

# Locative Ps as general relators

## Location, direction, DOM in Romance

Ludovico Franco, M. Rita Manzini, and

Leonardo M. Savoia

Università di Firenze

Based mostly on the Romance languages, we provide evidence for the conclusion that oblique adpositions involved in the encoding of location and direction do not contribute a specific, fixed spatial meaning. On the contrary, they are general relators, relating a complement to an event by establishing an inclusion relation between them. Locatives are specializations of the basic relational inclusion content. State-in, motion-to and motion-from interpretations depend on the interaction of these simple relators with the structure of the event. Specifically, the relator may attach at the level of the Result phrase (goal, motion-to) or at the level of the Cause layer (source, motion-from). Furthermore, the Romance languages provide evidence for differential encoding of non-animate vs. animate location, which we refer to as locative DOM, presenting and discussing various instances of it.

**Keywords:** Locative, Oblique, Adposition, Passive, Differential Object Marking

### 1. Issues and goals

Location in natural languages is often externalized by the same cases or adpositions which introduce genitive, dative, instrumental, i.e. non-spatial obliques, or in more traditional terms the two are syncretic. Consider, for instance, the French examples in (1) and (2). In (1), the same morpheme *à* 'to' introduces both a non-spatial goal (1a) and a spatial goal (1b). In (2), the morpheme *de* 'of, from' introduces a non-spatial possessor relation (2a) and a spatial source (2b).<sup>1</sup> Following an intuition originally formalized by Fillmore (1968), oblique cases are

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1. Persian is a non-Romance language with the same system, which has *be* 'to' for goals and motion-to, while *æz* 'of, from' covers partitives and motion-from.

the inflectional equivalent of prepositions (*to* = dative, *of* = genitive, etc.). In other words, if a preposition is a predicate introducing a relation between the argument it selects and another argument/event, so is oblique case. This means that we may indifferently use adpositions or case labels as one and the same thing (*of* or genitive etc.).

- (1) a. Je donne le livre à Pierre  
I give the book to Pierre  
'I give the book to Pierre'
- b. Je vais à la maison / à Paris  
I go to the house / to Paris  
'I go home/to Paris'
- (2) a. les enfants de Marie  
the children of Marie  
'Marie's children'
- b. Je viens de la maison / de Paris  
I come from the house / from Paris  
'I come from the house/from Paris'

*French*

A stream of cartographic literature takes spatial PP constituents to be structurally rich and articulated (Koopman 2000; den Dikken 2010; Svenonius 2006, 2010, Cinque 2010), comprising a Place head for stative meanings and a Path head for directed motion. Within the Nanosyntactic framework, Pantcheva (2011) decomposes the Path layer into three distinct functional projections, namely Goal, Source and Route, hierarchically ordered.<sup>2</sup> We avoid cartographic encoding of meaning for reasons which include lack of restrictiveness, recently summarized by Chomsky et al. (2019) in terms of learnability and evolvability of the hierarchies (see also fn. 2).<sup>3</sup>

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2. Assuming the hierarchy Loc > Goal > Source, Pantcheva (2010, 2011) rules out syncretisms between Location and Source to the exclusion of Goal. Indeed Nanosyntax (Caha 2009; Starke 2017) prohibits syncretisms of two nodes across a distinct intervening node. However, patterns of this kind, in spite of being rare, seem to be possible in natural languages, as illustrated by Creissels (2006) with examples from Dinka and other North East Africa languages. In general, cartographic hierarchies are prone to undergenerate.

3. This is not to deny the existence of complex adpositions like *in front of*, *above/on top of*, etc. Thus traditional adpositions do not constitute a homogenous class of elements (van Riemsdijk 1990; Zwarts 1997). Complex adpositions often require a simple preposition in order to be linked to their DP complement, while items preceding the oblique relator are what Svenonius (2006) calls Axial Parts (AxPart). Following Talmy (2000), adpositions in the spatial domain depict relations between a Figure (the entity which is located or in motion) and a Ground (the entity with respect to which the Figure is located). AxPart is defined by Svenonius (2006) as a

We aim to show that simple adpositions are endowed with a general relator content compatible with the different contexts in which they appear. In essence it appears that either we reduce the non-spatial meaning to the spatial meaning or vice versa. Specifically, Freeze (1992), Den Dikken (1995, 1998) propose that possession structures like (1a) are derived from an underlying locative template. However, Levinson (2011); Myler (2016) show that linguistic expressions encoding possession cannot be always derived from a locative. Our first goal is to provide evidence that the oblique adpositions involved in the encoding of motion events do not contribute a specific spatial meaning to the sentence.

We characterize the general relator content of adpositions in terms of inclusion (Belvin 1996; Belvin & Den Dikken 1997). We further propose that locative is to be construed as a specialization of the inclusion relation, roughly ‘x included by y, y location’. Nor is the locative restriction necessarily contributed by the adposition. Rather the adpositional relator, the content of the complement it embeds (location or other) and the event structure to which it attaches, contribute to the construction of the various locative meanings. In a nutshell, complex locative meanings are constructed by the interaction of simple syntactic and lexical components, as opposed to being encoded in complex syntactic structures.

In Section 1.1, we introduce our framework, motivating our characterization of oblique adpositions as general relators, whose locative interpretation depends on their context of embedding. We also introduce some basic data in Section 1.2, including locative DOM, i.e. the effect whereby two different adpositional sets convey location at animate and non-animate entities.

