

THE GRAMMATICALIZATION OF THE PREPOSITIONAL PARTITIVE IN ROMANCE

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. IE

The partitive : expressed by genitive case (Ancient Greek, Germanic, Slavonic, etc.)

1.2. LATIN

- Preclassical Latin : **genitive** attested mainly in non-literary, technical texts (Väänänen 1981)
 - (1) Farinam in mortarium indito; aquae paulatim addito (Cato, *Agr.* 74, 2nd c. BC)
flower-ACC:SG in the mortar put; water-GEN:SG little by little add
'Put the wheat in the mortar; add (some) water little by little' (quoted Väänänen 1981)
 - Classical Latin :
 - Partitive without Quantifier : **accusative**
 - Partitive with Quantifier : **de + ablative**
becomes very common in Late Latin (Christian texts), even without Q
 - (2) a. Ut comedatis carnem et bibatis sanguinem (*Ezechiel* 39.17)
that eat-SUBJ : 2PLUR meat-ACC :SG and drink-SUBJ : 2PLUR blood-ACC :SG
'so that you eat my flesh and drink my blood'
 - b. Et sic de pane illo edat (*Vulgate*, I *Corinthians* 11, 28)
and thus of bread this eat-SUBJ:3SG
'And so let him eat of that bread'
- Late Latin : Synchronic variation **bibere aquam / bibere de aqua illa** = common starting point of the evolution of the Romance partitive

ACC : Bare N → indefinite PART of a indefinite whole
DE + ABLATIVE : N + Modifier → indefinite PART of a definite whole

1.3. ROMANCE

- **DE + ILLE** grammaticalized into a partitive article in the Romance area
- **Unequal destiny** of the partitive article according to the language !

LATIN	Petrus de illo pane manducat	Petrus panem manducat
FRENCH	Pierre mange du pain	* Pierre mange pain
SPANISH	* Pedro come del pan	Pedro come pan
ITALIAN	Piero mangia del pane	Piero mangia pane

→				
I	II	III	IV	V
<i>De castris procedere</i> 'to set forth from a camp' (Plinius, <i>Ep.</i> 9, 7, 4)	<i>Discere id de me</i> 'to learn it from me' (Suetonius, <i>Ner.</i> 46)	<i>De pane illo edat</i> 'Let him eat of this bread' (<i>Vulgata</i> , I Corinth. 11, 28)	<i>Il boit du vin</i> 'He drinks wine.'	<i>Il ressent de la haine.</i> 'He feels hatred.'
<i>Decido de lecto</i> 'I fall from my bed' (Plautus, <i>Casina</i> 931)	<i>Filium habere de aliqua</i> 'to have a son from someone'	<i>Del vin bevaient</i> 'they drank some (of this) wine' (<i>Erec</i>)		

Fig. 1 – Grammaticalization chain from DE+ablative to Partitive Article (Carlier 2007)

Stage (I)

- **Semantics:** Preposition *DE* has spatial meaning (downward movement > movement away from a starting point or origin);
- **Syntax:** Adjunct (locative)
- **Paradigm:** *DE* alternates with other PREPOSITIONS: *ex / ab* + ablative

Stage (II)

- **Semantics:** *DE* gradually loses its spatial meaning > origin > extraction > partition > ...
- **Syntax:** Still a preposition but functions as a complementizer introducing an oblique complement
- **Paradigm:** Reduction (only other preposition introducing an oblique argument is *a* <Latin AD/AB, cf. Lamiroy et al. 2002).

Stage (III)

- **Semantics:** Partitive meaning, extraction from a contextually (deictically or anaphorically) defined partition set (cf. S. Luraghi SLE, 2.9.2010: inference 1)
- **Syntax:**
 - Hybrid status between PREP and DET (cf. Carlier 2007)
 - Occurs predominantly in direct object position of concrete verbs such as 'to eat, to drink' etc.

