

# ROMANIAN *al* AND THE SYNTAX OF CASE HEADS

Ion Giurgea \*

**Abstract:** After briefly presenting the distribution of the Romanian genitival agreeing particle *al* and the most important results of the previous research, I compare three recent analyses of *al* that are based on the idea that *al* is essentially a genitive marker and make use of a K (Case) projection: (I) *al* is a complex of functional heads (K-P+Agr) in the extended projection of the possessee; (II) *al* is a K head that forms a constituent with the genitive DP; (III) *al* is an Agr morpheme projected at PF by a genitival K head that forms a constituent with the genitive. I first compare analysis (I) with analyses (II)-(III) and conclude that analysis (I), although it offers a straightforward explanation for agreement, is contradicted by some distributional facts which indicate that *al* and the genitive form a constituent. Moreover, it needs an important modification in order to account for the fact that *al*-genitives can appear outside DPs, in predicative position. Analyses (II) and (III), in which *al* forms a constituent with the genitive, do not have these empirical problems, but require some modifications of the current minimalist assumptions about structural case in order to deal with the alternation between *al* and prepositional genitives. I then compare analyses (II) and (III) and I conclude that (II) is preferable because it can account for the loss of agreement of *al* in some varieties of Romanian.

**Keywords:** genitive, possessors, case (case markers, structural case), agreement (possessor agreement)

## 1. The distribution of *al*

In Romanian, genitives marked by the oblique (i.e. genitive-dative) morphological case and agreeing possessors<sup>1</sup> are introduced by the so-called “possessive (or genitival) article *al*”. This element agrees with the head noun (the ‘possessee’) in gender and number<sup>2</sup>, having the forms M.SG *al*, F.SG *a*, M.PL *ai*, F.PL *ale*:

- (1) a. o parte **a** oraşului  
a part-F AL.F.SG city-the.OBL  
b. aceste rude **ale** noastre  
these relatives-F AL-F.PL our.F.PL

*Al* does not appear if (and only if) the genitive/possessive immediately follows the suffixal definite article of the matrix DP:

- (2) a. prietena (\*a) mamei  
friend-F.the al.FS.G mother-the.OBL  
b. prietena bună \*(a) mamei  
friend-F.the good al.F.SG mother-the.OBL

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\* The “Iorgu Iordan – Alexandru Rosetti” Institute of Linguistics of the Romanian Academy, giurgeaion@yahoo.com.

<sup>1</sup> I use this term for the category traditionally labeled “possessive adjective”. The fact that they compete for the realization of structural adnominal case and that they even occupy the same position as genitive-marked DPs in some languages, including Romanian, indicate that “possessive adjectives” are not adjectives, but rather *pronouns*, i.e. DPs (see Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2011).

<sup>2</sup> Case agreement is sometimes possible in the DP-initial position, see section 4.4.

*Al*-constituents are normally postnominal; they can appear DP-initially, in which case they mark the DP as definite. With an overt possessee, this position is normal only with wh-genitives (see (3)), otherwise it is obsolete, archaic and poetic (see (3)); with pronominal possessors, it is still found in regional varieties:

- (3) a. [ale cărei] rude  
al-F.PL whose.F.SG relatives-F  
'whose relatives / the relatives of which'
- b. ![ai noștri] frați (high style/ironic/regional)  
al-MPL our.M.PL brothers-M  
'our brothers'
- c. ![a lumii] boltă (archaic, poetic: Eminescu, *Scrisoarea I*)  
al-F.SG worldthe.OBL vault-F  
'the world's vault'

*Al*-phrases can also appear without an expressed possessee, in which case they are usually interpreted as relying on ellipsis of the possessee, as in (4a); as in other DPs without an overt N, the possessee can also be interpreted non-anaphorically, as [+human], in the masculine plural, as in (4b).

- (4) a. Casa Mariei e mai mare decât a Ioanei (N ellipsis)  
house-F.the Maria-the.OBL is more big than al-F.SG Ioana-the.OBL  
'Maria's house is bigger than Ioana's'
- b. I-a adus pe toți ai lui (non-anaphoric empty N)  
CL.ACC has brought PE all al-M.PL his  
'He brought all his people/folks'

These DPs are interpreted as definite. Thus, (3) and (4) can be subsumed under the generalization that a DP-initial *al* in surface order (i.e. not considering any possible covert material) marks the DP as definite. This seems to suggest that *al*-phrases in (4) occupy the same position as in (3), but we should notice that the elliptical use is fully acceptable with any kind of possessors, as opposed to the pronominal use in (3) – see (3b-c). We will come back to this issue in 4.4 below.

## 2. Results of previous research

### 2.1 *Al* dropping as a PF-phenomenon

Several studies have shown that the absence of *al* in adjacency with the suffixal definite article – see (2) above – is to be analyzed as a PF-phenomenon, as it involves **linear adjacency** rather than a different structural position of the *al*-less genitive (Ortmann

and Popescu 2000a, Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2005, Cornilescu and Nicolae 2011, Beavers and Teodorescu 2012, Giurgea 2012, 2013a, Giurgea and Dobrovie-Sorin 2013)<sup>3</sup>.

There are several possible formulations of the linear adjacency conditioning of *al* dropping. Cornilescu (2003) proposes that the head represented by *al* (a K-P + Agr head) adjoins to  $D_{+def}$  when the two are adjacent in linear order, by a **head-adjunction** operation of the same type as the one found in P + D complexes like fr. *du* (= *de le* ‘of the.MSG’), it. *col* (= *con il* ‘with the.M.SG’).

In the Distributed Morphology framework, *al* dropping can be analyzed as the contextual insertion of a null allomorph of *al*. The rule can be formulated as in (5) (see Giurgea 2013a; the condition (ii) is necessary because *al* dropping only obtains if the preceding article is the article of the matrix DP, with which *al* agrees, and not the definite article of another DP, see Giurgea 2012, Teodorescu and Beavers 2012)<sup>4</sup>:

- (5) *al* has a null allomorph iff  
 (i) it is (linearly) adjacent with *-L*  
 (ii) *al* and *-L* share  $\phi$ -features as a result of agreement

## 2.2 *Al* as a genitive marker

The generative analyses of *al* have either privileged its agreement features and its use in DPs with no overt possessee N, as in (4) above – hence the treatment of *al* as a (matrix) D + pro-N that takes a genitive specifier (Dobrovie-Sorin 1987, 2000, 2002, d’Hulst et al. 1997) – or the fact that it only introduces genitives and possessives, alternating with prepositional genitive markers – hence the idea that it is essentially a genitive marker (Cornilescu 1993, 1994, 2003). The first type of analysis (as D + pro-N) analyzes postnominal *al*, see (1), (2b), as a relativizer (Dobrovie-Sorin 2000, 2002), but this hypothesis is contradicted by the fact that postnominal *al*- phrases can be

<sup>3</sup> This can be shown, inter alia, by the fact that in coordination of genitives following the definite article, *al* appears on the second adjunct (in (i), the singular agreement on the verb shows that the *al*-constituent is not an elliptical DP coordinated with *apartamentul mamei mele*):

- (i) Apartamentul [[mamei mele] și [?(al) Mariei ]] a fost vândut  
 appartement-the mother-the.OBL my and (al) Maria-the.OBL has been sold  
 ‘My mother and Maria’s apartment has been sold.’

Since conjuncts do not differ with respect to syntactic licensing properties, if *al*-phrases and *al*-less genitives had been different type of syntactic constituents, we would expect to find them in any order in (i), but this is not the case – *al* cannot appear in the conjunct following the suffixal article:

- (ii) \*apartamentul [[al Mariei] și [(al) mamei mele]]  
 apartment-the al Maria-the.OBL and (al) mother-the.OBL my

Moreover, *al* must appear if a DP-external parenthetical occurs between the suffixal article and the genitive:

- (iii) problema, însă, \*(a) României este numărul mare de pensionari  
 problem-the but al Romania-the.OBL is number-the big of pensioners  
 ‘But Romania’s problem is the great number of pensioners’

<sup>4</sup> This rule applies after linearization, at the Vocabulary Insertion level. It concerns the choice of *exponents* for the **abstract (syntactic)** terminal (‘morpheme’) *al*, whose syntactic analysis constitutes the object of this article. The formulation of this rule requires that information about **agreement** should still be visible at this stage. This can be obtained under a theory of agreement as **feature sharing/unification** (see Frampton and Gutman 2000, 2006, Pesetsky and Torrego 2007).

complements of the N (Cornilescu 1993, 1994, 2003), appearing in contexts typical for complements such as complex event nominalizations (in the sense of Grimshaw 1990; for complements of other types of N, see (1) and (2)b):

- (6) cumpărarea pripită a întreprinderii de către stat  
 buying-F.the reckless al-F.SG enterprise-the.OBL by state  
 ‘the reckless buying of the enterprise by the state’

Another property supporting the second type of analysis (i.e. as a genitive marker) is the fact that postnominal *al*-phrases alternate with prepositional genitives, depending on the inflectional properties of the element introducing the genitive DP (Cornilescu 1993, 1994, 1995): if this element is a D or another functional element without case inflection, the preposition *a* is used. If the genitive phrase is a bare noun (i.e. either there is no D or the D is null), the preposition *de* is used.