### 1.1 Basic proposal

Manzini & Savoia (2011a, 2011b), Manzini & Franco (2016); Franco & Manzini (2017) lay out an analysis of the syntax and interpretation of genitive *of*, dative *to*, and instrumental *with* based on the assumption that these elements are endowed with an elementary interpretive content interacting with the internal organization of the predicate/event. As for dative *to*, the line of analysis of ditransitive verbs initiated by Kayne (1984) is characterized by the assumption that verbs like *give* take as their complement a predication whose content is a possession headed by *to*. Following in part Kayne (1984); Pesetsky (1995); Beck & Johnson (2004); Harley (2002), we may say that in (3a) a possession relation holds between the dative (*Peter*) and the theme of the ditransitive verb (*the book*). We characterize

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function from the set of points occupied by the Ground in space to some other regions (specifically, axes) of the Ground such as the top, bottom, front, edges, proximity, and so on (see also Wunderlich 1991; Jackendoff 1996; Svenonius 2010: 132).

possession and hence the content of *to* in terms of the notion of “(zonal) inclusion”, as proposed by Belvin (1996); Belvin & den Dikken (1997) for the verb *have*, and we notate it as  $\subseteq$ , so that (3a) is roughly structured as in (3b).<sup>4</sup> In (3b) the result of the causative event is that the book is zonally included by Peter. Given the entities involved, the book is alienably possessed by Peter.

- (3) a. I give the book **to** Peter  
 b. [<sub>VP</sub> give [<sub>PredP</sub> the book [<sub>⊆</sub> **to**] Peter]]]

The same  $\subseteq$  inclusion content extends to genitives. In (4a), the *'s* genitive ending or the *of* preposition introduces a possession relation between the argument it selects, namely the woman (the possessor), and the head of the DP, namely (the) children (the possessum). The content of the *'s* case or the *of* preposition is the same inclusion elementary predicate  $\subseteq$  assumed above for datives. Thus in (4b)  $\subseteq$  takes as its internal argument its sister DP (the possessor) and as its external argument the head N/D (the possessum) – saying that *the children* is in the domain of inclusion of *Mary*.

- (4) a. Mary's children/the children **of** Mary  
 b. [<sub>DP</sub> the children [<sub>PP⊆</sub> **of** Mary]]

While in (3)–(4) we used English for simplicity, the same structures hold of their French counterparts in (1a)–(2a). Thus the *à/a* ‘to’ preposition establishes an inclusion relation between the argument it embeds (the possessor) and the theme of a transitive verb (the possessee). The *di/de* preposition also corresponds to a

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4. Belvin (1996) argues that the meaning of *have* is not possession/ownership, both of which notions are problematic to define, but rather that *have* means *include*. Inclusion, as defined by Belvin, is not concerned with the member-set relation, but rather with the concept of zonal inclusion, where the notion of zone refers to “a region of space-time”. Belvin assumes there is only one *have* with a fixed inclusion meaning, and semantic variation arises from the context. According to Belvin and den Dikken (1997: 170) “the ‘meaning’ of *have* ... denotes a special kind of inclusion relation ... ‘zonal inclusion’... Entities have various zones associated with them, such that an object or eventuality may be included in a zone associated with an entity without being physically contained in that entity... The type of zones which may be associated with an entity will vary with the entity” and so will the characterization of the predication they enter. Thus, *have* gives rise to at least the following kinds of meanings: alienable possession, inalienable possession, experience of mental states, locative and partitive. Oblique cases/adpositions are then similar to light verbs, like the *have* predicate, in the expression of an elementary inclusion predication (Franco 2018 for evidence from Pidgin/Creole languages). On the other hand Manzini and Savoia (2005, 2007) arrive to similar conclusions by considering Romance clitics, specifically the fact that in some varieties of Southern Italy the partitive and motion-from clitic *ne* also lexicalizes dative goals. They conclude that ‘inclusion’ or ‘superset of’ is the relevant characterization.

$P(\subseteq)$  category, which establishes an inclusion relation between the DP it embeds (again, the possessor) and the  $D(P)$  that it modifies. One of the consequences of this approach is that the widespread GEN=DAT syncretism in natural languages is simply triggered by the fact that they express the same primitive relation.

Going back to what interests us here, namely locatives, our core proposal is that English *to*, French *à* etc. are interpreted as a locative only in so far as they denote locatively constrained inclusion  $\subseteq$ . Locative is a specialization of the  $\subseteq$  relation, which arises from the locative nature of the element embedded by *à/to*, as in the well-known minimal pair in (5). Thus in the ideal case, locative properties, such as motion *vs.* state or directionality, are not part of the core relational meaning of adpositions like *à* ‘to’, etc.

- (5) a. I sent a letter to Peter  
      a'. I sent Peter a letter  
      b. I sent a letter to Rome  
      b'. \*I sent Rome a letter

Before continuing, we acknowledge that one may legitimately wonder what may be excluded from the denotation of such a wide-ranging relator as  $\subseteq$ . We observe that precisely because of its very general denotation, the inclusion predicate, corresponding to a case inflection or to an adpositional head, does not have sufficient lexical content to characterize, say, specific (sub)types of possession or location. Thus, in a language like Latin the same oblique case attaches to locations, possessors, goals e.g. *Romae* (Rome-OBL) ‘in Rome, of Rome, to Rome’. However, there are no languages where the oblique case may denote, say, ‘after’ as opposed to ‘before’, ‘on’ as opposed to ‘under’, etc. To encode those meanings, natural languages usually resort to more specialized relational nouns/Axial Parts (Svenonius 2006; Fábregas 2007; Franco 2016).<sup>5</sup>

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5. An anonymous reviewer asks us about the distinction between inherent and accidental possession, suggesting that it has overt reflexes in Romance. Thus inherent possession can be expressed by a dative clitic but not by a possessive pronoun in Spanish minimal pairs such as *Me duele la cabeza* *vs.* *\*Duele mi cabeza* ‘My head hurts’. The minimal pair provided by the reviewer may depend on the fact that an experiencer verb is involved; roughly speaking I am the possessor not so much of the head, as of the experience of a ‘hurting head’ (mine, of course). With other predicates, there is a less obvious contrast, such as in Italian (i).

