

# Possessive Pronouns in European Portuguese and Old French

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## Abstract

*The aim of this paper is to bring European Portuguese (EP) data into light, showing that, in spite of the lack of morphological evidence, the syntactic behaviour of possessives, across EP dialects, shows evidences for a tripartite possessive system (Cardinaletti, 1998; Cardinaletti & Starke, 1999). It will be argued that the syntactic position of possessives parallels the positions assumed for EP sentential subjects in non interrogative contexts: [Spec, AgrsP], [Spec, TP] and [Spec, VP]. As a matter of fact, depending on their syntactic properties and assuming, as null hypothesis, that the nominal head moves to Numb°, possessives may occur in [Spec, AgrsNP], [Spec, NumbP] and [Spec, NP]. Furthermore, would it be so, this dialectal variation would be useful in order to understand the changes that have occurred in other romance languages in previous stages. It might be the case that the loss of weak possessive forms (“mien”) in French parallels, among other things, the lack of sentential subjects in [Spec, TP].*

## 0. Introduction: possessives in Old Portuguese (OP) and Old French (OF)

In the sense of Cardinaletti (1998), in OP and OF, possessives behave alike. At this stage, both languages display (i) weak possessives in pre-nominal position (A pattern). These don't combine with articles (cf. (1a-b) & (2)) and, in OP, these could be doubled (see (1b)), meaning that they had X° property.

- (1) a. E non ouves o rogo que ti fez *teu* padre espiritual?  
(Mattos e Silva, 178 (1.28.23))  
and don't (you) hear the demand that to you has-made  
your (MASC, SING) spiritual father?

- b. [...] mais morou com muitas monjas e foi *seu* abade *delas*  
 (Mattos e Silva, 177 (1.5.56))  
 moreover (he) lived with a lot of monks and has-been their (3<sup>rd</sup>  
 SING P, MASC, SING) abbot of.them
- (2) a. S'il quiert *s'onor* et je la moie / S'il quiert *son* pris et je le  
 mien / Et s'il vialt la bataille bien / Encore la voel je plus cent tanz.  
 (Chrestien de Troyes, *Le Chevaier de la Charrette*, 3472-3475)<sup>1</sup>  
 if he seeks his (3<sup>rd</sup> SING P, FEM SING) honor and I the mine (1<sup>st</sup>  
 SING P, FEM, SING) / If he seeks his (3<sup>rd</sup> SING P, MASC SING)  
 award and I the mine / And if he wants the battle badly / Even a  
 hundred time more do I want it
- b. S'il contrepesast *vo* richece / encontre *vostre* grant proece.  
 (Foulet, 1919/1990: 163)  
 if he would compare your (2<sup>nd</sup> PLUR P, FEM PLUR) wealths /  
 against your (2<sup>nd</sup> PLUR P, SING) great bravery

The two languages display a second weak possessive paradigm (B pattern)  
 Just as the ones above, these occur to the left of the noun head but they combine with a determiner (cf. (3-4)) and occur in ellipsis (cf. (5-6)).

- (3) E maravilhando-se Juiãã, mandadeiro do papa, porque *o seu*  
 homen tanto tardara, alçou *os seus* ombros e vio viir pola carreira  
 com hu+a cárrega de feo sobre seu colo.  
 (Mattos e Silva, 1989: 181 (1.8.19))  
 and wondering Juiãã, messenger of.the, the reason why the his  
 man (3<sup>rd</sup> SING P, SING, MASC SING) has-delayed so much, (he) raised  
 the his (3<sup>rd</sup> SING P, MASC PLUR) shoulders and saw-him coming  
 along, carrying a faggot of hay
- (4) a. Tant m'afî en vous et croi / que chose celer ne vous doi / que *li*  
*miens* cuers sache ne ot.  
 I trust in you so much and believe (in you) / That (I) must not  
 hide anything / That the mine (1<sup>st</sup> SING MASC, MASC SING, CS)  
 heart would-know or would-hear
- b. *Un sien* compere en apela.  
 (Foulet 1919/1990: 166)  
 a his (3<sup>rd</sup> SING P, MASC SING) companion called
- (5) a. Os meus custumes non conviinhã con *os vossos*.  
 the my habits don't fit the yours (2d PLUR P, MASC PLUR)
- b. a terra muito alongada *da sua*.  
 (Mattos e Silva, 1989:179, (2.3.179 & 180, (2.3.26))  
 the land very far away from his (3rd SING P, FEM SING)

<sup>1</sup> All the examples are quoted from the net archives: Princeton University, Charrette Project, [www.princeton.edu/~lancelot](http://www.princeton.edu/~lancelot)

- (6) A lui amer estoit si buen / qu'a mon cuer prenoit **le suen**.  
 (Foulet 1919/1990:165)  
 to him to love was so good / that I take within my heart the his (3<sup>rd</sup>  
 SING P, MASC SING)

Finally, OP and OF display strong possessive forms (C pattern). These occur to the right of the noun head (cf. (7-8)) and in predicative contexts (cf. (9-10)):

- (7) a. non tira **a** calça **sua**  
 not take the trousers his (3<sup>rd</sup> SING P, FEM SING)  
 b. sem ajuda **sua**  
 without help (from) his (3<sup>rd</sup> SING P, FEM SING)
- (8) ce fut maleoit gré **mien**<sup>2</sup> (Foulet 1919/1990 166)  
 it was against will mine (1<sup>st</sup> SING P, MASC SING)
- (9) a. Tan altas obras non son **nossas**  
 so high achievements aren't ours (1<sup>st</sup> PLURP, FEM PLUR)  
 b. Leixa, filho, leixa o que trages, ca non é **teu**.  
 (Mattos e Silva, 1989:179, (2.32.13) & (2.14.9))  
 leave (it), son, leave what (you) are bringing, because (it) isn't  
 yours (2<sup>nd</sup> SING P, MASC SING)
- (10) a. La dame est **moie** et je sui **suens**.  
 the lady is mine (1<sup>st</sup> SING P, FEM SING) and I am hers (3<sup>rd</sup> SING P,  
 MASC SING)  
 b. Mais que qu'il face je seray **siene**.  
 (Raynaud de Lage, 1975: 60)  
 But whatever he would-do I will be his (3<sup>rd</sup> SING P, FEM SING)

So, in OF and OP there is a tripartite possessive system (cf. Cardinaletti & Starke, 1994, 1999):

1. Weak X<sup>o</sup> forms (in absolute initial position, occurring without any determiner and interpreted as definite descriptions).
2. Weak forms (to the left of the noun head, but co-occurring with definite or indefinite determiners, with cardinals or quantifiers and in ellipsis constructions).
3. Strong forms (to the right of the noun head and in predicative contexts).