- (7) această atribuire {a contractelor /a trei contracte/de contracte}  
 this assignment-F al-F.SG contracts-the.OBL /a three contracts/of contracts  
 de către guvern  
 by government  
 ‘this assignment of the contracts/of three contracts/of contracts by the government’

In (7), we see this alternation with complements of complex event nominalizations. The same alternation appears in other contexts characteristic for the “genitive function”: complement (or semantic arguments) of other relational nouns (see (8)), possessor or other non-argumental modifier, introducing a contextually identified relation (the **free-relation genitive**, see (9)).

- (8) un fiu {al președintelui /a doi oameni celebri/de rege}  
 a son al.M.SG president-the.OBL /a two persons famous/of king  
 ‘a son of the president/a son of two famous people/a royal son’
- (9) haine {ale avocatului /a mai multe persoane/de preot}  
 clothes-F al.FPL lawyer-the.OBL /a more many persons / of priest  
 ‘clothes of the lawyer’s/of several people/priest clothes’

These constructions fall under a morpho-syntactic notion of “genitive”, as the default (or prototypical) realization of adnominal DPs/NPs. The genitive in Romanian is thus a syntactic notion, not a morphological one, as there is no distinct inflectional genitive case. There *is* a morphological element restricted to genitive environments, but this is not an inflectional element: it is the possessive stem of agreeing possessors (see section 5.2 below).

Although not purely morphological, this notion of “genitive” is not purely syntactic either: if we find the alternation *al/a/de* in a context that is not adnominal, we can assign an abstract “genitive” feature to that environment. In Romanian, there are two cases in point: the possessive predicate context illustrated in (10) – see section 4.5 for evidence that such genitives are not necessarily DP-internal, with ellipsis of the possessee) and the complement of certain prepositions which, on the pattern of nouns used as prepositional

idioms, take “expletive” definite articles (*-a* ‘the.F.SG’ in *asupra* ‘on’, *înaintea* ‘before, in front of’, *contra* ‘against’, *-ul* ‘the.M.SG’ in *îndărătul* ‘behind’)<sup>5</sup> – morphemes that do not function as true Ds, but nevertheless act as the definite article with respect to *al* dropping and agreement on *al* and on an agreeing possessor – see (11):

- (10) Hainele erau {**ale** avocatului /**a** mai multe persoane/**de** preot}.  
clothes-F.PL were al-F.PL lawyer-the.OBL /a more many persons /of priest  
‘The clothes belonged to the lawyer / to several persons / .. were priest clothes’
- (11) a. **contra** [mea și **a** celorlalți] /[a două persoane]  
against-a my-F.SG and al-F.SG the-others.OBL / a two persons  
‘against me and the others’
- b. **înaintea** [noastră și **a** lor]  
before-a our-F.SG and al-F.SG they.OBL  
‘before/in front of us and them’

As Cornilescu (2003) noticed, the fact that *al*-phrases and prepositional genitives share the same abstract [genitive] feature is proven by their impossibility of co-occurring with event nominals. As we can see in (12), in spite of the fact that the noun, being based on a transitive verb, has two arguments susceptible of bearing structural case, *al* and prepositional genitives cannot co-occur, showing that they both realize the *same* structural case:

- (12) a. \*cumpărare a lui Ion a două case  
buying-F al-FS.G (the.)OBL Ion a two houses
- b. \*reparare de monumente a primăriei  
reparation-F of monuments al-F.SG city-hall-the.OBL

The only exception is when the lower argument is a reflexive pronoun: in this case, some nouns allow it to appear as a *de* ‘of’-PP (Pană-Dindelegan 2008, Giurgea 2013a), indicating the existence of a lower genitive position restricted to reflexives (see (13)); this position is also correlated with the prepositional marker *de* (in other adnominal environments, reflexives show agreeing possessor forms, introduced by *al*); the higher argument (the subject genitive) is realized as a canonical genitive:

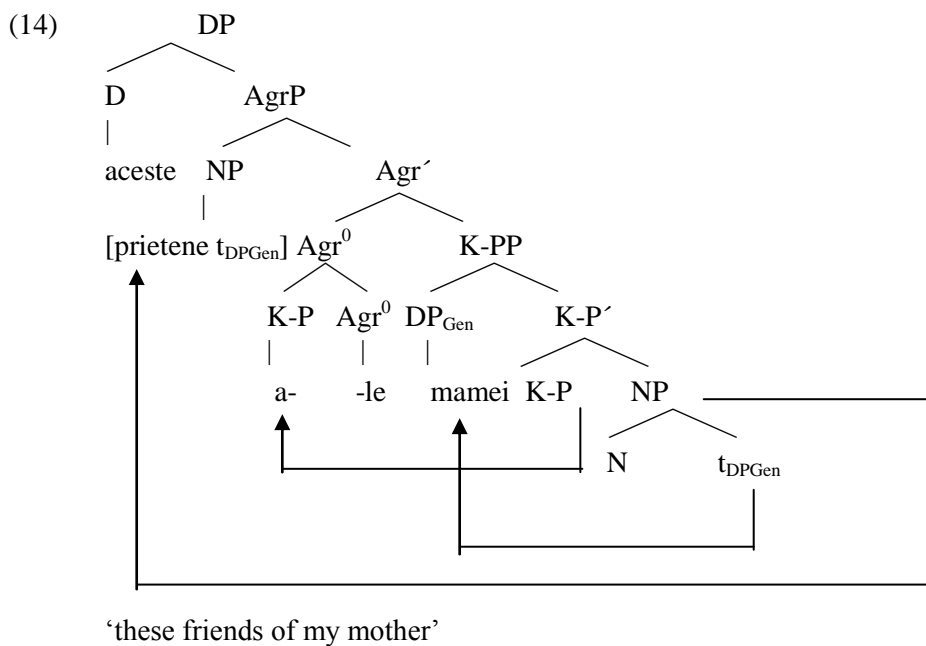
- (13) lauda de sine a puterii  
praise-the of itself al power-the.OBL

Summing up, I consider as an established result of the previous studies the fact that *al* is essentially a genitive marker. In the rest of the article, I will compare three recent syntactic implementations of the analysis of *al* as a genitive marker.

<sup>5</sup> These elements do not come from nouns: *asupra* < *asupră* (+*-a*) < Lat. *ad* ‘to,at’ + *supra* ‘above’, *înaintea* < *înainte* (+*-a*) < *în* ‘in’ + *ainte* < *a* + *\*inte* < *\*ănte* < Lat. *(ab)ante* ‘before’ (Avram 2000), *contra* is a modern Latino-Romance borrowing, *îndărătul* < *îndărăt(u)* (+*-ul*) < Lat. *in de retro* ‘in + of + back’. Note that, except for *contra*, these adverbs may have been reanalyzed as Preposition + idiomatic Noun, which might explain the attachment of the article (which, in the case of *-a*, may represent the reanalysis of the adverbial suffix *-a* as an article): *îndărăt* = *în* ‘in’ + *\*dărăt* (by ‘\*’ I indicate the fact that these elements are never used in other environments, as true nouns), *asupră* = *a* + *\*supră*, *înainte* = *în* + *\*ainte*.

### 3. Three analyses that use a Case projection (KP)

(I) **The ‘Kaynean’ analysis.** Adopting Kayne’s (1993) analysis of English *of*, Cornilescu (2003) takes prepositional genitival markers (*al* as well as *a* and *de*) to be complex functional heads in the extended projection of the possessee. Decomposing *al* into *a-* + agreement (*-l, -a, -i, -le*<sup>6</sup>), she takes *a-* to spell-out a lower K+P head, which attracts the genitive into its specifier and case-licensing it. This head subsequently raises to an Agr head (which is immediately projected by K-P as a ‘proxy’ head in the sense of Nash and Rouveret 2002), which is spelled-out as *-l/-a/-i/-le* (the inflected part of *al*). This derives the observed order *al*-Genitive. The remnant NP is attracted to SpecAgr and Agr agrees with this NP<sup>7</sup>:



(II) **The traditional K analysis.** Other studies (Giusti 2008, Giurgea 2008, 2013a)<sup>8</sup> maintain the traditional view that Case heads form a constituent with the phrase that they case-mark, being the highest functional layer in the nominal projection, above the DP – a layer currently called KP (Abney 1987; Lamontagne et Travis 1987; Loebel 1994; Bittner et Hale 1996)<sup>9</sup>. According to this analysis, K is a case head endowed with agreement

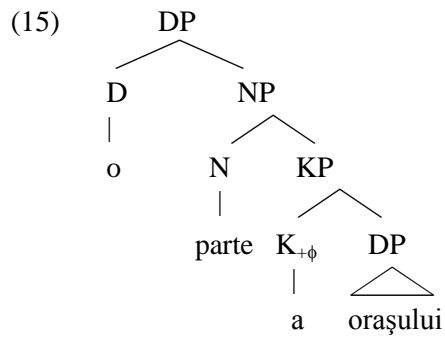
<sup>6</sup> The decomposition goes back to Grosu (1994), who treats the first part as a P and the last part as a D (a non-interpretible instance of the definite article). D’Hulst et al. (1997) and Dobrovie-Sorin (2000, 2002) also adopt the decomposition, but analyze the first part as (pro-)N and the second as D.