- (i) Mi    si    è fratturato il   ginocchio  
      to.me itself is fractured the knee  
      ‘My knee broke’

Rather, the question is whether the elementary contents we have postulated for *à* or *de* are sufficient to derive their apparently rich locative meanings, when interacting with eventive structures. We come back to these issues in Section 2. In Section 1.2 we provide some further evidence bearing on them, from Romance-internal variation.

## 1.2 Some basic evidence

Let us consider how location and directed motion are expressed in Italian. The adpositions *a* ‘at/to/’ *in* ‘in(to)’ both introduce state-in and motion-to, as in (6a), while *da* ‘from’ specializes for motion-from, as in (6b).

- (6) a. Sono / vado **in/a/\*da** casa  
I.am / I.go in/at/to/\*from home  
‘I am at home/I go home’  
b. Esco **\*in/\*a/da** casa  
I.get.out \*in/\*at/\*to/from home  
‘I get out of home’

*Italian*

The examples in (6) raise the issue of *a* vs *in* selection; in the same way *dans* ‘in(to)’ could alternate with *à* ‘to’ in front of French *la maison* ‘the house’ in (1b). This alternation is parenthetical to the main line of our inquiry, but we discuss it briefly before dismissing the *in* alternant. Consider the minimal pair in (7). (7a) means that the speaker is included by the vicinities of the church; on the contrary, (7b) says that the speaker is included by the church. Now, Italian *a* ‘to’ is also the dative relator – while *in* ‘in’, like its English counterpart, is only locative. It is natural to conclude that the default locative restrictions is to the vicinity of a given entity; the interpretation attributed to *a*, which by hypothesis is contextually determined, is the default one. By contrast, we may assume that a locative restriction is written into the lexical entry of *in* – and this additionally involves proper containment.<sup>6</sup>

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- (ii) Il mio ginocchio si è fratturato  
the my knee itself is fractured  
‘My knee broke’

6. The approach in the text commits us to the view that the two variants of a sentence like (i) correspond to two different treatments of the ground even if they are truth conditionally equivalent; specifically both are compatible with a context where Gianni arrives at the front door, but does not go in.

- (7) a. Sono **alla** chiesa  
 I.am at.the church  
 'I am at the church'  
 b. Sono **nella** chiesa  
 I.am in.the church  
 'I am inside the church'

*Italian*

The characterization just offered seems compatible with Folli (2008:209), who building on Tortora (2005), proposes that *a* combines with DPs expressing an unbounded location, while *in* combines with DPs expressing a bounded location. Similarly, *a* is systematically used in Italian together with DPs referring to cities and small islands (8a), while *in* is required with DPs referring to countries or big islands (8b). The generalization provided by Renzi & Salvi (1988: 513) is that "*a* is required with locations which can be conceived of as 'pointed' in our mental representation of their geographical nature". In present terms, proper containment, as introduced by *in* is associated with a non-point-like ground. The remaining grounds are associated with *a*, whose locative construal does not present such a restriction.<sup>7</sup>

- (8) a. Gianni è / va **a** / \***in** Creta / Firenze  
 Gianni is / goes to / in Crete / Florence  
 'Gianni is in/goes to Crete/Florence'  
 b. Gianni è va \***a** / **in** Italia / Sicilia  
 Gianni is / goes to / in Italy / Sicily  
 'Gianni is in/goes to Italy/Sicily'

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- (i) Gianni è corso all'ospedale / in ospedale  
 Gianni is run to.the hospital / in hospital  
 'Gianni ran to the hospital'

An anonymous reviewer points out that prepositions may be used in a 'desemanticised' sense, being (arbitrarily) selected as complements of verbs. S/he wonders whether the present characterization of *in* prevents such a use. Relevant examples in Spanish are *pensar en* (but Italian has *pensare a*) 'to think about', *confiar en* 'trust in'. The latter is paralleled by Italian *confidare in*; other examples include *credere in* (*Dio*) 'believe in (God)', *sperare in* (*una vittoria*) 'hope for (a victory)'. We note that all of these examples allow locative paraphrases, cf. Italian *riporre la propria fede/speranza in Dio/in una vittoria* 'put one's faith/ hope in God/in a victory'. One possibility therefore is that *in* is not desemanticised. Rather it provides a locative goal for the state of mind of the experiencer subject. As stated at the outset the *a/in* contrast is not central to the present research.

7. See Franco and Lorusso (2019) for a departure from this analysis; see also Matushansky (2016) for French.

Leaving aside the *a/in* issue, a further complication is that inanimate grounds, as in (6)–(8), contrast with animate grounds. With the latter state-in, motion-to and motion-from are all externalized by the *da* preposition in Italian, as in (9). The contrast between (6) and (9) configures an instance of Differential Object Marking (DOM) in the prepositional, rather than in the verbal domain.

- (9) Sono / vado / esco      **dal**                      parrucchiere.  
 I.am / I.go / I.get.out at/to/from.the hairdresser  
 ‘I am at/I go to/I come from the hairdresser’ *Italian*

We return to locative DOM in Section 4. What is immediately relevant here is that *da* plays all locative roles with human referents, namely state-in, motion-to and motion-from. By the hypotheses in Section 1.1, Italian *in/a* ‘at/to’ has the content  $\subseteq$  in (6a), so that (6a) means that the (vicinity of) *home* locatively contains (or comes to contain) the speaker. The null hypothesis is that the same  $\subseteq$  content which characterizes the adpositions in the state-in and motion-to contexts in (6a) should characterize *da* in (9) with human grounds. But if there is a single lexical item *da*, then motion-from is again characterized by the same locative inclusion content, in (6b) as in (9). Thus from examples like (9) we deduce that stative or directional uses of *da* are contextually defined.