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<sup>2</sup> Notice that the post-nominal position is a rare one and appears to be somehow archaic and lexicalized, which partly explains the appearance of the new pattern, 'dative possessive' (cf. *à moi*).

From OF and OP to European Portuguese (EP) and Modern French (MF), changes have occurred. PE has a more uniform system: (i) the absolute initial position is no longer allowed, unless in NP predicates; (ii) the B pattern extended and became the only possible choice; (iii) in morphological terms, there is a homophonous form occurring in all contexts (*meu / teu / seu*) and displaying agreement with the noun head.

As for MF: (i) weak possessives in pre-nominal position of OF generalized (*mon livre*); (ii) weak forms specialized for ellipsis (*le mien*), meaning that the pattern which generalizes in EP disappeared in MF; (iii) by the end of Middle French, a new pattern arises for post-nominal and predicative contexts (*à moi*), referred to as ‘dative possessive’.

## Questions

The remaining of this paper will attend the following questions:

1. Given that EP possessive morphology is opaque and displays homophonous forms in all contexts, should it be concluded that the possessive system reduces to a single form and has lost the tripartite distinction we saw for OP?
2. As far as the pre-nominal positions are concerned, how to account for the choices the two languages have made?

As for the first question, we will see that in spite of the morphological opaque nature of EP possessives, there is empirical evidence for a tripartite system (Cardinaletti & Starke, 1994/1999; Cardinaletti, 1998; Miguel, 2001, for EP) (1<sup>st</sup> section).

As for the second question, I will argue that the changes in the word order of root sentences that took place between MF and Classical French are crucial to explain the loss of the B pattern in SMF (2<sup>nd</sup> section).

Word order in OF root sentences follows Romance patterns (Lemieux & Dupuis, 1995) and highly relies on the informational structure of the language (Cinque, 1993; Zubizarreta, 1998, a. o.; for EP, Duarte, 1987, 1997; Ambar, 1992, 1999; Martins 1994; Costa 1998, a. o.).

Finally, I will try to relate these changes to the choices in the possessive paradigms of EP and MF, keeping the observations to the pre-nominal occurrences (3<sup>rd</sup> section).

### 1. Possessives in EP

The null hypothesis assumes that, in Romance languages, (a) the nominal head moves to Num<sup>0</sup> in overt syntax and (b) possessives are submitted to cyclic movement from [*Spec*, NP] to [*Spec*, NumP] and [*Spec*, AgrsNP]



[+animate] reading (see (13g)). On the other hand, in inalienable possession, the null pronoun is strongly preferred (see (13h)). Finally, when the possessive is the rightmost element of the structure, it gets an informational neutral focus reading (Cinque, 1993).

- (13) a. Um discurso **teu** é sempre um acontecimento.  
a discourse yours (2<sup>nd</sup> SING P, MASC SING) is always a happening
- b. Esses prêmios **vossos** não valem nada.  
those awards yours (2<sup>nd</sup> PLUR P, MASC PLUR) aren't worth-while
- c. Encontrei dois amigos **nostros** na praia.  
(I) met two friends ours (1<sup>st</sup> PLUR P, MASC PLUR) at.the beach
- d. Algumas amigas **minhas** foram ver a galeria de arte.  
some friends mine (1<sup>st</sup> SING P, FEM PLUR) went to see the gal-  
lery of art
- e. ??? O amigo **meu** \*(que te apresentei ontem) vai trabalhar para a Itália.  
the friend mine (1<sup>st</sup> SING P, MASC SING) \*(I) introduced to you yesterday) is going to work in Italy
- f. Aquele amigo **meu** (que te apresentei ontem) vai trabalhar para a Itália.  
that friend mine (1<sup>st</sup> SING P, MASC SING) ((I) introduced to you yesterday) is going to work in Italy
- g. Parti um pé da cadeira > \* parti um pé **seu** / **dela**.  
(I) broke a leg of the chair > \* (I) broke a leg its
- h. [pro]<sub>i</sub> Parti um braço [e]<sub>i</sub>.  
(I) broke an arm

### 1.1.2. *The post-nominal possessive displays strong properties*

The post-nominal possessive allows for focalization (14a), coordination (14b) and modification (see (14c)). In indefinite ellipsis, a post-nominal position (cf. Bernstein, 1993), possessives behave as when combined with a noun with phonological content (cf. (14) & (15)). They may also occur in isolation (16a), in predicative contexts (see (16b)) and in coordination with a DP (see (16b)).

- (14) a. Uma casa **MINHA**, isso queria eu!  
a house mine, that would.wish I
- b. Ter uma casa **minha** e da **minha** família era bom!  
to.have a house mine and of.the my family it would.be good
- c. Uma casa muito **minha**, isso queria eu!  
a house very.much mine, that would.wish I
- (15) a. Uma **MINHA**? Isso queria eu!  
a mine? That would.wish I
- b. uma **minha** e dos **meus** amigos  
a mine and of.the my friends

- c. Uma muito minha, dava-me muito jeito.  
a very.much mine, it would suit me
- (16) a Bem, para ser franca, exclusivamente meu, só tenho um cão.  
well, to be honest, exclusively mine, (I) just have.got a dog  
b. O livro é (muito exclusivamente) meu e da Maria.  
the book is (very exclusively) mine and of.the Mary

Given that the properties shown in (14)-(16) are the main properties of strong possessives (cf. table 1; Cardinaletti, 1998), we can conclude that EP displays strong possessive forms. Notice that all EP speakers agree on the above examples. This is not the case when we come to pre-nominal forms.

### *1.1.3. Pre-nominal position and dialectal variation*

For all EP speakers, the pre-nominal possessive combines with definite articles (17a) and demonstratives (17b).