<sup>7</sup> The analysis is maintained in Cornilescu (2006), and Cornilescu and Nicolae (2011). The latter study uses different labels: T instead of K-P (based on Pesetsky and Torrego’s (2001, 2004) proposal that structural case is uninterpretable Tense) and  $\phi$  instead of Agr. In this paper, I keep the labels K-P and Agr for readability reasons.

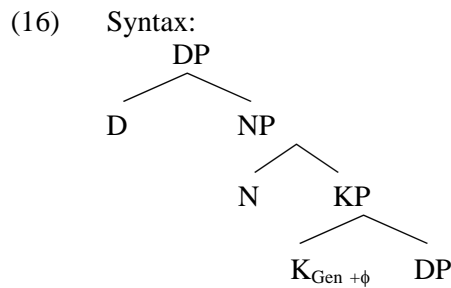
<sup>8</sup> Giusti (2008) also admits analysis (I) as a possibility.

<sup>9</sup> K instead of C is used as an abbreviation for ‘Case’ in order to avoid confusion with the complementizer.

features. Omitting further structure and displacement which may prove necessary in NPs containing modifiers (see the discussion in section 4.3 below), example (1)a can be represented, under this view, as in (15):

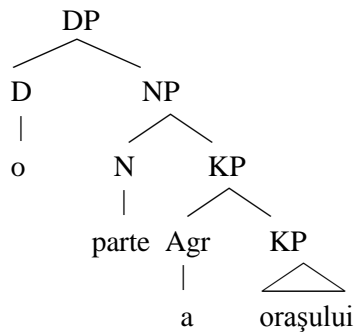


(III) **The Agr analysis.** Treating the oblique morphology on Ds and the possessive suffix as representing the spell-out of K, Giurgea (2011) proposes that *al* is a phrasal agreement marker, projected in PF by genitival K<sup>10</sup>:



KP = [<sub>KP</sub> K(+φ) [<sub>DP</sub> [<sub>N</sub>oraş][<sub>D</sub> -L]] or [<sub>KP</sub> [[<sub>N</sub>oraş][<sub>D</sub> -L]][<sub>K</sub> +Genitive(+φ)]] [<sub>DP</sub> t<sub>N+D</sub>]

PF:



This analysis adopts the assumption that Agr nodes are inserted at PF (Halle and Marantz 1993). This assumption can be made compatible with the idea that agreement takes place

<sup>10</sup> *Oraşului* ‘city-the.OBL’ can represent a complex N+D+K head, *-(u)lui* spelling out D+K.

in narrow syntax: as Pomino (2008) has proposed, the Agr nodes created at PF can receive the feature of another node by a process of **copying** (e.g. the  $\phi$ -features of Tense, valued in syntax, can be copied onto an Agr node). In this case, the head hosting the agreement feature in syntax is genitival K.

#### 4. The Kaynean analysis (I) compared to the analyses (II)-(III)

##### 4.1 Agreement

The Kaynean analysis offers a straightforward explanation of the agreement of *al*: being a complex of functional heads in the extended projection of the possessee, we expect it to agree with the possessee. Analyses (II)-(III) must assume that a Case head can agree “upwards”. However, upwards agreement should not be considered a problem, as it is also found with adjectives. In fact, under the analyses (II)-(III), it has been proposed that the agreement of *al* belongs to the phenomena of “concord”, just like adjectival agreement (Giusti 2008). Assuming that K’s  $\phi$ -features, just as the features of the A head, percolate to the KP-level, they can establish agreement in a very local configuration, Spec-Head (Giusti 2008) or even sisterhood. Genitival KPs and APs have nominal projections as sisters. Giusti (2008) assumes that genitives, as well as adjectives, occupy Specifier positions and the heads in the extended projection of N are copies of N’s features. By Concord, the features of these heads are copied to their Specs. However, we can dispense with Specs and functional heads – which may be undesirable for adjectives, which are seemingly adjuncts – if we assume feature percolation: the features of N or of the functional heads in its extended projection percolate to the level of projection which is a sister of the adjective/genitive, and Concord is established under sisterhood.

In sum, under analyses (II)-(III), we must distinguish between Chomsky-type agreement, modeled on the Tense-Subject relation, which is downwards oriented, searching in the complement of the head that bears the unvalued features, and upwards agreement, whose source (or controller) is outside the maximal projection of the target (or probe). Upwards agreement is needed for adjectives anyway. Its extension to KPs shouldn’t raise any special problem. Notice that, given the evidence that possessives are a special type of genitival DPs (see footnote 1 and Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2011), upwards agreement must independently be assumed for certain pronominal constituents (the agreeing possessors). Recent studies (Baker 2008, Wurmbrand 2011, Diercks 2011, Norris 2012, Zeijlstra 2012) have proposed upwards agreement for other data.

This type of agreement (which we may call possessor agreement) can be seen as part of adnominal case licensing. As we shall see in the next section, structural cases can be analyzed as unvalued counterparts of the features of their licensors (i.e.  $uT$ ,  $uv^*$ ,  $un^*$  rather than simply  $uCase$ )<sup>11</sup>. Under this view, we can assume that in some languages  $un^*$  comes with a richer featural counterpart of the licensor, i.e.  $un^*-u\phi$ . As this object is a

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<sup>11</sup> This idea is also found in a recent theory of morphological case (Pesetsky 2013). Replacing licensing and valuation with copying, Pesetsky claims that case morphology is the copying of part-of-speech information from heads to their dependents.



single complex of features, its components will not be valued separately, but rather all together, by the KP-external licenser (which bears the features of the possessee). This proposal reflects the intuition that possessor agreement is a part of genitive marking, rather than the result of a separate process (as in Giusti 2008, who clearly separates Concord from Agree)<sup>12</sup>.

#### 4.2 The choice between *al*, *a* and *de*

A more difficult problem for analyses (II)-(III), with respect to (I), comes from the theory of structural case.

In section 2.2 we have seen situations where *al* phrases and *a* and *de* genitives appear to compete for the same position – see (7)-(10). For such situations, we might consider that there is a single head Genitive, with contextual realizations (exponents) depending on its complement. Notice however that *al* differs from *a* and *de* by a presumably *syntactic* property – the agreement features. Moreover, *al*-phrases can occur in contexts where prepositional genitives are excluded – in elliptical DPs (see (17)) and preminally in the DP-initial position – see (17b), where, as we have seen, *al* also licenses definiteness of the matrix DP:

- (17) a. {Al Mariei /\*a trei copii} a venit.  
           al Maria-OBL / a three children has come  
           ‘Mary’s /\*of three children has come.’  
       b. {al cui /\*a ce} produs  
           al whom / a what product  
           ‘whose/\*of what product’

Another construction restricted to *al*-genitives is the *de-al* construction, very similar to the English partitive genitive construction – *al*-genitives can appear preceded by *de* ‘of’ in order to mark anti-uniqueness (the presupposition that there are other entities in the relation R with *x* than the referent of the DP; see Barker 1998)<sup>13</sup>:

<sup>12</sup> Possessor agreement is found in various languages of the world; it can appear either as a prefix or on a preposition (Bantu, some Arabic varieties, see Carstens 1991, Giusti 2008) or as a postposition, added to an oblique or genitive morpheme (modern Indo-Aryan languages, some Caucasian languages, see Koptjevskaja-Tamm 2003, Corbett 2006, Australian languages with “Suffixaufnahme”, see Plank 1995) or to a possessive suffix (see Slavonic varieties such as Sorbian, discussed in Corbett 2006). The most similar in this respect to Romanian is Albanian, where prefixal agreement markers co-occur with genitive-dative inflection (in agreeing possessors, the prefixal agreement marker are fused with the pronoun). In this language, the same forms are used as adjective agreement markers, which supports analysis (III) (as opposed to Romanian, where, as we shall see in section 5, there is some evidence in favor of analysis (II)).

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed treatment of this construction, see Nedelcu (2009), Dobrovie-Sorin and Nedelcu (2013). It should be mentioned, in this context, that this construction is not selected by determiners, so it cannot be used as evidence for analysis I (contra Cornilescu 2006). Thus, although because of anti-uniqueness *de-al* phrases normally appear inside indefinite DPs, there are cases in which they cannot occur inside an indefinite DP because anti-uniqueness is not satisfied (see (i)) and, conversely, they can occur in definite DPs if a higher modifier further restricts the denotation as to arrive to a singleton (see (ii)), in the same conditions as for partitive constructions (see Zamparelli 1998):

(i) Cu două capitole (\*de)-ale Mariei, fac zece. (*de* impossible if Maria wrote only 2 chapters)  
       with two chapters of al Maria-OBL make ten  
       ‘With two chapters by Maria, this makes up ten.’