We conclude that there is no single locative meaning that can be imputed to the intrinsic denotation of prepositions or to that of their complement (especially if the latter is not intrinsically locative, e.g. *the hairdresser*). Rather, the only possible source for disambiguation is the stative/directional content of the predicate – or to be more precise its interaction with the general content of the adposition (and its complement). Examples like (10a) show that that *da* also lexicalizes a fundamental non-locative oblique of the language, namely the agent or causer. For completeness, in (10b) we display the basic non-locative use of *a* in Italian, as a goal/recipient, i.e. a dative.

- (10) a. Gianni è stato ucciso **da** Maria / dalla valanga  
 Gianni is been killed by Maria / by.the avalanche  
 ‘Gianni has been killed by Mary/the avalanche’  
 b. Ho dato il libro **a** Piero  
 I.have given the book to Piero  
 ‘I have given the book to Piero’ *Italian*

Going back to the French data in (2), repeated below in (11a–b), recall that motion-from is introduced by the genitive preposition *de* ‘of’, again a general relator. We may complete the picture by adding that a dedicated complex preposition

introduces highly ranked referents, namely *chez* (Longobardi 2001), as in (12). Agents are introduced by *par*, not considered for the time being.<sup>8</sup>

- (11) a. Je viens **de** la maison / **de** Paris  
           I come from the house / from Paris  
           ‘I come from the house/from Paris’  
       b. le livre **de** Marie  
           the book of Marie  
           ‘Mary’s book’

- (12) Je suis / vais **chez** lui  
       I am / go by/to him  
       ‘I am by him/I go to him’

*French*

The contrast between Italian and French is in fact somewhat more nuanced. In the Italian pronominal clitic system, genitive/partitive and motion-from locative are externalized by the same item, namely *ne*, as in (13). In other words, in the pronominal clitic system, Italian is identical to French; hence clitics are not copies of lexical DPs but independent items with their own case alignment.<sup>9</sup>

- (13) a. **Ne** esco ora (dal parrucchiere / da casa)  
           from.it I.get.out now (from.the hairdresser / from home)  
           ‘I get out now from the hairdresser/home’  
       b. **Ne** vedo tre  
           of.them I.see three  
           ‘I see three of them’

*Italian*

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8. See Section 3. The Romance literature documents genitive adpositions in an agent role, for instance Ledgeway (2018) quotes a *di* agent in a causative construction for Mussomeli (Sicily). Passive/demoted agents in the genitive are further attested in Indo-Iranian languages (Keenan 1985). Catalan (i) is similar to French (11)–(12) (V. Acedo-Matellán p.c.)

- (i) a. La Maria ve **de** lluny  
           the Maria comes from afar  
           ‘Mary comes from afar’  
       b. la cua **del** gos  
           the tail of.the dog  
           ‘the tail of the dog’  
       c. Juan irá **en** cal **médico**  
           Juan will.go in by/to.the doctor  
           ‘John will go to the doctor.’

9. In various contexts, it is also possible to employ the Italian genitive P *di* ‘of’ in the expression of motion-from. The distribution appears to involve bare DP grounds, e.g. *esco di casa/prigione* ‘I get out of home/prison’, *esce di bocca* ‘it gets out of one’s mouth’.

A Prepositional system similar to French can be seen in Southern Italian varieties. In (14) we illustrate a so-called Gallo-Italian dialect of Sicily, Aidone, where the adposition *ðə* ‘of’ externalizes ablatives/sources, as in (14a), and genitives, as in (14b). The element introducing locatives with highly ranked referents is different from both the Italian and the French one, namely *nnə* ‘where’, coinciding with the interrogative *wh*-item, as in (14c–e).<sup>10</sup>

- (14) a. *stawə vəninnə ðə məssinə*  
           I.was coming from Messina  
           ‘I was coming from Messina’  
       b. *u libbrə ðə mmarjə*  
           the book of Maria  
           ‘The book of Maria’  
       c. *iwə vəŋə nnə/ndə mi*  
           he comes where me  
           ‘He come to me’  
       d. *jɛ nnə/ndə iwə*  
           he.is where him  
           ‘He is by him’  
       e. *nnə tə nə vai?*  
           where you from.it go  
           ‘Where do you go?’

*Aidone* (Manzini & Savoia 2005: § 4.9.1)

10. The use of *where* for DOM locatives is reported for South American Spanish varieties (Peruvian and Mexican Spanish, Luraghi 2011). Locative DOM is not a Romance quirk. In Persian, animate grounds require a complex P, e.g. *pish* ‘in front of, with, near’ or *nazd* ‘before, beside, near’, while inanimate grounds are introduced by a simple P. According to Fábregas (2015), in Spanish it is possible to obtain a motion-to reading with an animate DP introduced by *con* ‘with’, as in *ven con papá* ‘come with (i.e. to) daddy’. In English *with* is used to express the result state of motion towards non-locations, whereas *at* is used with locations, as illustrated in the examples in (i), taken from Myler (2013: 194).

- (i) a. He came to the man. He is with the man./#He is at the man.  
       b. He went to the ball (to kick it). He is with the ball./#He’s at the ball.  
       c. He went to the ball (and danced all night). He is at the ball. /#He is with the ball.

An anonymous reviewer suggests an analysis in term of a *path>place* configuration for *with*. It seems to us that there is no independent evidence for *with/con* as locative. The result of motion to a non-location is a comitative/accompaniment (on which see Franco and Manzini 2017). Thus Italian has both options in (ii). The *da* option is as described in relation to (9); the *con* option is a comitative.