- (17) a. Os meus dias são melhores que as vossas noites.  
the my days are better than the your nights  
b. Essas vossas gracinhas não têm piada nenhuma.  
those your jokes aren't funny at all

A large set of speakers allows yet for the possessive to co-occur with an indefinite ((18a)), with existential quantifiers ((18b)), with cardinals ((18c)) and with demonstratives ((18d)), giving evidence for dialectal variation:

- (18) a. Um teu discurso é sempre um acontecimento.  
a your discourse is always a happening  
b. Algumas minhas amigas foram ver a galeria de arte.  
some my friends went to see the gallery of art  
c. Encontrei dois teus primos na praia.  
(I) met two your cousins at.the beach  
d. Aquele simpático teu amigo de Paris vem cá este ano?  
that nice your friend from Paris is.coming here this year

As all speakers agree on (17), I will refer to this dialect as the **standard dialect**. EP speakers who accept both (17) and (18), i.e. pre-nominal possessives in indefinite contexts, belong to the **conservative dialect**. Within this dialect, we can still isolate two groups. The first one (the largest one too) strongly prefers (18a-b). Yet, a smaller group finds (18c-d) perfect.

Finally, although all speakers from the conservative dialect recognize the patterns in (18c-d), they find a contrast between these examples and those in (18a-b). For those who strongly prefer (18a-b), (18c-d) improves if the possessive receives secondary stress. Let us just say that these speakers are engaged in a **reanalysis process**.

1.1.3.1. *The conservative dialect*

In this dialect, possessives combine with definites or indefinites, triggering a specific reading (cf. (19a)). They allow modification (see (20a-c)) and coordination (cf. (20d)):

- (19) a. O / Um meu amigo vai oferecer-me um quadro que lhe pedi.  
the / a my friend is.going to give-me a painting that (I) him asked for  
b. Aquele meu amigo vai oferecer-me um quadro que lhe pedi.  
that my friend is.going to.give-me a painting that (I) him asked for
- (20) a. O muito meu amigo Pedro preparou-me uma surpresa.  
the very.much my friend Pedro prepared-me a surprise  
b. Não faças isso! Uma tão pouco tua atitude poderia chocar algumas pessoas.  
don't do that! A so little your attitude would.shock some people  
c. Francamente, não gostei nada de algumas tão pouco tuas cenas.  
to.be.honest, (I) didn't like some so little your scenes  
d. O muito meu e muito teu amigo de Paris chega amanhã.  
the very.much my and very.much your friend from Paris is.arriving tomorrow

According to Cardinaletti (1998), weak forms don't allow for coordination (see property (f), in table (1)). This could be a problem for the idea that these forms are weak, but Kayne (1975) and Sportiche (1998), a. o., show that weak pronouns allow for coordination. See weak nominative pronouns in French, in (21)<sup>4</sup>.

- (21) a. Dominique, c'est il ou elle? Écoute... franchement, je crois que c'est il et elle.  
Dominique, it's he or she? Well..., to be honest, I think it's he and she  
b. Bon, alors j'ai vu Paul et Marie; ou il ou elle vous appelleront demain.  
well, I saw Paul and Marie; or he or she will call you tomorrow

Following Cardinaletti's (1998) insight, the possessive is a weak phrasal (XP) possessive. As a weak form, the possessive moves to [Spec, AgrsNP] (see (11))<sup>5</sup>. Being an XP projection, the possessive allows for lexical material in its Spec – (20a-b). In this dialect, the pre-nominal possessive may occur in

<sup>4</sup> See Itshane (2000) for the same point on weak possessives coordination in French.

<sup>5</sup> In Cardinaletti's (1998) terms, to be 'weak' and to have XP status are not incompatible properties. See the possessive movement in (11). Only the last step involves head movement of the [Spec, AgrsNP] projection to the D° head.



[+/-definite] DPs – (19a). As for (22), it is perfect for the more conservative speakers. Here, the possessive is adjacent to the left of the noun head but not to the D° / Q° position.

- (22) a. ? os outros três meus livros  
the other three my books  
b. ? uns três meus amigos  
some three my friends  
c. ? dois grandes meus amigos  
two good my friends

As the word order in (22) suggests, in the most conservative EP dialect, the possessive may be licensed in [Spec, NumbP]<sup>6</sup>.

Summarizing, possessive syntax in the conservative dialect may be described as follows: (i) pre-nominal possessives have a phrasal nature (XP); (ii) they may be modified and coordinated; (iii) they occur in the Spec position of a functional projection such as: (a) [Spec, AgrsNP], adjacent to D° (+/- definite) or Q° head, displaying the features that trigger the possessive interpretation [+/-definite], [+/- specific] – semantic feature checking taking place in overt syntax – or (b) [Spec, NumbP], in which case, semantic feature checking takes place in LF.

In this dialect, possessives do not display [+/- definite] features (Brito, 2001); they are weak in the sense that they cannot be licensed in a  $\theta$ -position. They must be licensed in [Spec, AgrsNP], under local c-command by the D° / Q° head, or in a [Spec, Head] relation with NumbP.

#### 1.1.3.2. The standard dialect

See examples (23) for the ‘standard’ dialect (cf. Castro & Costa, 2001; Miguel, 2001), and compare them with (19-20) above.

- (23) a. A minha opinião não interessa.  
the my opinion doesn’t matter  
b. \*A simpática minha amiga de Paris  
the nice my friend from Paris
- (24) a. \*Uma minha amiga chega amanhã.  
a my friend is.coming tomorrow  
b. \*Alguns meus livros ficaram em casa da Joana.  
some my books stayed at Joana’s

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<sup>6</sup> But, for most speakers, there is an adjacency restriction between the possessive and the D° / Q° head: they prefer (19)-(20), where the possessive is submitted to a further movement to [Spec, AgrsNP], although this restriction seems to be stronger with [+definite] DPs. See Brito (2001) for an extended description of this dialect.