Stage (IV)

- **Semantics:**
 - Further bleaching : there is no longer a contextually defined partition set (cf. S. Luraghi SLE, 2.9.2010: inference 2)
 - Emergence of the notion of indefiniteness
- **Syntax:**
 - Prepositional status completely lost
 - Syntactic function:
 - Object position still dominant, progression on the scale of transitivity (marking of the autonomy of the object with respect to the verb *versus* object incorporation)
 - Extension to other verbs than 'to eat, to drink', 'to give', 'to take'
 - Extension to other syntactic positions than DO: Subject NP and PP
- **Paradigm:** Partitive enters into a new paradigm, that of the article

Stage (V)

- **Semantics:** Extension to abstract nouns
- **Syntax:** Partitive article more frequent in all positions ⇒ reducing the primitive domain of zero determination.
- **Paradigm:** Further paradigmaticization of the articles

Aim of the paper

Empirical data show that French went from I to V, Spanish from I to III, Italian from I to V but the process is not completed

Research questions :

- (i) How to account for the different outcome of the grammaticalization chain in the three Romance languages ?
- (ii) Are the parameters which were significant in the rise of the partitive in middle French (Carlier 2007) equally significant in modern Italian ?
- (iii) Is the evolution of partitive article consistent with other typological phenomena in the area of Romance languages on the one hand and in a broader (indo-)European context on the other hand ?

2. LATIN

2.1. STAGE III: LATE LATIN

- **Meaning:** extraction from a contextually defined partition set

- Determiner

- (3) *Si quis manducaverit ex hoc pane, vivet in aeternam* (John 6:51)
If eat-PRF.FUT.3S out of this-ABL.N.M bread-ABL.SG, live-FUT-3s in eternal-ACC.F.SG
'If anyone shall eat from this bread, he will live forever'

- Relative clause

- (4) *Nam et catelli edunt de micis quae cadunt de mensa dominorum suorum*. (Matthew 15,27)
for even dog-NOM-PL eat-PRST.3PL of crumb-ABL.PL that-NOM.F.PL of/from table-ABL.F.SG master-GEN.M.PL
their-REFL.GEN.M.PL
'But even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters'

- Prepositional complement

- (5) *Ampullam, in qua de oleo beati Martini continebatur* (Vita Aridii)
Phial-ACC.SG, in which-ABL.F.SG of oil-ABL.M.SG Martin-GEN.M.SG contain-PASS.IMPF.3SG
The phial, in which was contained of-the oil ('some oil') of St Martin.

- **Syntax:** Object position of verbs, compatible with the idea of fragmentation: 'eat', 'drink', 'give', 'take'
- **Paradigm :** "de + ablative" versus accusative

There is an occurrence in *Peregrinatio Aetheriae* (4th C.) that has been identified as a stage IV-use (Väänänen 1981: 112).

- (6) *dederunt nobis presbyteri loci ipsius eulogias id est de pomis*
give.PERF.3PL us.DAT priest.NOM.PL place.GEN. that.GEN praise.ACC.PL that is of fruit.ABL.PL
(*Peregrinatio Aeth III,6*)

2. FRENCH

2.1. The Grammaticalization Chain

2.1.1. Stage III : Old French

- Semantics : Partitive meaning, extraction from a contextually defined partition set
(6) *Le gastel et le vin leur baillent ... Del vin volentiers bevaient*
The pastry and the wine they bring him of-the-M.SG wine-SG gladly drink INDIC;IMPF-3PL
'They bring them the pastry and the wine. They drink gladly (some) of the wine.'
(Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec*, 3178 [1170])
- Syntax : *del N* appears in object position after verbs with concrete meaning, 'to take', 'to eat'
(7) *Blancandrins fut des plus saives paiens*
Blancandrin-NOM.SG be-INDIC.PST.3SG of-the.REG.PL more wise REG.PL heathens REG.PL
'Blancandrin was amongst the wisest heathens'. (*Chanson de Roland* [1100], 24)
- Paradigm : in alternation with the zero marker : *boivre vin / boivre del vin*

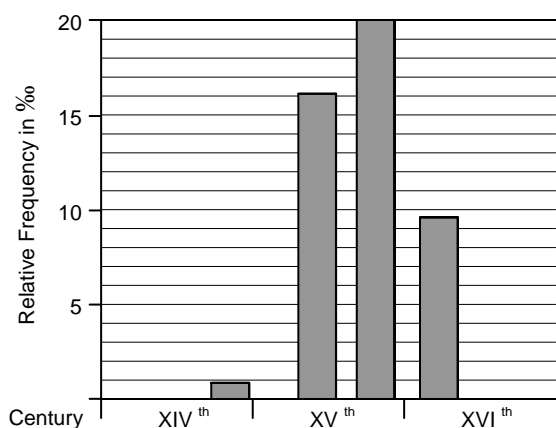
From the 13th century on, in texts that reproduce the oral register: first occurrences of stage IV