- (ii) *Vieni da/con papà*  
       ‘come to/with daddy’

Overall, we conclude that while the locative preposition system varies within Romance, its general shape is remarkably consistent. Location and direction are expressed by general relators, to which we cannot impute any specific locative content. Nor a fortiori can we impute to these relators a stative vs. directional content or other locative specialization. Therefore, it must be the case that the interaction between the general relators, their complements and the event structures that embed them differentiate locative meanings. In Section 2 we run a detailed case study concerning Italian, aimed at proving this hypothesis for the locative and non locative differentiations of *a* ‘at, to’ and *da* ‘from, by’.

## 2. The Italian *a* ‘at, to’/ *da* ‘from, by’ system

As is evident from the example sets in Section 1, Italian has a locative set distinguishing dative/locative *a* from ablative *da* – where the former also lexicalizes non-locative goals and the latter also lexicalizes agents/causers. At the same time, still according to Section 1, *a* and *da* have the same core meaning, namely that of inclusion. In this section we seek to establish that further differentiations between *a* and *da* in the sentential domain are determined by the complement they take (location or not) and by the event structure which they are merged with (and eventually select).

### 2.1 Italian *a* ‘at, to’

Let us begin with *a* ‘to’ whose structural contribution was detailed above in (3) for simple goal dative contexts with respect to its English counterpart *to*. In this respect, it is also potentially relevant that in the Romance languages (as in Indo-European more generally) the dative adposition/case is the preferred externalization for DOM objects. We provide just one example from standard Spanish in (15a). According to Manzini & Franco (2016) the syncretism of dative and DOM, is based on the fact that the same lexical content  $\subseteq$  is instantiated in both contexts, as seen in structure (15b) for sentence (15a). In other words, object DPs highly ranked in animacy/definiteness require for their embedding the same elementary predicate  $\subseteq$  introducing goals. For ease of comparison, in (16a) we reproduce the Italian example of a goal dative in (10a) whose structure is (16b).

- (15) a. lo/le llama    a    el  
           him s/he.calls DOM him  
           ‘S/he calls him’  
       b. [<sub>VP</sub>  $\nu$  [<sub>VP</sub> llama [<sub>PP</sub>  $\subseteq$  a [<sub>DP</sub> el]]]]

Spanish

- (16) a. Ho dato il libro a Piero  
           have given the book to Piero  
           'I have given the book to Piero'  
       b. [<sub>VP</sub> dato [<sub>PredP</sub> il libro [[<sub>⊆</sub> a] Piero]]] Italian

In the ditransitive structure (16b), the two arguments of  $\subseteq$  are the two DPs *Piero* and *the book*, the former including, i.e. possessing, the latter as the result of the causative event of giving. For the DOM structure (15b), we follow the standard idea of Hale & Keyser (1993); Chomsky (1995), who assume that transitive predicates result from the incorporation of an elementary state/event into a transitivizing  $\nu$  layer. Within such a framework, (15b) can be rendered as 'She makes/gives a call to him'.<sup>11</sup> In present terms, the  $\subseteq$  relation holds of the object DP *el* 'him' and of an elementary event 'call' so that the 'call' resultative sub-event is in the zonal inclusion domain of 'him' or 'he has a call (caused by me)'. A different implementations of the same basic idea is provided by Torrego (2009); Pineda (2014), by using the Appl projection.

In short, the basic content of the *a/à* Romance preposition is the general relator  $\subseteq$ , as in (17). Writing a locative restriction into the  $\subseteq$  content is rather trivial. Thus, one may distinguish  $\subseteq$  from  $\subseteq_{\text{Loc}}$  where the first one means inclusion and the second locative inclusion. However, it is not obvious that this is in fact necessary. Whenever *a* selects a spatially extended referent, i.e. a location, it seems that the locative interpretation can be triggered.

- (17) *a*:  $P, \subseteq$

Similarly, whether the location is interpreted as a stative or as a directional, may in principle be encoded as a further restriction on the preposition. In reality, these different interpretations seem to rest on the shape of the event. Consider for instance Italian (18). If we endorse the hypothesis that *a* 'to' is the same general relator as in (16), then everything else equal we expect the structure of the transitive sentence in (18a) to be as in (18b). In other words, (16b) and (18b) are structurally identical. However, in (18b) the spatial nature of the object of  $\subseteq$  induces the locative interpretation. Specifically, the  $\subseteq$  locative predication represents the result of a motion event (roughly 'I cause a motion with the result of Gianni being at home'); the locative complement is therefore interpreted as the endpoint of the motion (i.e. a motion-to locative). None of this needs to be encoded at the adposition or in the structure it projects, since it seems to be contextually forced.

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11. The English paraphrase only really works for telephone calls and such-like. (Non-literary) Italian has *dagli una voce* 'lit: give him a voice' meaning *call him* (by voice). The existence of an exact non-incorporated paraphrase is of course immaterial to the analysis in the text; it is used merely for the sake of exposition.

- (18) a. Mando Gianni a casa  
 I.send Gianni to home  
 'I send Gianni home' *Italian*  
 b. [<sub>VP</sub> v [<sub>VP</sub> mando [ Gianni [<sub>C</sub> a casa]]]]

Much the same reasoning can be applied to the unaccusative predicate in (19a), cf. (6a), with the structure in (19b). Note that the adoption of the idea that a motion-to locative predication is a result of a caused event commits us to the idea that unaccusatives also have a v-V structure. Lack of an external argument must be independent of the presence of v, perhaps associated with Voice, as in Harley (2013); Legate (2014), among others.