- (25) a. \**A muito exclusivamente tua* decisão não agradou ao Pedro.  
the very.exclusively your decision didn't please to.the Pedro  
b. \**O meu e teu amigo* de Paris mandou-nos uma carta.  
the my and your friend from Paris sent us a letter
- (26) a. Está bem, mas *a MINHA* opinião é diferente.  
Ok, but the my opinion is different  
b. E agora quero mandar beijinhos [ *pó mé pai, pás nhas irmãs*] >  
para o meu pai, para as minhas irmãs.  
and now, (I) want to send kisses [to my father, to.the my sisters]

As the above examples show, in the standard EP dialect, possessives obey a strict adjacency condition with the definite determiner (see (23a-b)). They cannot combine with indefinite determiners, or indefinite quantifiers (in Gius-ti's 1993 sense) – see (24a-b). They do not allow any kind of modification (see (25a)) or coordination (see (25b)). They may be contrastively stressed (see (26a)) and, finally, they allow phonetic reduction (see (26b)). Then, we may assume that they display the properties of 'weak' possessives, as described in Cardinaletti (1998).

Being so, in the standard EP dialect, the syntax of possessives may be described as follows: (i) the definite determiner and the possessive obey a strict adjacency condition; (ii) the possessive does not allow any kind of modification or coordination; (iii) it allows phonetic reduction; (iv) it displays [+definite], [+specific] features; (v) it is licensed in an adjacency position, namely to the right of D°, under local c-command from D°. It shares the semantic properties of the definite determiner he combines with. We may conclude that, in this dialect, pre-nominal possessives have been reanalysed as heads (X°). They start showing X° properties ([-coordination], [-modification], [+ phonetic reduction]).

As far as linguistic change is concerned, the prediction is that pre-nominal possessives, in standard EP, are acquiring the properties of pre-nominal possessives in standard Spanish and standard French.

So, while conservative EP displays three licensing positions for possessives ([Spec, NP], [Spec NumP] and [Spec, AgrsNP]), standard EP seems to display only two licensing positions ([Spec, NP], for strong possessives, and [Spec, AgrsNP], for weak X° possessives). If so, the prediction would be that standard EP does not display a weak phrasal possessive. It does not seem to be the case. If we take a look at the pre-nominal position, when combined with demonstratives, this prediction is not borne out, since all speakers agree on (27):

- (27) a. Este teu livro é muito interessante.  
this your book is very interesting  
b. Aquela tão pouco tua atitude de ontem chocou-me.  
that so little your attitude from yesterday chocked me

- c. Essa tão tua triste mania de criticar os outros vai trazer problemas!  
that so your sad habit of criticizing the others will bring problems
- d. ? Então, que é feito daquela tão bonita tua amiga de Paris?  
so what about that so pretty your friend from Paris?
- e. ? Tens notícias daquele tão simpático teu amigo de Paris?  
have (you) got any news from that so nice your friend from Paris?

As can be seen in (27), when combined with demonstratives, pre-nominal possessives display the behaviour of weak XP projections, as weak possessives of the conservative dialect did. Furthermore, when combined with demonstratives, possessives are allowed to occur in post-nominal positions (see (13b)). So, NPs headed by demonstratives admit the weak phrasal possessive in both dialects. This fact may be related to diachronic changes in the syntactic nature of both possessives and definite articles; we may guess that the definite article weakened.

### *1.1.3.3. Summary and further questions*

In spite of the opaque nature of morphology, the data collected in this section show that EP displays a tripartite possessive system. It was further assumed that there are three possible licensing sites for possessives: [Spec, NP], [Spec, NumbP], [Spec, AgrNP]. Although EP behaves like Italian (cf. Cardinaletti, 1998) in allowing pre-nominal possessives and determiners to co-occur, the data show that, in this language, while the post-nominal possessives behave uniformly as strong pronouns, the pre-nominal possessives are subject to dialectal variation.

Before trying to account for the interpretive properties of the three forms, we will first go back to OF word order in root clauses, aiming to relate the changes in OF and OP possessive paradigms to the changes occurring at the sentence level.

## **2. OF word order in root contexts and ‘information package’**

As is commonly accepted, OF already had the unmarked word order exhibited by Modern French (SVO), mainly corresponding to a categorical judgment<sup>7</sup>. In what follows, I will try to show that, as was the case for EP and other Romance languages, pragmatic and discourse constraints acted upon word order (Pesetsky, 1992; Valduví, 1992; Kiss, 1995, 1998; Zubizarreta,

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<sup>7</sup> I will not consider the expletive constructions. These seem to extend when a null operator with loco / temporal value could no longer license the V(S) order (IXth-Xth centuries) – see Marchello-Nizia (1995).

1998, among others). This amounts to saying that OF subjects were licensed in one of three positions: [Spec, Agrs], [Spec, TP] and [Spec, VP] (Lemieux & Dupuis, 1995; Vance, 1997).

### 2.1. *SVO order*

That modern SVO word order was present from the first stages of OF is a well documented fact, as well as evidence for long movement of finite verb to [Agr<sup>o</sup>]. This is so because:

- (i) in OF, expletives occur in a pre-verbal position: being weak pronouns, they are interpreted as subject unmarked topics ((28), underlined);
- (ii) the negative particles *pas* and *mie* occur to the right of the finite verb – (29): if *pas* is in [Spec, NegP] and if the NegP position is between TP and AgrsP, in (29) the Verb moves to Agr and the subject is interpreted as an unmarked topic, in [Spec, Agrs] (Pollock 1989);
- (iii) the word order in (29) is read as a categorical judgement, as does the modern unmarked SVO order.

- (28) Merlin, que porra il de cest siege avenir? – Certes, fet il, il en advendra encore maintes merveilles.

(Foulet 1990, 185)

Merlin, what could it from this siege come? – For sure, says he, it (from it-CL) will.come a lot of wonders

- (29) Les deus dames ne venoient pas a pié. (V.(3), 39; Q 97, 1)  
the two ladies NEG were coming not on foot

### 2.2. *CV(S) order*

On a par with the previous order, OF displays CV(S), with a non subject constituent at the left edge of the clause and an inverted subject that may be null (see Roberts, 1993; Marchello-Nizia, 1995; Vance, 1997, among others, for an extended discussion).