- (18) o rudă de-a mea  
 a relative-F of al-F.SG my-F.SG  
 ‘a relative of mine’

The conclusion is that *al* should be distinguished in syntax from *a* and *de*. *Al*, *a* and *de* are distinct lexical items. Under the traditional analysis (analyses II-III), we can thus formulate the relation between these markers and the DPs they introduce in terms of selection (with the observation that in analysis III, the head that selects is not *al* itself, but the oblique/possessive K whose agreement features are realized by *al*):

- (19) *al*: [<sub>K</sub> Genitive, Select: DP+M(morphological)-Case/Possessive, u $\phi$ ]  
*a*: [<sub>K</sub> Genitive, Select: DP-M-Case]  
*de*: [<sub>K</sub> Genitive, Select: NP/DP with null D]

The problem is that the genitive, as we have seen in section 2.2, behaves as a **structural** case – it is not associated to a certain theta-role or selected by certain lexemes, but is dependent on a formal property of the syntactic environment, that of being **nominal**<sup>14</sup>. Structural case is currently formalized, in minimalism, as an unvalued case feature, case licensing being analyzed as valuation of this feature. Case is represented as in need of licensing (hence, unvalued) insofar as it is not established at first merge – e.g. the internal argument (Theme) of *buy* will be accusative if *buy* is combined with an active Voice (or *v*\*), nominative if *buy* is combined with a passive Voice, and genitive, as in (6), if the root *buy* is inserted in a nominal environment (combining with a nominalizing head).

However, the representations in (19) are incompatible with the view that case is unvalued: in order to describe the three lexical items of category K as in (19), we must first mark them as Genitive (since the special selection patterns in (19) and the concord  $\phi$ -features are only found with genitive K).

This problem can be overcome by revising the theory of structural case. We can abandon the idea that structural cases rely on an unvalued Case feature (*uCase*). Pesetsky and Torrego’s initial proposal that structural case is *uTense* was only meant for the nominative (see Pesetsky and Torrego 2001). We can extend the idea to the other structural cases by using distinct features for each – thus, accusative can be identified with *uv*\* (being licensed by a *v*\* head) and genitive as *un*\* (calling the genitive-licensing head *n*\*, on the model of *v*\* for the VP-internal argument).

One may also invoke the following argument in favor of the genitive being already valued in the lexicon: unlike the nominative and accusative, the genitive can be non-argumental (see 2.2 above, ex. (8)-(9)) and even appear in predicative position, as in (10) above (see section 4.5 below for evidence that genitives can really be predicates). For

- 
- (ii) prima carte de-a lui pe care am savurat-o (Internet example)  
 first-the book of al he-OBL OBJ which have enjoyed-CL.ACC  
 ‘the first book by him that I enjoyed’

<sup>14</sup> The idea that the genitive is a structural case has been accepted in many studies, initially, only for genitives clearly related to a certain position, such as the English Saxon genitive (see Fukui 1986, Abney 1987, Picallo 1991, Cornilescu 1993, 1994, 2003, Siloni 1997, van Hout and Roeper 1998, Radford 2000, Alexiadou 2001, Borer 2003, Alexiadou et al. 2007, Giusti 2008, a.o.).

such cases, the genitive head can be considered to be interpretable (the copula takes any property-denoting expression, the interpretation is provided by this constituent and not by the copula). However, when appearing inside DPs, non-argumental genitives do not behave like adjuncts, insofar as they can occupy the same special positions as argumental ones (such as the DP-initial position, e.g. *John's books* or Ro. *ale patriei ogoare* ‘*al.FPL fatherland.the.OBL fields*’). If this special syntax is the effect of the functional heads that license the genitive, we have to conclude that non-argumental genitives can also be subject to case licensing. It is possible, indeed, to consider that genitive is always uninterpretable case, and the relation introduced by non-argumental genitives is contributed by another element of the structure – an *n* head for adnominal non-argumental genitives, in whose specifier the genitive is first-merged, a special possessive Pred head for predicative genitives (adopting Bowers’s (1993) widely accepted analysis of small clauses as PredPs)<sup>15</sup>.

In some languages, including Romanian, there is a difference between argumental and non-argumental genitives, which appears to be related to licensing: whereas argumental genitives are clearly restricted to one per phrase (see (12) above), a non-argumental genitive (including those with an “author” role) can co-occur with an argumental one:

- (20) a. portretul lui Liszt al bătrânei doamne  
 portrait-the OBL Liszt al old-the.OBL lady  
 ‘the old lady’s portrait of Liszt’  
 b. teoria atomilor a lui Democrit (Internet)  
 theory-the atoms-the.OBL al OBL Democritus  
 ‘Democritus’s theory of atoms’

Should we conclude that the non-argumental genitive is a non-licensed adjunct? The counter-argument based on the special positions also applies here (pronominal possessors can occupy a special position immediately after definite D, before N, see Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea 2011, Giurgea and Dobrovie-Sorin 2013):

- (21) prima lor teorie a vidului  
 first-the they.OBL theory al void-the.OBL

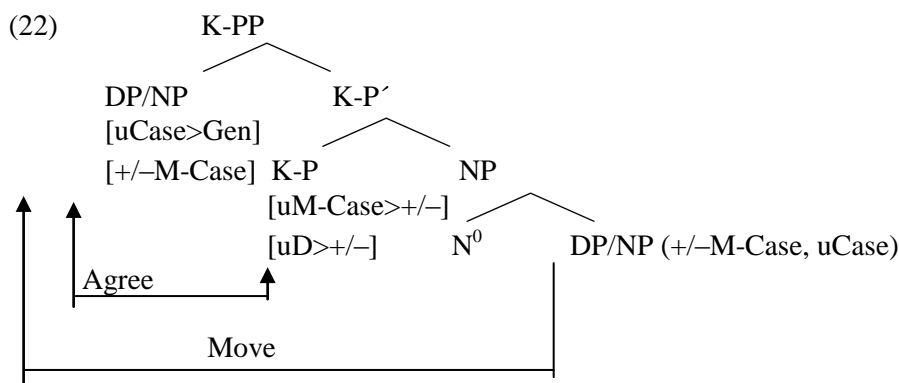
This co-occurrence can be analyzed by allowing the *n* or Poss that selects an extra (non-argumental) genitive to license the argumental genitive. The ban on co-occurring argumental genitives – see (12) – follows from the fact that this head is *above* the domain where arguments are inserted, so it can only license one of the arguments (i.e. the second genitive, being argumental, cannot be first merged as a Spec of this head).

Summing up, the existence of non-argumental genitives is not a sufficient argument against treating the genitive as uCase. The existence of the three genitive heads in (19) would remain thus the only argument, provided that we accept analyses (I)-(III).

<sup>15</sup> In the case of predicative genitives, as well as for non-argumental genitives for which there is no evidence of displacement, it can be claimed that the Pred head and *n*/Poss head, respectively, also license the genitive

But outside the genitive system, there are other facts that support a view of structural cases as valued in the lexicon. For the direct object, Romanian, like various other languages, has a special differential object marker, which is sensitive to the formal but also semantic properties of the DP it marks, in a quite complex way<sup>16</sup>. As this head is only found in direct objects, it is a good candidate for an accusative K. But since such a case head only exists for direct objects, the null hypothesis is that this K is marked as a (structural) object case in the lexicon.

Analysis (I) (the Kaynean analysis) is compatible with the assumption that the genitive is uCase, because in this analysis the case feature is not hosted by *al/a/de*, but only by the DP introduced by these markers. Cornilescu (2003) proposes the following account for the alternation between *al*, *a* and *de*: the genitive DP has a feature  $\pm$  M-Case (morphological case). The K-P head, which values the case feature of this DP as genitive, agrees with it in the feature  $\pm$  M-Case and also in a feature  $\pm$  D:



Then, K-P projects Agr as a proxy head (see (14) and the discussion above it), K-P adjoins to Agr, Agr agrees with the remnant NP and attracts it to its specifier (yielding the order N-*al/a/de*-Genitive).

The K-P + Agr head is spelled-out according to the features D, M-Case and  $\phi$ :

- (23) +M-Case +D > *al* (depending on  $\phi$  : *al*, *a*, *ai*, *ale*)  
 -M-Case +D > *a*  
 -M-Case -D > *de*

Although this account has the advantage of being compatible with the characterization of the genitive as uCase, it cannot explain why agreement is only found with *al*: although *a* and *de* are also assumed to represent K + Agr, no agreement inflections appear on these heads.

#### 4.3 Evidence for constituency of *al* + Genitive sequences and word order inside DP

The main problem of analysis (I) is that it assumes that *al* (and the other case markers *a* and *de*) do not form a constituent with the genitive DP. Under this analysis, the

<sup>16</sup> See Dobrovie-Sorin (1994), Mardale (2009), Tigău (2010), a.o.

fact that these markers are always immediately followed by the genitive DP is the by-product of the raising of the remnant NP to SpecAgrP and of K-P to Agr, which must be coupled with the requirement that no specifier or adjunct intervenes between SpecK-PP and Agr<sup>0</sup>. But, besides adjacency, there are other arguments for constituency of the [*al* + Genitive] sequence.