- (8) *Ha !biaus dous fiex, seés vous cois, ou vous arés des eviaus.*
Ha ! handsome sweet son, seat-IMP.2PL you-PL quiet, or you-PL have-INDIC.FUT.2PL of-the-
REG.SG.M hits-REG.PL
'Ha ! Dear sweet son, keep quiet, or you will take hits'
(Adam de la Halle, *Jeu de la Feuillée*, 396-397 [1276], quoted Foulet (1916))

2.1.2. Stage IV : Middle French

- Dramatic frequency increase in the 15th century

FIGURE 2: Relative frequency in ‰ of the partitive in four translations of *De Falconibus* (Albertus Magnus)



Translation 1: End of the 14th century: 0,91 ‰

Translation 2: Middle of the 15th century:
16,04 ‰

Translation 3: Second half of the 15th century:
19,84 ‰

Translation 4: Beginning of the 16th century:
9,49 ‰

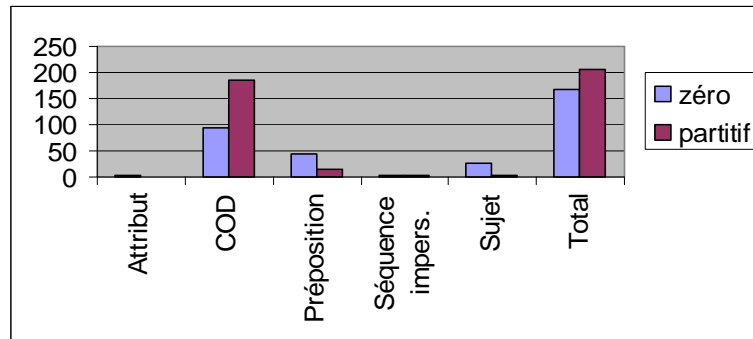
2.1.2. Stage IV :

- Semantics : There is no longer a contextually defined partition set. Partitive > Indefinite

- Syntax :

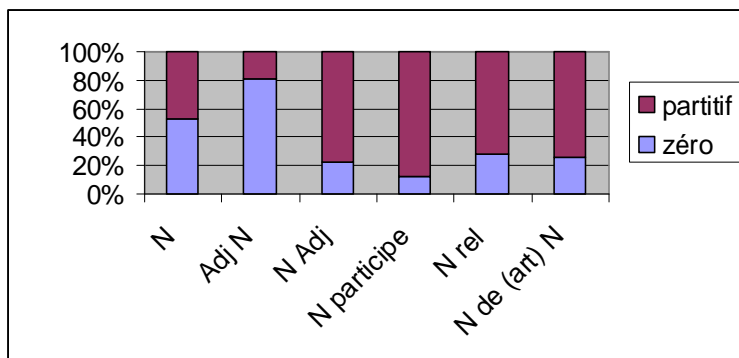
- Function with respect to the verb: Object position still dominant, but extension to other functions (subject; PP)

FIGURE 3: Frequency of the partitive and zero determination according to the syntactic function in the 15th C. translations of *De Falconibus* (Albertus Magnus)



- Internal NP structure

FIGURE 4: Relative frequency in % of the partitive and zero determination according to the internal structure of the NP in the 15th century translations of *De Falconibus* (Albertus Magnus)



- (9) a. *pren **vif argent*** (translation 2)
take quick silver
b. *prenez **de l'argent vif*** (translation 3)
take of the silver quick

Partitive / Ø	N	
Partitive	N	Modifier
Ø - Modifier	N	

2.1.3. Stage V : Classical and Modern French

- (10) *Il éprouve **de la haine**.*
He feel-PRST-3SG of the hatred.
'He feels hatred'

- (11) *avec amour* versus *avec **de l'amour***
'with love' 'with of the love'
632 occurrences 13 occurrences in the *Frantext* corpus (1700-2010)
98 % 2 %

2.2 Partitive and typology of Romance

2.2.1. From OV to VO

- Verbal domain

From Latin to Romance: shift in word order (S)OV > (S)VO

French is the most consistent SVO language among the Romance languages.

During the period of Middle French, the last residues linked to the OV paradigm are evacuated at an accelerated rate (Buridant 1987, Combettes 1988 and Marchello-Nizia 1995).

- Correlated change in the nominal domain: Modifier N > N Modifier

Situation in Middle French:

- PP, relative clauses, participles at the right of the head noun
- Adjectives at the left or the right,

(12) a.... *samblans au noir faucon* **Adj N**
black falcon

b. ... *laquele li emplist et engrosce plus les jambes que du faucon noir* **Adj N**
falcon black

From the 15th century on: Adj N > N Adj.