The examples that will concern us here are of the (30-31) kind, where the left edge constituent is a ‘deictic’ adverb of the *si / ainsi / ici* class:

- (30) a. ainsi ne le comande *pas* nostre ordre. (V. (49), 68, Q, 120, 6)  
thus NEG it commands not our order  
b. Si a le roi ainsi attendu des le tens Josephe jusqu’a ceste hore  
thus has the king so waited since the time Joseph until this hour
- (31) a. *Ici* voi ge la començaïlle de granz hardements.  
(Marchello-Nizia, 1995: 80, Q, 278)  
here see I the beginning of great achievements  
b. Et maintenant recognois je nostre grant ygnorance, (...).  
(Bertin, 2000, *Bérinus*, T. 1, 1350, p. 14)  
and now admit I our great ignorance

In the spirit of two of the most recent analyses on this matter, Lemieux & Dupuis (1995) and Vance (1997), in these examples, the subject is in [Spec, VP] (cf. (30a)) and in [Spec, TP] (cf. (30b) & (31)). This inversion pattern has been analysed in one of two ways:

1. OF is an asymmetric V2 language of the Germanic type and has a generalized V-to-C movement (Adams, 1989; Roberts, 1993; Vance, 1997; Hirschbühler & Labelle, 2000, among others)

2. OF is a symmetric V2 language; the inversion occurs both in root and in embedded clauses; the rarity of inversion in embedded contexts is accounted for by taking discourse constraints into consideration (Lemieux & Dupuis, 1995; Marchello Nizia, 1995; Vance, 1997).

Having as background the work that has been done on EP word order<sup>8</sup>, I will adopt the second analysis; the arguments I rely upon are listed above. The idea in (i) is the main point in Lemieux & Dupuis (1995), and the idea that inverted nominal subjects occur in [Spec, TP] or in [Spec, VP] is argued for in Vance (1997), following Lemieux & Dupuis (1995); the other arguments have been, to my knowledge, less explored:

1. OF exhibits inversion both in root and in embedded contexts;
2. OF has short Verb movement to T;
3. Nominative pronouns are not clitics in C;
4. Inversion occurs in D-linked presentations (subject in [Spec, TP]) and in 'thetic judgement' constructions (subject in [Spec, VP]);
5. Agr encodes the information 'subject of predication' (subject in [Spec, AgrsP]); this position is not exclusively reserved for syntactic subjects.

2.2.1. *OF has subject inversion in root and in embedded contexts*

Observe the examples in (32) and (33):

- (32) Et n'a il as dés jué mie / de par mi ne a ma requeste.  
(Foulet, 1919/1990: 287)

and NEG has he dies played not / because of me nor to my request

- (33) a. Et li rois dit que **volontiers** / **li feroit il**, .viii. jorz antiers, / amor et joie et compaignie.

(LAF, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, Chretien de Troyes, v. 2307-9)  
and the king said that willingly / to.him will-make he, eight days all.along / friendship, joy and company

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<sup>8</sup> See references below.

- b. Et quand ce sot li seneschax / uns fel, uns traïtres mortax, / que grant envie me portoït / por ce que ma dame creoit / moi plus que lui de maint afeire / si vit bien / **c'or porroit il feire** / entre moi et li grant corroz.

and when this heard the seneschal / a perfidious, a deadly traitor / that great envy had towards me / for this that my lady believed / me more than him in a great lot of matters / then saw (3<sup>rd</sup> SING) well / that then could he provoke / between her and me a great anger

In (32), we have an inversion in a root context headed by *et*. Lemieux & Dupuis (1995) assume that the licensing conditions of subjects in V2 contexts do not involve verb movement to C. If these subjects can be licensed in the IP domain, OF is a symmetric V2 language. The explanation for the rarity of V2 phenomena in embedded contexts does not lie in the fact that it is a root phenomenon. This is so because adverbs triggering the inversion have discourse anaphoric properties. As they hardly occur in embedded contexts, the prediction is that these constructions should be rare in embedded contexts. Nevertheless, whenever the discourse conditions are met, inversion becomes possible in such contexts. This is the case in (33) above.

### 2.2.2. *OF has short verb movement to T*

#### 2.2.2.1. *Intervening subject oriented adverbs*

Observe the example in (34):

- (34) Li reis erranment li dist...  
(Lemieux & Dupuis, 1995: 106, QLDR, li tiers livre, p. 223)  
the king promptly to.him (CL) says...

(34) shows that OF SV order does not require a strict adjacency between the finite verb and the nominal subject. This implies one of three things: (i) the subject is a marked topic in the left periphery of the clause and there is a null subject argument<sup>9</sup>; (ii) both the subject and the verb are left-moved to the CP area (Germanic V2 pattern, as standard analyses assume; see Roberts, 1993, among others); (iii) the subject is an unmarked topic, in [Spec, AgrS], and V moves to T.

Costa (1998) convincingly shows that in EP (i) the verb has short movement to T, (ii) subject oriented adverbs are adjuncts to TP, and (iii) a subject oriented adverb may disrupt SV adjacency, without forcing the subject to be interpreted as a marked topic, in a left dislocated position.

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<sup>9</sup> See Barbosa (1995) for this view on EP SVO order.

The EP translation of (34) is perfect and *erranment* gets a subject oriented reading: ‘the king shows promptitude while answering’. This is the first cue to take OF as being of the EP kind. But OF word order gives further evidence to take this view.

#### 2.2.2.2. OF negation

In OF, the negation includes two single items; *ne*, as in (35a), and the stressed *non*, which occurs in isolated contexts (see (35b-c)):

- (35) a. Il *n'en* set mot, *n'i* a culpes le bers.  
 (Foulet, 1919/1990, *Rolland*, 1173)  
 he NEG of-it knows (not) a word, NEG has no guilt the baron
- b. “tu as... – Non ai.” // “tu es... Non sui”  
 you have... not have (I) // you are... No am (I)
- c. “Ha! Biaux dous fieus, seés vous cois [...]. / – Non ferai.”  
 (Renaud de Lage, 1975: 125-6)  
 ha! Fair sweet son, (do) sit quietly? -not will-do (I will not do so)

When negation is reinforced by *pas*, as well as by other negation adverbs (*onques*, *mie*), these may occur to the left of *ne*. We may take this as further evidence for short V movement to T. In (36), *pas* and the other reinforcers stand in [Spec, Neg] and the finite verb has short movement to T (Neg further attracts V).