First, notice that the derivation in (14) (with movement of the remnant NP before *al*) predicts that all complements and modifiers attached lower than K-P + Agr should appear before the genitive (because they are inside the moved remnant). This prediction is however only partially fulfilled. It is true that light adjectives must appear before genitives. However, with complements and heavy PPs the normal order is Genitive-PP, except if the modifier is a light PP (*de* + NP) (such modifiers tend to precede the genitive if they form an established conceptual unit with the N):

- (24) a.        relația        (tensionată a ) Mariei        cu Ioana  
               relation-the tensed        al Maria-the.OBL with Ioana  
               ‘Maria’s (tensed) relationship with Ioana’  
       b.        această aplicare        a teoriei        la date noi  
               this        application al theory-the.OBL to data new  
               ‘this application of the theory to new data’  
       c.        ultima atribuire a titlului        unei echipe germane  
               last-the awarding al title-the.OBL a-OBL team        German  
               ‘the last awarding of the title to a German team’

Analysis (I) must assume that PP and dative complements move to a position intermediate between the K-P and the nominal projection that undergoes remnant raising to SpecAgrP:

- (25)    [<sub>AgrP</sub> [<sub>NP/nP</sub> relație t<sub>Mariei</sub> t<sub>cu Ioana</sub>] [a [<sub>K-P</sub> Mariei [t<sub>K-P</sub> [<sub>XP</sub> cu Ioana [<sub>NP/nP</sub>]]]]]

But notice that in this structure, the constituent left after remnant movement contains not only *al* and the genitive, but also includes the PP complement. The problem now comes from prenominal genitives – see (3). Since NP raising to SpecAgr is assumed to take place always, the prenominal placement of *al*-genitives must be derived by further movement of the constituent containing *al* and the genitive. First, adopting the common assumption that only maximal constituents can be dislocated, the NP must evacuate SpecAgrP – Cornilescu and Nicolae (2012) propose, indeed, that it raises to SpecNumP. Then, the remnant AgrP, containing *al* followed by the genitive, is raised to SpecDP (or a higher position, below D but above SpecNumP):

- (26)    [<sub>NumP</sub> relație [<sub>AgrP</sub> relație [a [<sub>K-P</sub> cărei [t<sub>K-P</sub> ... relație cărei]]]]] →  
           [<sub>DP</sub> [<sub>AgrP</sub> relație [a [<sub>K-P</sub> cărei [t<sub>K-P</sub> .. relație ...]]]]] [<sub>D</sub> [<sub>NumP</sub> relație [<sub>Num AgrP</sub> ]]]]  
           ‘whose relationship’

This derives the correct word order in case AgrP does not contain the XP projection in (25) – i.e. if the basic structure does not contain post-genitival PPs. But starting from the

structure in (25), this derivation leads to an order *al*-Genitive-PP-N, which is ungrammatical:

- (27) a. \*[a cărei cu Ioana] relație  
           al whose with Ioana relationship  
       b. \*[a cărei la date noi] aplicare  
           al whose to data new application  
       c. \*[a lui unei echipe germane] atribuire  
           al its a-OBL team German awarding

The problem comes from the fact that under analysis (I), *al* and the genitive DP do not form a constituent. Under analyses (II) and (III), such a problem never appears.

Placing XP above the genitive does not solve the problem: the entire remnant AgrP would have to be moved to a higher Spec (let's say, SpecYP) in order to obtain the N-Genitive-PP order, but then subextraction from a specifier (SpecYP) is needed in order to eliminate the NP from the AgrP constituent (by raising to SpecNum).

A general problem for the movement analysis of prenominal genitives under analysis (I) is that the constituent being moved must be a remnant functional projection of the possessee rather than the genitive itself. This is very implausible given the fact that there is at least one clear situation in which the feature of the *genitive* is responsible for movement: as we have seen in section 1, the prenominal placement is normal only for wh- genitives (in DPs with overt N) – see (3), repeated here:

- (28) a. [ale cărei] rude  
           al-F.PL whose-F.SG relatives-F  
           ‘whose relatives/the relatives of which’  
       b. ![ai noștri] frați (high style / ironic / regional)  
           al-M.PL our.M.PL brothers-M  
           ‘our brothers’  
       c. ![a lumii] boltă (archaic, poetic: Eminescu, *Scrisoarea I*)  
           al-F.SG world.the.OBL vault(F)  
           ‘the world’s vault’

If *al* extends the projection of the genitive (as in the traditional KP analysis, see the analyses (II)-(III)), it is expected that the wh- feature percolates to the KP and licenses movement of the entire *al*-phrase. But the requirement of raising an entire remnant AgrP if only the specifier or the complement of Agr is marked +wh is hard to justify. We would rather expect the order in (29), which is ungrammatical:

- (29) \*cărei [idei [<sub>AgrP</sub> t<sub>NP</sub> ale [t<sub>DGen</sub> ... ]]]

For other DP-initial genitives, including those with no overt possessee, as in (4), analysis (I) can assume a special type of Agr, marked +def, which does not require remnant movement of the NP in its Spec and incorporates into an immediately higher D.

Further evidence that *al* forms a constituent with the genitive comes from the combination with focal particles. It is possible to attach a focal particle to a genitive, and, in this case, the particle must *precede al*:

- (30) Aceasta este părerea [chiar [a celui care l- a  
this is opinion-the right al-F.SG the one.OBL which him has  
angajat]] (Internet)  
hired  
'This is the opinion of the very person who hired him.'

As the particle is applied to the genitive DP, rather than to a larger part of the NP, analysis (I) predicts its attachment after *al*, an order which is not possible:

- (31) ??părere(a) [(a) [chiar celui care l- a angajat] [t<sub>K-P</sub> t<sub>NP</sub>]]  
opinion(the) al right the one.OBL which him has hired

Summing up, word order facts support analyses (II)-(III) against (I). As for the Adjective–Genitive order, it cannot be considered as evidence for a special licensing position of postnominal genitives, coupled with movement of the remnant NP, because the same placement after (light) adjectives is found with prepositional complements, which are not subject to case licensing in special positions, under current assumptions:

- (32) relația tensionată cu George /\*relația cu George tensionată  
relation-the tensed with George/ relation-F.the with George tensed-F.SG

The empirical generalizations, valid for many languages (Semitic, Celtic, other Romance languages, see Giurgea 2009, Adger 2013), is that light modifiers in head-initial domains (especially in the NP), if they appear to the right of the head, tend to appear **before** complements, which are heavy phrases – examples such as (33) show that modifiers have right-over-left scope (“*]*”), which means that their placement between N and complements is not due to head movement of the N:

- (33) atacul aerian neașteptat al japonezilor asupra Americii  
attack-the air.ADJ unexpected al Japanese-the.OBL against America-the.OBL  
'the unexpected air attack of the Japanese against America'

The technical implementation of this generalization is a very complex problem, which cannot be addressed in the space of this article<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> The most “canonical” derivation would involve extraposition of a constituent containing the complements, evacuated by N due to raising to n. Of course, rightward extraposition can be decomposed into two leftward movements (of the extraposed constituent and then of the remnant). However, as these movements are not well motivated, and extraposition is generally optional, other accounts have been proposed, which modify some of the assumptions behind the canonical derivation (see Giurgea 2009 and Adger 2013 for some proposals). Alternatively, a canonical derivation can be combined with a PF-filter that excludes linear orders in which light modifiers are separated from N by heavy phrases.

#### 4.4 DP-initial *al* phrases

In the previous section we have come to the problem of DP-initial *al*-phrases. Admittedly, this construction is a problem for all three K-analyses, especially because of the contrast between DPs with and without an overt N.

For the fact that *al*-phrases in DP-initial position license definiteness, it can be assumed that *al*, being an agreeing element, can bear a +def feature – like adjectives – which licenses a null +def D. This is not unparalleled in the system of Romanian. Indeed, correlated with the fact that definiteness marking is realized by an **inflectional feature** in Romanian<sup>18</sup>, we can find marking of definiteness by a phrase bearing a +def feature and sitting in SpecDP with other agreeing adnominal constituents such as adjectives (in (34), there are two suffixal “articles” but a single D – a single referent, to which the coordination of adjectives applies; in (34), we see that the definiteness marking is not on the first word, but on the lexical head of the first constituent, if this is an AP):

- (34) a. [lungul și anevoiosul] drum (two definite markers but not two Ds!)  
 long-DEF and hard-DEF road/voyage  
 ‘the long and hard road/voyage’  
 b. [atât de reușita] întrunire  
 such of successful-DEF reunion  
 ‘the so successful reunion’

Even with nouns, the repetition of the suffixal article in coordination of NPs under a single D may be taken as evidence for definiteness licensing by Agree or Agree + Move (the NP occupying SpecDP, see Cinque 2004) – compare (35) – with a single referent but two suffixal “articles” – with DPs with overt Ds, e.g. (36a-b), and with the counterpart of (35) in languages with non-affixal definite D, e.g. (36c), where it can be seen that the coordination involves NPs under a single D:

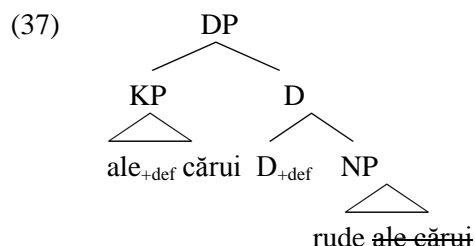
- (35) Sora lui Ion și nepoata generalului, Cristina, se afla și  
 sister-DEF OBL Ion and niece-DEF general-the.OBL Cristina REFL found and  
 ea acolo  
 she there  
 ‘Ion’s sister and the general’s niece, Cristina, was also there’  
 (36) a. acea [soră a lui Ion și nepoată a generalului]  
 that sister al OBL Ion and niece al general-the.OBL  
 ‘that sister of Ion and niece of the general’  
 b. altă [soră a lui Ion și nepoată a generalului]  
 other sister al OBL Ion and niece al general-the.OBL  
 ‘another sister of Ion and niece of the general’

<sup>18</sup> See Halpern (1992), Ortman and Popescu (2000b), Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea (2006) on the affixal nature of the definite article, and Cornilescu and Nicolae (2012) on definiteness marking by a feature operation (Agree).