Only adjectives which have a role of degree marker, bearing on the quantity (*un homme simple* 'a simple minded man' versus *un simple homme* 'one man') or on the categorial content of the noun (*un piètre amant* 'a poor/ mediocre lover') stay in prenominal position (undergo semantic weakening, role of nominal determination).

- Hypothesis (Lehmann 1974, Geisler 1982)

Lex – N – Gramm
Gramm – N – Lex

pren vif argent

take quick silver

prenez de l'argent vif

take of the silver quick

Case
Number

Position of the grammatical morpheme of the head:

- Loss of postnominal plural marker
- > Systematic expression of number under the form of an prenominal article.
 - Extension of definite and indefinite singular article
 - Creation of an indefinite non singular article: the partitive article
 - Article: free morpheme > clitic

2.2.2. Information structure, linear order and determination

Leiss (2007:74): languages with a relative flexible word order have the possibility to express (in)definiteness by word order. Cf. Czech (Kramsky 1972: 42)

(13) *Kniha je na stole* SV / OV → NP: thematic and definite
Book is on the table
'The book is on the table'

(14) *Na stole je kniha* VS / OV → NP: rhematic and indefinite
On table is book
'There is a book on the table'

In Latin, flexible word order available for the expression of information structure and (in)definiteness.

From Latin to French, word order becomes more rigid. French represents the most advanced stage in this evolution: word order is strictly constrained by syntax and less available for the marking of discourse function.

Since word order cannot serve anymore to express the thematic or rhematic status of the NP and the associated opposition between definiteness and indefiniteness, a systematic marking of (in)definiteness came into existence under the form of a complete article system, with only a very restricted use of zero determination.

4. SPANISH

4.1. The Grammaticalization Chain

4.1.1. Stage III : Old Spanish

- **Semantics** : Partitive meaning, extraction from a contextually defined partition set
 - (15) a. Cogió del agua en elle e a sus primas dio (*Cid* 2801)
 take-PAST :3SG of the water in it and to his cousins give-PAST:3S
 'He took some water [into his hat] and gave it to his cousins'.
 → *del agua* previously mentioned as *la linpia fuont* 'the clear source'
 - b. Los cadiellos comen de las migaias que cayen de la mesa de sos sennores
 'The puppits eat (from the) bread crumbs that fall from the table of their lords'
 El Evangelio segun San Mateo, ed. Th. Montgomery, Boletin de la RAE, anejo VII,
 Madrid 1962, quoted from Zamorro Calvo 1992)
 → *de las migaias* : specified by following relative clause
- **Syntax** : *del N* appears in object position after verbs with concrete meaning, 'to take', 'to eat'
- **Paradigm** : in alternation with the zero marker
 - (16) Old Sp. Dexado ha heredades e casas e palacios (*Cid* 115)
 left has-PRES :3SG inheritances and houses and palaces
 'He has left objects to inherit and houses and palaces'

4.1.2. Stage IV : never reached by Spanish !

- No examples after 15th Century, exc. *dar de la fruta* (*Santa Teresa de Jesus*, 17th c.)
- WHY ?? Multiple Sources and Multiple Causes (cf. B. Joseph, WS SLE 43, Vilnius)

4.2. The partitive and the typology of Romance

4.2.1. From OV to VO

Lex - N - Gramm
 Gramm - N - Lex

Case
 Number

- Strong verbal + nominal morphology based on word ending, e.g. -s marks plural in an unambiguous way (Stark 2007) ⇒ less need to mark number with free preposed morphemes
- Gradual loss of the pronominal adverb *ende* : the two phenomena are undoubtedly linked (Posner 1996 :335), cf. Fr. *en* It. *ne*

4.2.2. Information structure, linear order and determination :

Free word order in Spanish (cf. Lahousse and Lamiroy in press ; Zubizarreta 1999 : SOV, SVO, VSO, VOS, OSV, OVS) ⇒ less need to mark (in)definiteness as words can be moved around in the sentence to indicate their thematic (definite) vs rhematic (indefinite) character cf. Latin

5. ITALIAN

5.1. The Grammaticalization Chain

5.1.1. Stage III : Old Italian

- Semantics : Partitive meaning, extraction from a contextually defined partition set

(17) Se tu ai cornò, del vino ti do volentieri (*Novellino*, quoted Tekavčič (1980 : 115)
if you have wheat, of the wine to you give-PRES :1SG with pleasure
'If you have wheat, I will be happy to give you some wine'

- Syntax : *del N* appears in object position after verbs with concrete meaning, 'to give' etc
- Paradigm : in alternation with the zero marker