- (36) a. Et Perceval *pas ne* s’an faint / par desor le boucle l’ataint / si  
 l’abati sor une roche.  
 and Perceval *pas-NEG* denies / above the shield beats him / thus  
 Knock him down on a rock
- b. Et li vaslet *pas ne* demeure  
 (LAF, *Le conte du Graal*, Chretien de Troyes)  
 and the valet *pas-NEG* delays

#### 2.2.2.3. Pas is a VP modifier (Vance, 1997)

In (37), if *pas* was a sentential negation, it would have to be stranded to the right of the finite verb. As it occurs to the left of the dislocated verb, it is a VP modifier and not a sentential negation.

- (37) a. Mais ici *pas trouvé* ne l’ai.  
 but there PAS find NEG have (I not)
- b. Mais *pas faire* ne le pourras  
 but PAS to do NEG it not will (you)

Summing up:

(i) *Pas* shows up in a post-verbal position, to the right of the finite verb (cf. (29)). This position may be accounted for in one of two ways: (i) there is long Verb movement to AgrS, in case *pas* is taken to be a part of sentential negation, in [Spec, NegP]; (ii) *pas* is ambiguous between sentential negation and phrasal negation (VP modifier).

(ii) *Pas* occurs to the left of *ne*, and both particles are to the left of the finite verb. In these cases, there is short V movement to T (in null subject contexts and with lexical DPs).

Things being so, OF would share with EP, a very conservative Romance language, the property of exhibiting short verb movement to T.

#### 2.2.2.4. *Pronominal subjects don't cliticize in C°*

As is well known, OF nominative pronouns have weak / strong pronoun properties, so we expect the strong ones to have the same distribution of subject DPs. Observe (38) and (39):

- (38) a. Se ge i mien conseil te di,  
(LAF, *Conte du Graal*, Chrétien de Troyes (8704-8960)  
if I an advice of mine to you tell
- b. Et apres ce le roi pria / que **il et tuit si chevalierr / venissent a lui hebergier.**  
(LAF, *Le chevalier au Lion*, Chretien de Troyes, v. (2302-4)  
and after that (to) the king asked (3<sup>rd</sup> SING P) / that he and all his knights / came to his house to shelter
- c. Et **ge meïmes** une bataille en fis.  
(LAF, *Le Couronnement de Louis*, v. 2498)  
and I myself a battle there had
- (39) a. Au roi diras, foi qu'il me doit, / qui ert mes sire et **je ses hom.**  
(LAF, *Conte du Graal*, Chrétien de Troyes (8704-8960)  
to.the king (you) will.say, faith that he to me owes / for he is my lord and I his vassal
- b. Quand **ele de fi le savra** / qu'ele est sa suer **et il ses frere...**  
(LAF, *Conte du Graal*, Chretien de Troyes)  
when she truly it will.know / that she is her sister and he his brother
- c. Respond G' « **et ge toi autresi**» (LAF, id. V.2516)  
answers G' «and I to.you the same»

In (38a), a scrambled object shows up between the pronominal subject and the finite verb; we will take this as evidence for the strong nature of this pronominal subject. This is further confirmed by the coordinate subject containing a pronoun and a DP (cf. (38b)). So, if pronominal subjects cliticize in





judgement; the subject is the unmarked topic. This seems to be strong evidence for the claim that OF shares the assertive structure of null subject Romance languages.

### 2.2.3. *The inversion triggers as loco-temporal arguments*

#### 2.2.3.1. *Anaphoric function, deictic or temporal anchoring*

Medieval texts display a highly oral character. Deictic or temporal adverbs establish ‘discourse connections’ (see Lemieux & Dupuis, 1995; Marchello-Nizia, 1995; Vance, 1997, among others). Adverbs such as *si, lors, après, puis, dont* serve to move the text / the discourse forward.

- (41) *Après* jura Lancelot tout autretel serrement come il avoit fet. *Et puis* jura messires Gauvains et Perceval [...]. *Et lors* jurerent tuit li compaignons de la Table Reonde.

(Vance 1997, 244, 95, Q 23, 24)

afterwards took Lancelot the same oath as he had made, and then swore sir Gauvain and Perceval and Boort and Perceval[...]. And then swore all the companions of the Round Table

In (41), as Haegeman & Guéron (1999: 523) observe,

“The preposed adverbial serves as the scene-setter and specifies the reference time, the starting point for computing the time of the event. We could say that the reference point in time is ‘given’; it is the starting point with respect to which the ‘new’ event time is calculated”.

In this example, the subject *Lancelot* intervenes between the finite verb, *jura*, and the object, *tout autretel serrement*. Notice that although in [Spec, TP] and being of a shared knowledge nature, the above-mentioned subject receives the focus interpretation, so it is part of the new information in this specific utterance. This is so, if we are to adopt the following focus algorithm (Cinque, 1993; Reinhart, 1995; Zubizarreta, 1998; Costa, 2000):

- (42) Focus algorithm (Costa, 2000: 203):
- a. The focus set of constituents of a sentence is the prosodically most prominent constituent plus everything it c-commands.
  - b. The prosodically unmarked most prominent constituent is the rightmost one, following the recursion pattern.

OF being a VO language (Marchello-Nizia, 1995), the informational focus algorithm will apply to the Subject and the Object under its c-command. The other two subjects – *messires Gauvains et Perceval* and *tuit li compaignons de la Table Reonde* –, being the rightmost constituents, receive the focus interpretation. In these constructions, there seems to be a paradox: subjects are, so to speak, some kind of ‘old-new’ information. Why should it be so?