- c. la [soeur de Jean et nièce du général] (French.)  
 the sister of Jean and niece of-the general  
 ‘Jon’s sister and the general’s niece’

We can thus adopt the following structure for DP-initial *al*-phrases:



The optional +def feature of *al* as well as its DP-initial placement reflect its origin: *al* (< Lat. *ille*) comes from a former prenominal, non-suffixal form of the definite article<sup>19</sup>.

The only difference with respect to adjectives is that the +def feature of *al* is not reflected in a distinct definite inflection. There is but one exception: forms with case concord manifested by a special oblique morpheme (mainly plural *alor*)<sup>20</sup>, being restricted to DP-initial *al*, can be taken to represent the definite inflection of *al*:

- (38) a. zilele de naștere despre care știam deja și **alor**  
 days-the of birthday about which knew already and al-PL.OBL  
**căror** **protagoniști** le urez „La mulți ani  
 which-PL.OBL protagonists them.DAT wish to many years  
 și multă sănătate” (Internet)  
 and much health  
 ‘the anniversaries I already knew about and to whose protagonists I wish  
 “Happy Birthday and good health!”’
- b. Asta li s-a întâmplat **alor**  
 this them.DAT REFL has happened al-PL.OBL  
**mei părinți** (Internet)  
 my parents  
 ‘This happened to my parents’

The fact that the DP-initial placement is common only when there is no overt head N, otherwise being very restricted – see (4) vs. (3), is problematic for all three K-analyses. Under analysis (I), we can assume that a [+def] *al* requires that the NP it attracts in its Spec be null<sup>21</sup>. Under analyses (II)-(III), we can say that the heads which bear the feature

<sup>19</sup> See Giurgea (2012, 2013a) and references therein.

<sup>20</sup> The norm only admits *alor*. However, the singular forms, masculine *alui*, feminine *alei*, can be found in the colloquial register (they are quite well attested on the Internet).

<sup>21</sup> As we have seen in 4.3 above, under analysis (I) we can assume that prenominal *al*-phrases reflect a structure in which there is no movement of NP to SpecAgr. Of course, this only holds for DPs with overt N.

responsible for the absence of overt N (an +E feature triggering ellipsis of the complement, see Merchant 2001, or a feature indicating selection of a null n/N, for DPs with empty N that are not interpreted by ellipsis, see (4)) can also attract an *al*-genitive, raising it into a position from where it can license the null definite D (becoming closer to SpecDP).

As we can see, all three analyses need to resort to ad-hoc assumptions. Some studies have concluded that *al* is ambiguous, representing a pronoun/N + D item when it occupies the first position of a DP with no overt N (see Vasilescu 2008, *GBLR* 2010, Giurgea and Dobrovie-Sorin 2013). However, a unitary analysis is preferable, because even in DPs with no overt N *al* is necessarily immediately followed by a genitive/possessive (the definite D followed by empty N is normally realized as *cel*, see Giurgea 2013b).

#### 4.5 *Al*-phrases in predicate position

According to analysis (I), *al* is a head in the extended projection of the possessee, which means that *al* should only appear DP-internally. However, as we have already seen in section 2.2, *al*-phrases can appear in non-nominal environments. The clearest case is the predicative position – see (10) above, repeated as (39b), and (39a). For prepositions hosting an uninterpretable definite article, as in (11), it can be assumed that there is a defective nominal environment (just as the article is present, the Agr and K-P heads assumed by analysis (I) can also be assumed to be present, in spite of the absence of a lexical N).

- (39) a. Firma e {a primarului /a doi străini /de securist}.  
 business-the is al mayor-the.OBL /a two foreigners /of security officer  
 ‘The business belongs to the mayor / to two foreigners / to a (communist) state security officer.’
- b. Hainele erau {ale avocatului /a mai multe persoane/de  
 clothes-F.the were al-F.PL lawyer-the.OBL/a more many persons of  
 preot}.  
 priest  
 ‘The clothes belonged to the lawyer/to several persons/were priest clothes.’

One may argue that in such examples the genitive is not predicative, but rather adnominal, inside an elliptical DP (see (40)):

- (40) firma e [a primarului [~~firmă~~]]  
 business-the is *al* mayor.the.OBL business

Notice first that this analysis can only apply to *al*-phrases: prepositional genitives, as we have seen in 4.2 above (ex. (17)), do not license ellipsis of the possessee. Whereas *de*+NP constituents can be analyzed as adjective-like modifiers rather than genitives, when they

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For DP-initial *al*- phrases in elliptical DPs, the position of the N can be taken to precede *al*, so the proposal in 4.3 is compatible with the account suggested here for elliptical DPs.

are not complements, *a*+DP constituents are clearly genitives (they introduce a referent or quantified variable interpreted as the possessor, exactly like *al*-genitives). Examples such as (41) (and also (39) above) show that *a*-genitives are acceptable in predicative position:

- (41) Firma este a doi băieți, unul barman și unul chelner. (Internet)  
 Firm-the is a two boys one bartender and one waiter  
 ‘The business belongs to two boys, a bartender and a waiter.’

Analysis (I) can explain these facts only by introducing the additional assumption that the conditions on ellipsis are relaxed in the predicative position.

But even for *al*-phrases, which, in principle, can rely on ellipsis, it can be shown that there are instances which cannot rely on a null possessee, but are genuine predicates. The evidence comes from the existence of situations where an empty possessee N inside the predicate is ruled out, as it can neither be the result of ellipsis nor an empty non-anaphoric grammatical N.

As we have seen in (4), resumed in (42a-b) below, *al*-phrases with no overt possessee can be interpreted as instances of N ellipsis – see (42a); non-elliptical interpretations are only possible in the plural: the masculine has a +human interpretation – ‘(X’s) people (friends/relatives/supporters etc.)’; the feminine, more restricted, has a [–animate] interpretation, see (42):

- (42) a. Casa Mariei e mai mare decât a Ioanei.  
 house-F.the Maria-the.OBL is more big than al-F.SG Ioana-the.OBL  
 ‘Maria’s house is bigger than Ioana’s.’: [<sub>N</sub>Ø] = *casă* ‘house’  
 b. I-a adus pe toți ai lui.  
 CL.ACC has brought PE all al-M.PL his  
 ‘He brought all his people/folks.’  
 c. A venit cu toate ale lui.  
 has come with all-F.PL al-F.PL his  
 ‘He brought all his stuff.’

No non-elliptical reading is possible for the singular. Let us now look at example (43):

- (43) Nimic nu e al meu.  
 nothing not is al-M.SG my  
 ‘Nothing is mine.’

As there is no N which can serve as an antecedent of ellipsis for *al meu* ‘mine’<sup>22</sup>, the *al*-phrase, if it were DP-internal, would have to represent an instance of a non-elliptical

<sup>22</sup> The subject is an indefinite pronoun, which does not contain a lexical N; some authors assume that indefinite pronouns incorporate a grammatical N (see Abney 1987, a.o.), but, even if this is true, it must be noted that this incorporated N cannot serve as an antecedent of N ellipsis – thus, the second sentence in (i) cannot be understood as involving the ellipsis of a noun ‘thing’, but requires another salient N as an antecedent or, in the case of the masculine, can be interpreted as ‘two persons’; in order to refer to an unspecified N ‘thing’, the noun ‘thing’ must appear overtly in the second sentence:

construction. But this reading is excluded in the singular – *al meu* ‘mine’ cannot be used in argumental positions to refer to ‘my belonging/property’ or ‘my friend/relative’. Therefore, the postcopular phrase (43) cannot represent a DP-internal *al*-phrase.

When the subject contains an overt N, the postcopular *al*-phrase may be analyzed as relying on the ellipsis of that N, see (40). As N ellipsis is never obligatory, an ellipsis analysis predicts that such sentences should allow a paraphrase with an overt N (such paraphrases may be stylistically infelicitous because of redundancy, but not ungrammatical). But there are cases in which a paraphrase with an overt N is impossible.