5.1.2. Stage IV :

- Semantics : Extension to contexts in which *del N* is no longer a contextually defined partition set (a-b examples from Dante quoted by Tekavčič 1980 : 115)

(18) a. Chi del fango ingozza (*Inferno* 7, 129)
who of-the mud swallows in great quantities
'Who swallows mud in great quantities'
b. Rompendo della scorza, non che dei fiori e delle foglie nove (*Purgatorio* 32, 113)
breaking (of-the) bark, not only (of-the) flowers and (of-the) new leaves
'Breaking some bark, not only flowers and new leaves'

- Syntax : Extension to subject position (21) and to the PP (22) :

SUBJECT

(19) a. Secondo la nostra tradizione esistono delle condizioni nelle quali alla donna è consentito abortire. (*Corriere della Sera* 1.6. 2010)
'According to our tradition there are conditions in which a woman is allowed to have an abortion'
b. Delle donne sconosciute hanno aperto la porta (native speaker judgment)
'Unknown women have opened the door'

PP (*a, con da, in, per, su, sotto, verso*)

(20) a. Ecco una ricetta per dei buonissimi biscottini di pasta frolla da accompagnare con del tè o caffè. <http://www.ricettaidea.it/cucina-base> (29.7.2010)
'Here comes a recipe for very good biscuits of shortcrust pastry to have with tea or coffee'
b. Può essere infatti coperto da del cioccolato oppure proposto in varie dimensioni e forme in base alle proprie esigenze. <http://www.ricettaidea.it/cucina-base> (26.7.2010)
'It can in fact be covered with chocolate or presented in various dimensions and forms according to everyone's own need'.
c. L'idea che qualcosa che dà fiducia possa comunque portare a dei pericoli per il sistema bancario è sempre stata considerata troppo assurda da credere. (*24 Ore // Sole* 3.8.2010).

'The idea that something that gives confidence can however become dangerous [lead to dangers] for the system has always been considered as too absurd to believe'.

!! in contrast with Renzi et al. (2001 : 318 ff) : * *da del* / * *in del*

- Paradigm : Partitive enters into the paradigm of the articles (Renzi 1982 : « proprio *dei* è l'articolo indeterminativo plurale »)

5.1.3. Stage V

- Semantics

- Extension to abstract referents

(21) a. Bisogna avere della pazienza (from Tekavčić 1980 : 116)

'One needs to have patience'

b. Vogliamo soltanto fare del bene e dare una mano, mai saremmo andate contro la chiesa, davvero non capisco le polemiche». (*Corriere della Sera* 1.6.2010)

'We only want to do good and give a hand, we would never have criticized the Church, really I don't understand the controversy.'

- Semantic constraints on the partitive : residual (original) partitive meaning (Korzen 1996)

(22) a. Abbiamo bevuto del vino caldo

'We drank some hot wine'

b. Abbiamo bevuto vino caldo

'We drank « vino bruciato »'

(23) a. Correggo dei compiti

'I am grading a few assignments' or 'I am grading assignments [not exams]'

b. Correggo compiti

'I am grading assignments'

(24) a. Piero beve dell'acqua

'Peter drinks some water'

b. Piero beve acqua

'Peter drinks (usually) water'

- Syntax : Constraints on the use of the partitive

Sample : 24 Ore Il Sole and www. Ricettaidea, it.

From 18.7 to 18.8.2010 - <http://glossa.fltr.ucl.ac.be>

FIGURE 5: Frequency of the partitive according to the function with respect to the verb (Object position still dominant, but extension to other functions (postverbal subject, PP)