2.2.3.2. *Deictic / temporal adverbs as ‘speaker’s point of view’ markers, subjects in [Spec, TP] > D-linked speaker oriented and old / new information*

The deictic / temporal adverbs occurring in (41) set a point of view in the discourse, the location from which the utterance must be seen. They bring light to the relation that the speaker establishes with the hearer, helping him to process the information in the right way: they convey the speaker’s beliefs and establish a second level predication (speaker and hearer communication contract). So, whenever the speaker or any ‘active participant’ is prominent, the post-verbal subject lexicalizes. In that sense, being new information in a particular utterance doesn’t seem to exclude either ‘shared knowledge’ or specific, definite reference. This is shown by the existence of post-verbal pronominal subjects. These are items with a [+specific] feature and they must occur in [Spec, TP]:

- (43) a. *Ici voi ge la començaille de granz hardements.*  
 (Marchello-Nizia 1995, 80, Q, 278)  
 here see I the beginning of great achievements
- b. Et dist: «Guillaume, maintenant / Voy je bien vostre entention;  
 (...)»  
 (Bertin 2000, 55, (ex. (17a) and (17b) Machaut, Guillaume de, *Le Jugement du roy de Navarre*, 1349, p. 237)  
 and says: «Guillaume, now see I well your intention (...)»
- c. *mes Dex li porra bien aidier, et je cuit que si fera il.*  
 (V.236, *Erec et Enide*, 3420)  
 but God to.him will.be.able to.help, and I believe that so will.do  
 he

In (43), the inverted subject pronouns (deictic or anaphoric) are in [Spec, TP]. They show up whenever there is a need to express an event participant as discursively salient<sup>10</sup>, or in order to make ‘the information source’ clear. Furthermore, in these particular utterances, the subject pronoun is new information in the sense that it gets a ‘stage reading’, this stage being new.

So, subjects in [Spec, TP] occur in D-linked speaker oriented presentations. Here, the subject is ‘shared knowledge’ but it is nevertheless a focused constituent, encoding new information, both at the prosodic and at the discourse level. On the other hand, the constituent occurring in [Spec, AgrSP] encodes pragmatic information: pragmatic roles, such as ‘subject of predication’, D-linked information and ‘speaker oriented’ information. By that time, it was a discourse / pragmatic oriented position.

<sup>10</sup> Notice that DPs are virtually ambiguous between the two interpretations ‘given / new’, contrary to nominative pronouns.

#### 2.2.4. Summary

OF displays an unmarked (S)VO order, exhibited in categorical judgments contexts. So, in these contexts, OF is not different from null subject Romance languages (Duarte, 1997; Zubizarreta, 1998; Costa, 1998). The subjects in [Spec, TP] refer to specific entities (mainly pronouns, proper names, honorific titles), introduced in the preceding discourse and / or belonging to the shared knowledge domain of the speaker and the hearer (Marchello-Nizia, 1995; Duarte, 1997, for EP). Nevertheless, in the particular context they occur, they must be interpreted as new information. The inversion triggers are of a deictic or a temporal nature and fulfill a double function: (i) to move the discourse forward and, (ii) to set a point of view (pragmatic function). As Buring (2000: 22) claims:

“[...] we may observe that prototypicalthetic sentences are situation specific: they can only be used with reference to a specific situation, either defined by the speech event or built up in a narrative report. [...]. For all predicates occurring in sentences with athetic interpretation we must assume that they have, in addition to a participant argument, a spatio-temporal argument, which is called “l(ocation)” in Kratzer (1988) and “stage” in Erteschik-Shir (1997). The situation-specific, or event-reporting interpretation ofthetic sentences suggests that the spatio-temporal argument is the topic of thethetic sentence. According to this view, athetic sentence is about the contextually specified space / time at which the reported event takes place. Hence everythetic sentence has a silent ‘stage topic’, its true external argument.”<sup>11</sup>

If we take the claim above, we may conclude that OF D-linked presentations have an overt ‘stage topic’ external argument. The adverb and the inverted subject contribute to this value. The adverb and the inverted subject in [Spec, TP] are interpreted as old and shared information, although the inverted subject seems to be acquiring a ‘new value’ in this particular utterance. In these cases, the inverted subject and the loco-temporal adverbs stand in a local relation, forcing the inverted subject to get out of the nuclear VP scope (Diesing, 1992).

#### 2.3. OF D-linked speaker oriented constructions as multiple subject constructions

Natural languages display constructions where more than one subject position is lexically filled, called *multiple-subject constructions* (Chomsky, 1995: 342); those that are better described are: (i) transitive expletive constructions and (ii) presentational ‘there’ constructions (cf. 44)).

<sup>11</sup> See Pinto (1997) for the same point on subject inversion in Italian. The author assumes that inversion occurs whenever the predicate licenses a ‘loco-temporal’ external argument.

- (44) There is a man in the room

In these constructions: (i) an NP (the associate) must appear in a certain formal relation to *there* in the construction; (ii) the expletive is licensed by the presence of the associate; (iii) the associate triggers verb agreement; (iv) there is an alternative form, with the associate actually in subject position after overt raising and corresponding to a different numeration; (v) the expletive is merged in [Spec, AgrS]; (vi) LF adjunction of the associate yields a DP constituent of the form [NP there-[NP a man]], or, instead, the formal  $\phi$  features of the associate are assumed to covertly raise to AgrS (Chomsky, 1995: 340-2).

Departing from the standard analysis above, Moro (1997) and Koopman (2001) claim that the expletive and the associate form a small clause and that the preverbal expletive position is explained by assuming expletive predicate raising to [Spec, AgrS]. In this framework, the expletive is a *locative predicate*. See (45), as in Koopman (2001):

- |      |                              |   |
|------|------------------------------|---|
| (45) | a. Merge DP and <i>there</i> | [a problem <sub>sg</sub> [there]]   |
|      | b. Agree (Spec, head)        | [a problem <sub>sg</sub> [there] <sub>sg</sub>                            |
|      | c. Merge <i>be</i>           | be [a problem <sub>sg</sub> [there] <sub>sg</sub> ]                       |
|      | d. Move predicate            | [there] <sub>sg</sub> be [a problem <sub>sg</sub> [there] <sub>sg</sub> ] |

Lemieux & Dupuis (1995) assume the structure in (46b) for (46a):

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| (46) | a. Si a puis le roi ainsi attendu des le tens Josephe jusqu'à ceste hore.  |
|      | b. [ AgrP <b>si</b> [Agrs <b>a</b> <sub>j</sub> [TP <b>puis</b> [TP <b>li rois</b> <sub>i</sub> [T <sup>+</sup> t <sub>j</sub> [VP <b>ainsi</b> [VP [e <sub>i</sub> ] [V <sup>+</sup> <b>attendu</b> ]]]]]]]   |
|      | c. [ AgrP <b>si</b> <sub>k</sub> [Agrs <b>a</b> <sub>j</sub> [TP <b>puis</b> [TP [ <b>li rois</b> <sub>i</sub> [e <sub>k</sub> ]]][T <sup>+</sup> t <sub>j</sub> [VP <b>ainsi</b> [VP [ <sub>sc</sub> e <sub>i</sub> [e <sub>k</sub> ]] [V <sup>+</sup> <b>attendu</b> ]]]]] |

