supported by the presence of Slavonic prepositional phrases headed by *ot*(*ŭ*). The *de*-genitive had an archaic character and was used in the formal register. The absence of the *de*-genitive from original documents goes to show that it was not used in the spoken language any longer.

The *de*-genitive does not appear in later texts.

In the first grammar textbooks of Romanian from the 18th century, the *de*-genitive was a bookish form.

In Modern Romanian, the *de*-genitive has been preserved in the noun phrase only in a few expressions. The pattern of the preserved structure is the one that contains an NP complement ((11a); cf. (3a)). In my opinion, the frozen structure in (11b) is interpretable as an old *de*-genitive, by analogy with the corresponding structures from the Romance languages (cf. the Galician structure, see Ledgeway 2012: 213); in (11b), the preposition *de* governs a definite DP, quantified by the universal quantifier *toate* 'all'. The DP complement pattern has an exceptional nature in present-day Romanian.

(11) a. miez [$_{\text{DE-phrase}}$ de noapte]
middle DE night
'midnight'
b. pâinea noastră cea [de-phrase de toate zilele] (dă- ne-o)
bread-DEF our CEL-F.SG.ACC de all-F.PL days-DEF.ACC (give-us-it)
'(give us) our daily bread (lit. the our bread of all days)'

The preposition *de* has various uses within the noun phrase in Old and Modern Romanian, which may be traced back to Latin syntactic patterns. I will not refer here to these types of *de*-phrases (see Cornilescu 2006, Cornilescu and Nicolae 2009, Mišeska Tomić 2006: 150-151, Mardale 2009: 243-260, Nedelcu 2013: 456-457). I will only state that they share the feature [non-specific].

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Pattern (8), still in use (*Mihai de România* 'Mihai of Romania'), is not interpreted as an equivalent of the genitive case in the present-day language. Its position has been consolidated under the influence of the corresponding structures from foreign languages.

The existence of structures (in the 18th century) with the *de-genitive* as a complement of a deverbal adjective (9a), (10a) certifies that the complement of the adjective in the genitive, which has been considered to be a modern pattern in Romanian, is attested in the old language.

Corpus

CP[1] = Coresi, 1577. *Psaltire slavo-română* (Braşov). B. Petriceicu-Hasdeu (ed.) 1881. Bucharest: Tipografia Academiei Române.
CV = *Codicele Voroneţean* [1563–1583]. M. Costinescu (ed.) 1981. Bucharest: Minerva.
DÎ = A. Mareş, G. Chivu, M. Georgescu, M. Ioniță and A. Roman Moraru (eds.) 1979. *Documente şi însemnări româneşti din secolul al XVI-lea.* Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române.
EG = D. Eustatievici Braşoveanul 1757. *Gramatica rumânească.* N. A. Ursu (ed.) 1969. Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică.
ILV = *Institutiones linguae valachicae. Prima gramatică a limbii române scrisă în limba latină.* G. Chivu (ed.) 2001. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române.
LRB = A. Rosetti (ed.) 1926. *Lettres roumaines de la fin du XVI*[e] *et du début du XVII*[e] *siècle tirées des archives de Bistritza.* Bucharest: Socec.
NL = I. Neculce. *Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei.* In G. Ştrempel (ed.) 2003. *Marii cronicari ai Moldovei*, 807-1199. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, Univers Enciclopedic.
PH = *Psaltirea Hurmuzaki* [approx. 1490–1516]. I. Gheţie and M. Teodorescu (eds.) 2005. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române.
PS[B] = *Psaltirea Scheiană* [Moldova, 1573–1578]. I. Bianu (ed.) 1889, I. Bucharest: Tipografia Carol Göbl.

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