First, we have seen that DP-initial *al*-phrases appear in definite DPs. But postcopular *al*-phrases can be used in contexts which clearly exclude uniqueness of a description of the type ‘X’s N’ in postcopular position – see the use of *also* in (44):

- (44)   Și (bluza)       asta e a mea  
           also (blouse-the) this is al my  
           ‘This blouse / this one is also mine’

In such cases, a paraphrase with an overt N is clearly degraded. However, some speakers allow such sentences, possibly because the uniqueness condition on possessive definite description is weakened, as also noticed for English by Mandelbaum (reported by Zamparelli 1995), see (46):

- (45)   %și (bluza)       asta e bluza       mea  
           also (blouse-the) this is blouse-the my  
           ‘This blouse / this one is also my blouse’
- (46)   These are Harold’s tools, and those, too, are Harold’t tools (Mandelbaum 1994, as quoted by Zamparelli 1995/2000, example (354a))

But there is a case in which a paraphrase with an overt N is impossible for all speakers: when, with an overt N, the genitive would not be interpreted restrictively (as opposing Ns that belong to *x* to Ns that do not belong to *x*). This typically happens when the subject denotes an entity unique in the world:

- (47) a.   Ale tale       sunt cerurile și al       tău e  
           al-F.PL your-F.PL are skies-N.the and al-M.SG your is  
           pământul. (*Psalmi* 88.12)  
           Earth-N.the  
           ‘The skies are Thine and the Earth is Thine.’
- a'.   \**Cerurile sunt cerurile tale și pământul e pământul tău.*  
           skies-the are skies-the your and Earth-the is Earth-the your
- b.   Malvinele       sunt ale       englezilor.  
           Falkland-F.PL.the are al.FPL Englishmen-the.OBL

- 
- (i)   Nu-i       trebuie nimic. Eu aș   mai vrea doi /două \_  
       not-him.DAT needs nothing I would more want two-M/two-F  
       ‘He doesn’t need anything. I still want two.’

- b'. \*Malvinele sunt Malvinele englezilor.  
Falklands-F.PL.THE are Falklands-the Englishmen-the.OBL

Notice that an empty grammatical N interpreted as “thing” does not solve the problem of examples (47), because, as we have said, a non-elliptical interpretation is impossible in the singular; moreover, *al* and the agreeing possessor agree with the subject, which indicates that, if a possessee N were present inside the predicate, it should be the same as the N inside the subject, which leads us back to (47):

- (48) a. Egiptul e al meu /\*a mea  
Egypt-M.the is al-M.SG my-M.SG/ al-FSG my-F.SG  
b. Norvegia e a mea /\*al meu  
Norway-F.the is al-F.SG my-F.SG/ al-M.SG my-M.SG

We must conclude that *al*-phrases can be true predicates, expressing possession<sup>23</sup>. This means that *al*-phrases are not necessarily DP-internal, contrary to what analysis (I) claims.

Under the traditional analyses (II)-(III), this fact is not problematic. The *al*-phrase is nothing but a genitive-marked nominal, and such nominals can occur in predicative positions in other languages, expressing possession (see Latin, in which genitives do not normally license ellipsis of the possessee):

- (49) Hic liber est Marci (Latin)  
this book is Marcus-GEN

On the issue of case licensing of predicative genitives, see section 4.2 above.

Analysis (I) can account for predicative genitives only if it is substantially modified: the head K-P should be allowed to function, sometimes, as a Pred head, having a DP complement instead of an NP and a genitive specifier expressing possession, filled by external Merge.

Compared to this modified version of analysis (I), the other analyses are more economical, having a single lexical entry for *al*.

#### 4.6 Interim summary

Summing up the results so far, analysis (I) (the Kaynean analysis), although it offers an elegant account of agreement and it can describe the alternation between *al*, *a*

<sup>23</sup> Possessives functioning as predicates can be found in English (see Zribi-Hertz 1997), Italian, German, Polish (for the latter two, see Partee and Borschev 2003). For English, Zribi-Hertz (1997) has presented various examples in which a postcopular possessive does not rely on ellipsis:

- (i) England is mine / John's [context: War Games] (Zribi-Hertz 1997, example (29))  
(ii) a. I'm all yours [says the doctor, putting down the phone] ≠ I'm all your {doctor/man}.  
b. I am yours; you are mine. [Romeo and Juliet]  
≠ I'm your {lover/man/woman/wife/husband/mate}.  
c. The night is ours. ≠ The night is our night.  
d. Victory is ours. [says Napoleon]?  
= Victory is our victory. (Zribi-Hertz 1997, examples (15-16))

and *de* without modifying the standard assumptions on structural case, is contradicted by data that show that *al* + Genitive strings form a constituent. Moreover, it faces the problem of the lack of agreement on *a* and *de* and it needs a substantial revision in order to explain the predicative use of *al*-phrases. The traditional analyses (II)-(III) fare better on the empirical side, but require a revision of the theory of genitive as structural case, which should allow the existence of K heads marked as genitive in the lexicon. A problem of all three analyses is that they cannot easily account for the greater acceptability of DP-initial *al* phrases in DPs without an overt N.

In the following, I accept as a fact that *al* and the genitive/possessive form a constituent, and I will concentrate on the K-type analyses that share this assumption, namely, the analyses (II)-(III).

### 5. Comparison between analyses (II) and (III)

Analysis (II) differs from (III) in that *al* is taken to be the K head itself, just like the prepositions *a* and *de*, for the genitive<sup>24</sup>. However, unlike *a* and *de*, *al* co-occurs with other affixes that can be taken to represent K – oblique endings, possessive suffixes, the proposed marker *lui*:

- (50)    *acest caracter al [români-l-or /lui Ion/no-str-u]*  
          this character.N al-M.SG Romanians-the-OBL.PL/(the).OBL.SG Ion/we-POSS-M.SG

The fact that I analyzed the possessive suffix and *lui* as K heads led me to propose, in Giurgea (2011), that *al* is an Agr head inserted at PF in order to host the  $\phi$ -features of the genitival K (analysis III). However, I believe now that there are important facts which support (II) over (III). In the following, I will first present these facts, then I will show how analysis (II) can handle the co-occurrence problem exemplified in (50).

#### 5.1 Arguments in favor of analysis (II)

The main argument in favor of analysis (II) is the fact that *al* has completely lost its inflection in a wide area of Romanian, leading to an invariable *a* (for evidence that this element evolved from *al*, see Gheție and Mareș 1974, Gheție 1994, Giurgea 2012, a.o.; old Romanian texts from regions which have today invariable *a* still have examples of agreeing *al*). In many varieties, this invariable *a* keeps the distributional properties of *al*:

<sup>24</sup> Romanian has other prepositions that can be analyzed as case heads (see Mardale 2009, 2013, a.o.): accusative *pe*, the differential object marker, and dative *la*, used for DPs introduced by elements which lack case inflection:

- (i)    **Pe** cine ai văzut? – Am văzut-o            pe Maria.  
          PE whom have seen            have seen-CL.3SF.ACC PE Maria  
          ‘Whom did you see? – I saw Maria.’
- (ii)    Le-            au dat premii la zece persoane.  
          CL.3PL.DAT have given prizes to ten persons  
          ‘Ten persons have been awarded prizes.’

it introduces agreeing possessors and oblique DPs, it is dropped after the definite article, as in (51), it can appear in the DP-initial position and with ellipsis, marking the DP as definite, as in (52):

- (51) a. băiatu' vecinului  
boy-the neighbour-the.OBL  
b. un băiat a vecinului  
a boy a neighbour-the.OBL
- (52) a. moşneagu avea o fată care era mai harnică, iar  
old-man-the had a daughter which was more hardworking and  
**a babii** era mai lenişă. (*Texte dialectale Bistrița*, 34)  
a old-woman.the.OBL was more lazy  
'The old man had a daughter that was more hardworking, and the old  
women's was more lazy.'  
b. **a mîei** to' la doctoru i-am dus (ibid. 31)  
a my.MPL also to doctor.the them-have.1 brought  
'My (children) I also brought to the doctor'  
c. Astronomii, adecă [[**a stelelor**] cunoscători] (*Cantemir, Divanul*,  
astronomers-the that-is a stars-the.OBL experts 1r)  
'astronomers, i.e. the experts on stars'

This invariable *a* cannot be analyzed as Agr because it does not agree. This leaves us with a K head analysis. But, since it has the same distribution as *al* (in some varieties), the additional assumptions required by analysis (II) – see 5.2 below – are needed anyway, for this invariable *a*. But if we apply these assumptions to *a*, why not extend the same analysis to *al*? Moreover, if *al* is a K head, the loss of inflection is not as unexpected as in the case it had been an Agr head.