- (19) a. Vado a casa  
 go to home  
 'I go home' *Italian*  
 b. [<sub>VP</sub> v [<sub>VP</sub> vado [1SG [<sub>C</sub> a casa]]]]

The structures we propose in (18)–(19) are in line with formal literature on causative-resultative events (Higginbotham 2009). For Ramchand (2008:40), who argues for a causing sub-event, a process sub-event and a result sub-event, the latter, encoded in ResP, “gives the ‘telos’ or ‘result state’”. Importantly, for present purposes, she assumes that result predicates/projections are augmentable with a DP Ground. In this latter instance “the exact nature of the result asserted in these predications comes from a unification of the lexical-encyclopedic content of the verbal Res with the prepositional *to*’s Res feature.” (Ramchand 2008:105). Thus adpositions of the type of *to* are endowed with a Res feature together with locative Place features. While for Ramchand, semantic components are cartographically encoded in the syntax, it is not obvious that there is an empirical necessity for this stance. Therefore in (18)–(19), P does encode neither the Res content already present in the event structure, nor the Place content, which is already present in the P object.

By contrast with the motion-to reading of locatives, which requires a resultative motion predicate, the state-in reading is available with any predicate and requires only that the preposition involved embed a location. For instance, an atelic, manner of motion predicate like *camminare* ‘walk’ in (20) consistently blocks the motion-to reading, when merged with elementary relators of the type of *a* ‘to’. However, the stative locative meaning remains perfectly accessible. In present terms, the event of walking is zonally included in the space defined by Rome.

- (20) Ho camminato a Roma  
 I.have walked at/\*to Rome  
 'I walked in Rome' *Italian*

To be more precise, Folli & Ramchand (2005); Folli (2008) show that Italian manner of motion verbs split into two classes, with respect to their ability to give rise to goal of motion interpretations with simple adpositions. The latter strategy is available for those verbs that encode in their lexical entry a possibility for resultativity (cf. Zubizarreta & Oh 2007), corresponding to a dedicated projection (ResP) for the *telos* of the event. Thus a verb like *correre* ‘run’ is ambiguous between a telic and an atelic construal, where the availability of a resultative meaning for manner of motion verbs is further linked to the expression of the auxiliary. The *have* auxiliary is associated with the atelic/unergative predicate (21a), while the *be* auxiliary (21b) is associated with the telic/unaccusative interpretation (Hoekstra 1999, Gehrke 2008 on Dutch).

- (21) a. Gianni è corso a casa.  
           Gianni is run to home  
           ‘Gianni ran home.’  
       b. Gianni **ha** corso a casa  
           Gianni has run to home  
           ‘Gianni ran in the house’

*Italian*

By contrast, in (20), a predicate like *camminare* ‘walk’ only allows for the atelic, unergative construal and is therefore incompatible with the *be* auxiliary, as in (22).

- (22) \*Gianni è camminato a casa  
           Gianni is walked to home  
           ‘Gianni walked home’

*Italian*

The data in (20)–(22) strengthen the conclusion that oblique adpositions are unable to encode a *telos* on their own since we might expect that in such case they could compose with non-resultative verbs yielding a motion-to specification. Rather, the evidence is compatible with the conclusion that they are characterized as general relators establishing an inclusion relation, interpreted in locative environments as the Ground and in resultative environments as the goal of motion.

## 2.2 Italian *da* ‘from, by’

We are now faced with the question of what tells apart locative sources from locations and locative goals, so that in Italian the latter are lexicalized by *a* ‘at, to’, but the former is introduced by *da* ‘from’. In Section 2.1 we proceeded by first analyzing the basic structure of non-locative *a* and then arguing that essentially the same structure holds for the locative. In this section, we propose to do the same for *da*.

Apart from locative sources, Italian *da* is specialized for another set of non-locative source arguments namely agent or causer sources/origins of an event. In

(23a) we repeat an example of an agent/causer in a passive sentence, originally in (10a); *da* phrases also encode causers in unaccusative events, as in (23b).

- (23) a. Gianni fu ucciso **da** Maria / **dalla** valanga  
 Gianni was killed by Maria / by.the avalanche  
 ‘Gianni was killed by Mary/the avalanche’  
 b. Muoio **dalla** sete  
 I.die from.the thirst  
 ‘I’m dying of thirst/I am very thirsty’

*Italian*

The discussion of agents/causers in passives involves us in the complex question of the structure to be assigned to passives. Perhaps the most influential current analysis is that of Collins (2005), who argues that a passive  $\nu$ P has exactly the same shape as an active  $\nu$ P at first Merge. However, there must be a reason why the internal arguments and not the external arguments move to the Spec, IP position. For Collins the reason is that VP moves to Spec, VoiceP; this positioning of VP removes the intervention of the external argument in Spec,  $\nu$ P from the movement path of the internal argument – i.e. it smuggles the internal argument in the position from where it moves. Part of this analysis is that there is no *by*-phrase. *By* is the Voice head, which as such is immediately followed by the external argument in Spec,  $\nu$ P.

There are two types of problem with the smuggling proposal. The first potential problem is that movement of VP to Spec, Voice is not clearly endowed with any relevance at the C-I (Conceptual-Intentional) interface. Thus it endorses what we may call Kayne-type movement (Kayne 1994); Chomskyan movement is never semantically empty (Chomsky 2001). The second problem concerns the sequence *by* – external argument. For reasons of restrictiveness, we side with Chomsky’s (1995) requirement that heads must bear interpretable content. This bans saying that *by* is a “dummy preposition” (i.e. one consisting entirely of uninterpretable features) selecting for  $\nu$ P. Furthermore, *by*-DP is a constituent; therefore some Kaynian type of movement is necessary to reconstitute it from the merely adjacent *by*-DP sequence in Collins’s analysis, presumably moving DP to the Spec of *by* and then adjoining *by* to DP. We consider a grammar of this type to be unnecessarily rich.<sup>12</sup>

In Section 1, in discussing locative DOM, i.e. the use of *da* to introduce highly ranked referents, we suggested that the  $\subseteq$  content should be attributed to *da*, in so far as it introduces locations and goals. In short, *da* is a preposition with the basic relator content of other oblique prepositions/cases such as *a* in (17)

12. Similarly, in Bruening (2013), the *by*-phrase is hosted by the same projection as any other external argument (VoiceP), but nevertheless it is a constituent.

also introducing locations and goals. As before, we associate this content with the notion of inclusion. Next, we make the standard assumption that agents/causers are associated with the causation layer of events, so that the *da*-phrase attaches to the vP projection, as in structure (24) for Example (23a). In (24), the *da*-phrase introduces the external argument causer/agent as a possessor/locator of the causation event so that (24) can be paraphrased as ‘there is a caused event of Gianni being killed and Maria is the owner/locator (author) of this causation.’