Let us assume an analysis along the lines of Lemieux & Dupuis, with a slight modification, namely that the adverb is merged with the subject, as in Moro (1997) (see (43c)). The adverb is taken to be a loco-temporal predicate and is generated as a small clause head, having the subject as its Specifier. The subject and its predicate are generated in [Spec, VP]. The local relation guarantees that the small clause subject is read as a D-linked expression and has a **stage reading**, this stage being precisely the 'new kind of information' at a discourse level. The local relation ensures agreement between the predicate and its Specifier in terms of 'referential time' feature, topic feature and  $\phi$ -features (Koopman, 2001; see (45)). Finally, a 'predicate chain' is formed. This analysis derives in a natural way the intuition that the adverb has scope both over the utterance tense and over the 'subject'. So, being part of the stage unmarked topic in [Spec, AgrS], the nominal subject is interpreted as a topic (old), although its structural position allows a focus interpretation (new).

Let us further assume the version of the EPP expressed as (47), where *u* must be read as ‘uninterpretable’ (Pesetsky & Torrego, 2000):

- (47) *The nature of nominative case*  
Nominative case is *uT* on D

In D-linked sentences, the constituents occurring in initial position are ‘locational-temporal predicates’, checking the tense feature against the DP subject in its specifier, guaranteeing a stage interpretation for this nominal expression, and then raising to [Spec, AgrS] in order to be in an *agree* relation with the main predicate tense, scoping over it. On a descriptive level, as far as D-linked utterances in OF are concerned, what seems to be at stake is something like (48):

- (48) In D-linked sentences,  
The constituent bearing the most prominent T feature may check EPP in [Spec, AgrS].

OF would be roughly as follows (cf. Pesetsky & Torrego, 2000; Baylin, 2001, for Russian):

- (49) a. Nominative Case checks a T feature in Spec, AgrS > SVO (categorical judgements)  
b. Under certain conditions triggered by discourse, a phrase bearing the most prominent T feature may check EPP in [Spec, AgrS] > XPVS (subject being interpreted as a stage). Among these are D-linked / speaker oriented constructions.

### 3. Possessives: further questions

We may now turn back to the initial question. Possessives in OP and OF occur mainly to the left of the nominal head. They display a weak form, occurring to the left of the nominal head and co-occurring with definite or indefinite determiners, demonstratives and quantifiers. The paradigm includes a weak *X<sup>o</sup>* in absolute initial position. Observe (50) and (51).

- (50) a. Um meu amigo trouxe-me uma prenda de Paris.  
a my friend brought-me a gift from Paris  
b. \*Um meu amigo não diria isso. / \*Nenhum meu amigo disse isso.  
a my friend wouldn't say that / no my friend said that  
c. \*Procuo um meu amigo que queira ir comigo a Paris.  
(I) am.looking.for a my friend who would.go with.me to Paris
- (51) a. Um amigo meu trouxe-me uma prenda de Paris.  
b. Um amigo meu não diria isso. / Nenhum amigo meu diria isso.  
c. Procuo um amigo meu que queira ir comigo a Paris.



- e. Parmi les festes et la joye, ayons toujours ce refrain de la souvenance de nostre condition, et ne nous laissons pas si fort emporter au plaisir, que par fois il ne nous repasse en la mémoire, en combien de sortes *cette nostre allegresse* est en bute à la mort [...].

(Galliot, 1967, 316, Montaigne, *Essais*, I, chap. XX)

this our joy

- (54) a. *un bien vôtre serviteur*  
a very your servant  
b. *Cette mienne et tienne envie* de comprendre les faits peut nous mener en prison.  
this my and your will
- (55) a. \* Je cherche un mien ami qui puisse m'aider.  
b. Aucun ami à moi à l'horizon qui puisse me sauver!

All things being equal, we can assume that [Spec, TP] and [Spec, NumbP] encode the same kind of information. This structural position induces specific readings for the possessive combined with demonstratives and with the definite article.

So, as a tentative answer for the initial questions, we may say that EP elected the D-linked speaker oriented structure and has to recast the paradigm in order to recover the categorial value, triggering ( $X^0$ ) reanalysis in [Spec, AgrsNP]). This means that, in early stages of OP and OF, the definite article had the kind of status we assumed for loco-temporal adverbs, that is, a predicate nature. The loss of the B pattern (cf. (52)-(55)) in MF may be due to a more general prohibition on predicate raising, still to be accounted for.

French elected the categorial judgement. *Mon / cet ami à moi* encode nowadays the 'speaker oriented' (specific) interpretation.

#### 4. Summary and further questions

Starting from a previous stage (OP & OF) showing a parallel behaviour for possessives, EP and MF display now different patterns. The observation of word order in the OF sentential domain, when compared with the DP domain, shows that D-linked speaker oriented constructions in IP and DP domains were alike. In the DP domain, an NP with a possessive in [Spec, NumbP] contained a determiner acting as 'loco-temporal predicate'. This predicate / determiner raises to [Spec, AgrNP], in order to check EPP in [Spec, AgrsNP], inducing a specific stage interpretation.

In OF and conservative EP, the utterances showing possessives in [Spec, NumbP] were / are D-Linked, speaker oriented constructions. [Spec, TP] and [Spec, NumbP] encoded the same kind of information, but MF has lost this pattern both in sentential and in DP domains, while in EP the [Spec, TP] posi-



tion for subjects is still available. On the other hand, only in the most conservative EP dialect is the [Spec, NumbP] position available for possessives.

Most authors agree that EP is still a discourse oriented language, while MF has lost this property. In this case, we may ask if, in MF, the order [Subj]<sub>POSS</sub>-N (O) is a categorical judgement, paralleling the SVO sentential order.

Many more questions have remained unanswered; the two main ones may be described as follows:

1. What are the proper features of Number that trigger a specific interpretation for the possessive in its Specifier?
2. Does the definite article behave 'just' as the head of the higher functional projection of an argument Noun Phrase in all Romance languages, or are there differences in the functional domain of Noun Phrases in these languages?

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