If we analyze *al* as an Agr head, in which only the last part represents Agr (*a-l*, *a>a*, *a-i*, *a-le*), the description of agreement morphology in Romanian is simplified: we can maintain the generalization that all agreement morphemes are inflectional in Romanian, and *al* can be included into an already existing inflectional class<sup>25</sup>:

- |      |     |       |                |        |                              |
|------|-----|-------|----------------|--------|------------------------------|
| (53) | MSG | a-l   | ce-l           | ace-l  | e-l                          |
|      | FSG | a-a>a | ce-a           | ace-a  | e-a                          |
|      | MPL | a-i   | ce-i           | ace-i  | e-i                          |
|      | FPL | a-le  | ce-le          | ace-le | e-le                         |
|      |     | al    | 'the' (strong) | 'that' | 'he, she, it, they' (strong) |

## 5.2 Solution to the problems of analysis (II) (the co-occurrence with case morphology and possessive suffixes)

In oblique DPs, the unambiguous oblique morphemes (M.SG *-ui*, F.SG *-ei*, PL *-or*) normally attach only to the determiner. Adjectives and nouns do not show any case

<sup>25</sup> All these items come from Lat. *ille* (for *cel* and *acel*, in composition with the deictic particle *ecce/eccu/ \*acu*). This class also contained diminutives in the suffix *-el*, but in the present-day language the feminine *-ea* is normally replaced by *-ică* in this class: *măricel*, *măricea/măricică*, *măricei*, *măricele* 'big-DIM'.

inflection, except in one situation: in the feminine singular, when they are inside a DP introduced by a determiner with unambiguous case morphemes; in this case, they show forms identical to the feminine plural (with a very few exceptions: feminine nouns with the plural *-uri*, which are a small class, have *-e* or *-i* in the oblique singular):

		M.SG	M.PL	F.SG	F.PL
(54)	Direct:	un băiat	niște băieți	o fată	niște fete
	Oblique:	unui băiat	unor băieți	unei fete	unor fete
		‘a boy’	‘some boys’	‘a girl’	‘some girls’

As the unambiguous oblique morphemes only appear on the D, they can be taken to represent a K head affixed to D, rather than the spell-out of a case inflectional feature. Nevertheless, there are cases in which unambiguous oblique morphemes co-occur<sup>26</sup>: this happens when the D is preceded by a plural universal and, optionally, when D is followed by another functional item that has (rich) case inflection (if this item is followed by N ellipsis, the oblique morpheme becomes obligatory, see (55c)<sup>27</sup>):

- (55) a. al **tuturor** **acestor** oameni  
 al all-PL.OBL these-OBL people
- b. **acestor** **altor** /alte aspecte  
 these-OBL other-PL.OBL/other-PL aspects
- c. **multor** **altora**  
 many-OBL.PL other-OBL.PL.AUGM

The fact that these morphemes can be repeated supports the hypothesis that they spell-out a case feature of D and other functional elements, rather than K itself. This feature is transferred to them via concord with K<sup>28</sup> or via selection by K.

A more likely candidate for a K morpheme is *lui*<sup>29</sup>. This is a prefixal oblique marker which appears with proper nouns – see (56), and, in the colloquial register, with common nouns treated as proper nouns – see (57): the ending *-a* on *mama* is not to be analyzed as a definite article, as it does not fall after prepositions, unlike the true definite article, see (57b) vs. (57c)<sup>30</sup>; *lui* is obligatory with proper nouns that do not have case inflection, otherwise it is optional).

- (56) a. al lui Ion  
 al OBL Ion

<sup>26</sup> For a detailed treatment of this phenomenon, see Barbu (2009).

<sup>27</sup> In this example, the oblique morpheme of ‘other’ is followed by an ‘augment’ (glossed AUGM), which appears on some functional elements when they are followed by an empty N (see Giurgea 2010, 2013b).

<sup>28</sup> Recall our discussion about concord and upwards agreement in section 4.1. Notice that case concord inside DPs is another instance of upwards agreement, since the case feature originates on the highest head in the nominal projection (K, if we adopt the KP-hypothesis, possibly also D, in languages or constructions where there is no evidence for a distinct K layer), as noticed by Norris (2012) for Icelandic.

<sup>29</sup> GALR (2008) treats it as a case marker, see Tomescu (2008: 84).

<sup>30</sup> On definite article drop after prepositions, see Dobrovie-Sorin (2007), Dobrovie-Sorin et al. (2013).



- (57) b. al lui Carmen  
al OBL Carmen
- a. lu' mama  
OBL mother-the
- b. la mama  
at mother-the  
'at mum's/to mum'
- c. la fată/\*la fata  
at girl / at girl.-the  
'at the girl's/to the girl'

However, at least for the standard language, there is another possible analysis of *lui*: as this element never co-occurs with determiners and is restricted to the singular, it can be analyzed as a proprial determiner, marked for oblique case. Traditionally, indeed, *lui* was analyzed as a definite article form, based on its origin – it comes from the preposed definite article (< Lat. *illui*, with unstressed initial *i-* lost in late Vulgar Latin). It was initially restricted to the masculine (like the homophonous suffixal article *-lui* and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person oblique pronoun *lui*, both stemming from the same *illui*), having a feminine *iei/ii* which is today lost (except in some archaic North-Western varieties).

In sub-standard varieties, *lui* (usually in the reduced form *lu'*) can be followed by definite DPs, so it cannot be treated as a D. It can be considered as a part of the K head *al*, especially since *al* usually appears in the invariable form *a* in these varieties:

- (58) a lu' ăștia (sub-standard)  
a(l) OBL these-M

The most difficult case to account for is the co-occurrence with suffixal agreeing possessors:

- (59) a noa-str-ă  
al-F.SG we-POSS-F.SG

Based on the genitival distribution and interpretation, Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea (2011) argued that agreeing possessors are pronouns rather than APs. They showed that the reason why their inflectional morpheme displays inherited  $\phi$ -features cannot be the absence of inherent  $\phi$ -features, because agreeing possessors *can* have inherent  $\phi$ -features (e.g. singular in the form *său* 'his/her-M.SG'), on condition that they are part of the featural specification of the root. Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea (2011) argued that the  $\phi$ -features of the inflectional morpheme do not agree with the features of the root, but upwards, with the possessee because they are attached at the K-level, above the DP-level (see the discussion in section 4.1 above on concord agreement). The empirical evidence for this claim is the fact that the  $\phi$ -inflectional morpheme is not attached directly to the root, but to a "possessive stem", derived from the root by a possessive suffix (boldfaced in the examples below):

- (60) sg. 1 m-**e**-u, m-**e**-a ‘my’                      2 t-**ă**-u, t-a-Ø (where t-**a**-a>ta) ‘your-SG’  
 pl. 1 no-**str**-u, noa-**str**-ă ‘our’                      2 vo-**str**-u, voa-**str**-ă ‘your-PL’  
 3sg. s-**ă**-u, s-**a**-Ø (where s-**a**-a>sa) ‘his/her’

Dobrovie-Sorin and Giurgea (2011) analyzed this suffix as a K head.

However, if we adopt analysis (II), as *al* co-occurs with possessive suffixes – see (59), we cannot analyze the possessive suffix as a K, unless we adopt KP recursion.

There is a possible solution to this problem which avoids KP recursion. The possessive stems can be analyzed as spelling out a pronominal D endowed with a [genitive] feature. K’s agreement features are realized as a separate morpheme at PF (see Halle and Marantz 1993, Pomino 2008), which normally appears as the second part of *al*. In the case of pronominal possessors, this morpheme undergoes fission – see the boldfaced part in 0, being attached both to *al* and to the possessive stem (see Halle and Marantz 1993 for morpheme fission):

- (61) [K + Genitive + M.SG] [DP + 1PL + Genitive] →  
 [K + Genitive] [**M.SG**] [DP + 1PL + Genitive][**M.SG**]  
 |                      |                      |                      |  
 a-                      -l                      nostr-                      -u  
 ‘our-M.SG’

## 6. Conclusions

We have examined three analyses of the Romanian genitival agreeing particle *al* which take it to be essentially a genitive marker and make use of a K (Case) projection. The analysis of *al* as a complex of heads (K-P + Agr) in the extended projection of the possessee explains *al*’s agreement with the possessee and the alternation between *al*-genitives and prepositional genitives without modifying the minimalist conception of structural case as unvalued case. Nevertheless, this analysis cannot account for some distributional facts which can only be explained if *al* and the genitive form a constituent. Moreover, *al* cannot be considered a functional head in the extended projection of the possessee in all circumstances, because, as I have shown, *al*-genitives can occur in predicative positions.

The other two analyses agree on the fact that *al* forms a constituent with the genitive and differ in whether *al* is considered to be the case head itself or an Agr morpheme projected by genitival K at PF. Based on the loss of agreement of *al* in some Romanian varieties, I argued for the first alternative, analyzing *al* as a K head.

The analysis of *al* as a K on top of the genitive DP has consequences for the theoretical assumptions about case and agreement: (i) The alternation between the three genitival heads *al*, *a* and *de* can only be explained if these heads are marked as genitive in the lexicon, in spite of the fact that the genitive has structural case properties. I proposed that structural case should be seen as an uninterpretable/unvalued counterpart of the categorial feature of the licensor (*uT*, *uv\** or *un\**) rather than as *uCase*. (ii) The fact that

*al* has agreement features leads to the conclusion that K heads can host  $\phi$ -features that agree “upwards”, like concord agreement on adjectives. If structural case is an uninterpretable counterpart of a formal feature of its licenser, the fact that adnominal structural case can be enriched with  $\phi$ -features is expected. We can thus explain the phenomenon of agreeing possessors which is encountered in various unrelated languages.

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