(24) [<sub>VP</sub> v [<sub>VP</sub> ucciso Gianni] [<sub>C</sub> **da** Maria]]

We must also account for the fact that the structure in (24) is only available with perfect/passive participles (further embedded under a copula). The answer is to be sought in the range of ideas relating to the reduced structure of perfect participles, and to the emergence of ergative alignment in perfectivity splits. Following Manzini et al. (2015), and references quoted there, perfect participles lack the Asp/Event/Voice layer which supports the attachment of a DP external argument. Therefore, the external argument surfaces as an oblique, as indeed in (24). Short passive is also possible. In this latter instance, an external argument slot made available by the predicate remains unsaturated; this is read as an open variable at the C-I interface and is interpreted by existential closure, as in (25).

(25) [<sub>VP</sub> ∃x v [<sub>VP</sub> ucciso Gianni]]]

Summarizing so far, the passive participle is the perfect participle, adopting the insight of Collins (2005). The basis for passive is aspectual, as also perceived by Gehrke and Grillo (2009). However, aspect does not determine VP-movement, but rather it triggers the oblique or existential treatment of the external argument. The *da* element is a *bona fide* preposition, with a relational content and this content interacts with event structure to express agent/causer interpretation in the same way as happens for any other oblique agents/causers – for instance in perfect ergativity splits. A structure similar to (24) characterizes the unaccusative sentence in (23b), as illustrated in (26).

(26) [<sub>VP</sub> v [<sub>VP</sub> muoio <sub>1SG</sub>] [<sub>CP</sub> **dalla** sete]]

Finally, what crucially motivates the smuggling approach for Collins (2005) is that it allows the object to move across the external argument to reach the subject position. However, we take it that a free variable does not count as an intervener on the movement path in (25); recall that existential closure at the C-I interface follows movement. Furthermore, there is reason to believe that the oblique does not intervene on the movement path. Indeed the external argument DP embedded under the general relator does not c-command the internal argument (see Manzini 2017 for a more detailed discussion). An obvious test of the correctness

of this conclusion come from the fact that even leaving aside passives, obliques do not normally intervene on agreement paths.

At this point, we are ready to switch to locative *da* ‘from’, which we expect it to have exactly the same structure as agent/causer *da*. This means that we expect it to be attached not at the result of an event, but rather at its causal component, as indicated in structure (27b) for sentence (6b), reproduced below as (27a). See Section 4 for the lexical entry of *da*.

- (27) a. *Esco da casa*  
           I.get.out from home  
           ‘I get out of home’ *Italian*  
       b. [<sub>VP</sub> v [<sub>VP</sub> *esco* 1SG] [<sub>C</sub> *da casa*]]]

Note that we do not necessarily predict that source PPs and agent phrases, both attached at the vP level, are in complementary distribution. Following Chomsky (1995) nothing prevents multiple Specs/multiple adjunction to a given constituent, so the well-formedness of sentences like (28) does not pose a problem.<sup>13</sup>

- (28) *Gianni fu fatto uscire dalla stanza dal maestro*  
       Gianni was made.to.exit from.the room by.the teacher  
       ‘Gianni was sent from the room by the teacher’ *Italian*

The correspondence between motion-from arguments and passive agents is mentioned by Caha (2009). He argues that ablatives can encode not only a spatial “source of motion” reading, but also a more abstract “source of event” reading, corresponding to the passive agent. (26b) provides a formalization of this intuitive idea, under which source is not an intrinsically defined content of the adposition.

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13. As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, with predicates simultaneously selecting for sources and goals, the order source>goal is the unmarked order, as in (ib), though the reverse order remains possible, as in (ia).

- (i) a. John went to Manchester from London  
       b. John went from London to Manchester

In present terms, the predicted order is (ia) with the structure in (ii), where the goal attaches to the VP and the source to the vP.

- (ii) [<sub>VP</sub> v [<sub>VP</sub> went [ John [<sub>C</sub> to Manchester]]] [<sub>C</sub> from London]]

There are certain contexts where the *from...to* order is obligatory, for instance in (iii). In these instances and in (ib) we suggest that *from ... to* is a single constituent. Evidence that this can be the right interpretation is provided by the fact that source-goal constituents can lead to fixed expressions/idioms in Italian (e.g. *dall'oggi al domani* ‘overnight, without notice’, lit. ‘from.the today.to.the tomorrow’).

- (iii) From Manchester to London/\*To London from Manchester there are 200 km.

Rather, the adposition has a general relator content and the source (of movement, of event) interpretation depends from the interaction of this general relator content with attachment at the causative component of the predicate.