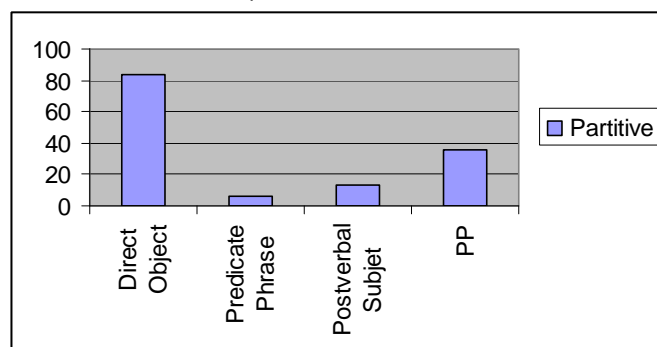
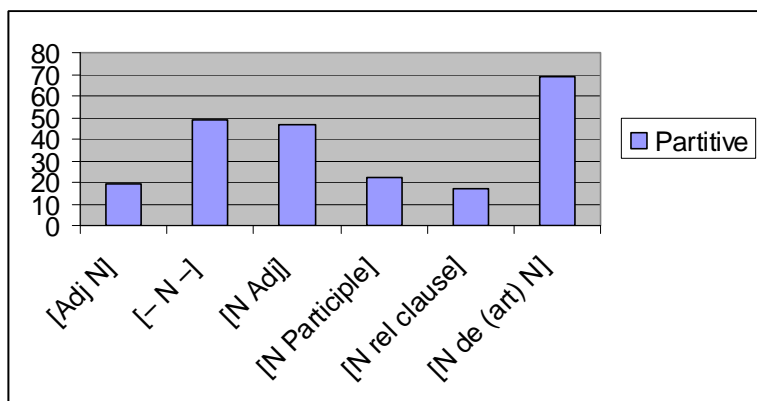


FIGURE 6: Frequency of the partitive according to the internal structure of the NP



➤ NP + relative

- (25) a. Ecco del vino che hanno portato dall'Alsazia (Renzi et al. 2001 :378 ff)
 'Here you have some wine which they brought from Alsace'.
 b. Passa del tempo che sembra lunghissimo, in attesa dei soccorsi (*Corriere della Sera*, 26.5.2010)
 'Time goes by which seems very long, waiting for some help'.

➤ NP + postposed Adj / Participle

- (26) a. Abbiamo bevuto vino / abbiamo bevuto del vino maturato in cantina
 'We drank wine / we drank wine riped in the wine cellar.'
 b. Piero e Gianni sono diventati medici / sono diventati dei medici molto stimati
 'Peter and John became doctors / became very much appreciated doctors

- **Paradigm** : Still large alternation with zero marking (often without meaning difference, by the same speaker : « overlap stage » Heine 1993)

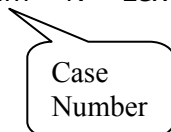
- (27) esistono per vostra conoscenza queste proprio non lo so eh ma esistono dizionari etimologici ('but there are etymological dictionaries') che oltre a dire l'origine della parola indicano con buona approssimazione cosa la data di prima apparizione nell'italiano ... questo per dire che praticamente esistono dei livelli di approssimazione ('there are levels of approximation ') cioè in cui si studiano meglio o peggio i fenomeni ehmm (Bonvino 2001)

5.2. The partitive and the typology of Romance

5.2.1 From OV to VO

- Important ideolectal and regional variation : North + Centre ↔ the South (Tekavčić 1980 : 116).
- Similar variation in other domains of « neo-Italian » (Sabatini 1985) that are consistent with OV → VO

Lex - N - Gramm
 Gramm - N - Lex



- Gradual loss of « Passato remoto » + gradual increase of Present Perfect
- Gradual loss of « PRO-DROP » ? Gradual increase of subject clitics without discursive reason
- Number and gender end marking of N is ambiguous in Italian (Stark 2007) ⇒ preposed free morphemes

SINGULAR	PLURAL
Cas A	Cas E
Can E	Can I
Libro	Libr I
Braccio	Bracci A

MASCULINE	FEMININE
Libr O	Cas A
	Man O

5.2.2. Information structure, linear order and determination :

Word Order less free than in Latin and in Spanish (cf. Lahousse and Lamiroy in press, Renzi et al. 2001, Belletti and Shlonsky 1995, Sornicolá 1994)

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

6.1. The grammatical category of the articles is typologically rather uncommon. Moreover, its spread in Western-European languages is a recent phenomenon, probably due to contact (Heine & Kuteva 2006). Schroeder (2006) has shown that there is a continuum from West to East:

Western-European languages e.g. English, French, Spanish, Italian	Central-European languages e.g. German	Eastern-European languages e.g. Russian, Finnish
Definite article ≠ demonstrative	Definite article = demonstrative	No article-use of demonstrative Incipient article-use use of demonstrative

6.2. Even in the Romance group, there is a continuum:

French	(North-)Italian	Spanish, Portuguese

- Coherence between overall typological evolution and emergence of the partitive:
Word order OV > VO and position of the grammatical morphemes with respect to the head

Verbal domain

personal inflection > clitic pronoun

aoristic past tense: past simple *il vint* > perfect 'have/be' + past participle *il est venu*

Nominal domain

case inflection > prepositions

plural inflection of the noun > article

- Evolution towards a rigid word order: the position is a marker of syntactical function and does not have a discourse meaning

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