Our proposal as a whole also has some similarities with the Structural Ambiguity Hypothesis put forth in Gehrke (2008) (see also Real Puigdollers 2010). For Gehrke (2008:88) any ambiguity between a locative and a directional meaning is structural and not lexical. According to her analysis, adpositions which are ambiguous in determining locative vs. directional readings are attached to the VP in two different ways. When they define a directional meaning, they attach to the verbal spine as complements of a BECOME event (Rothstein 2004); on the contrary, when they convey a locative meaning, they “modify the whole event” (Gehrke 2008:122). However, Gehrke (2008) claims that both motion-to and motion-from adpositions are attached to a BECOME event, namely they are both introduced as complements of the resultative component of the event. Indeed, she argues that any differences between sources and goals is “extra-linguistic in nature” (Gehrke 2008:230), and not linked to specific syntactico-semantic properties teasing motion to and motion-from apart. From the present point of view this approach has the disadvantage that it only addresses locative modifiers and does not extend to the core issue that is engaging us, namely whether we must indeed recognize location or just general relators as a primitive content.

Finally, Nam (2005), Nam (1995) argues for a syntactic asymmetry between motion-to and motion-from items, based on evidence such as source-goal contrasts in incorporation, movement, the possibility of entering into locative alternations. As we did here, Nam assumes that, in event structures, goal PPs express a resultative state, given that they encode a final location, while source PPs specify only a starting point, thus modifying the whole event (Filip 2003; Arsenijević 2006; Saeed 2016 for similar ideas). However, Nam (2005) claims that adpositions are themselves endowed with locative/directional semantic values, while we argue that it is better to characterize them as general oblique relators whose task is to signal the role of a DP argument (spatial or non-spatial) as owning/locating a (sub)event in the verbal spine.

### 2.3 Italian *a* as agent/causer

An obvious question raised by the present account of Italian *a/da* is why, if *da* ‘from, by’ has the same general relator content as *a* ‘to, at’, the two are not freely interchangeable. Of course, the same question could have been asked concerning *to* and *of* in (3)–(4). In other words, since dative *to* and genitive *of* have the same content, the question arises why they are not interchangeable. The answer is that *of* specializes for NP attachment while *to* specializes for VP attachment

(Manzini and Franco 2016); in other word there are selectional restrictions in place. Similarly *da* ‘from, by’ is the general relator for sources, merged with vP/causation events; *a* ‘to, at’ is the general relator for goals, merged with telic VP/result events, as well as for stative locations, merged with atelic VP events.

Nevertheless, recall from Section 1 that in several languages genitive and dative are syncretic (for instance in Balkan languages) – which is what we predict, given their shared core content. Simply, the selectional restrictions distinguishing *of* and *to* are suspended. The expectation then is that goals/locations and sources/agents may be syncretic in some languages/contexts. Indeed in Italian there is at least one context where *a* etc. ‘to, at’ and *da* etc. ‘from, by’ are freely interchangeable – namely causative constructions, where quite strikingly both introduce an oblique external argument. Kayne (1975) dubs the two main causative constructions of French from the prepositions introducing the external argument, namely *faire-à* and *faire-par*, as illustrated in Italian (29). In *faire-à* the agent is introduced by *à/a* ‘to’, in *faire-par* it is introduced by French *par*, Italian *da*. The sole argument of unaccusatives does not allow the oblique realization, as in (29b), though the sole argument of unergatives (somewhat marginally) does, as in (29c).

- (29) a. Ho fatto pulire la stanza **a / da** Maria  
 I.have made clean the room to / by Mary  
 ‘I made Mary clean the room’  
 b. Ho fatto venire ( *\*a / \*da* ) Maria  
 I.have made come to / by Mary  
 ‘I made Mary come’  
 c. Ho fatto cantare ( *?a / ?da* ) tutti  
 I.have made sing to / by everybody  
 ‘I made everybody sing’

*Italian*

One way to interpret the data in (29) is that in causative constructions, *a* phrases can in fact be interpreted as agents, configuring a syncretism (i.e. a common lexicalization) of goals/locations and agents. This interpretation of the facts requires however a brief detour into causative constructions. Following Baker (1988), causative constructions of the French or Italian type are characterized by movement of the embedded predicate VP to a position adjacent to the causative verb, from where incorporation of V to the causative predicate can take place. This has the effect of producing the restructuring of the arguments of the embedded sentence, i.e. their case (and linear) rearrangement. Informally, a complex predicate, e.g. *make-clean* in (29a), conflating the causer, causees and theme roles aligns them in the common way of trivalent predicates i.e. nominative-accusative-dative. However, trivalent predicates consistently interpret the dative as a goal. By contrast, goal interpretation does not characterize the causee. In fact, a problematic aspect

of the Baker (1988) framework that warrants a mention here, is that in effect it leaves us without an account for the *fair-par* constructions, where an embedded active verb is coupled with an external argument expressed through a *by*-phrase (Baker 1988: 487, fn. 38).

Recently, Belletti (2017) reforms the classical VP-movement analysis of causatives so as to bring out the parallel with the smuggling analysis of passive. Thus the *a/da* phrase in (29) is constructed as the *by* phrase in Collins (2005). The external argument of transitive or unergative predicates embedded under causative verbs, for instance in (29), occupies the Spec, vP/Voice while being case-marked by the *a/da* dummy attached to the sentential spine. Following our rejection of the smuggling analysis of passive, and of the dummy nature of prepositional heads, here we propose that external arguments in complements of causative verbs simply undergo a process of obliquization (Bellucci 2017), as schematized in (30) for sentence (29a).

(30) [<sub>VP</sub> fatto ... [<sub>VP</sub> v [<sub>VP</sub> pulire la stanza] *a/da* Maria]]

What we must explain is why the complement structure in (30), with the oblique alignment of the external arguments, could not be embedded under any other matrix predicate than the causative verb (or the restricted set of causative and direct perception predicates). The simplest option is that the matrix predicate with pure CAUSE content selects directly a vP – or alternatively an IP lacking agreement properties and an EPP position. In either instance, an embedded nominative subject is blocked, forcing obliquization, or of course existential closure of the external argument variable, as in (31).

(31) Ho fatto pulire la stanza  
I.have made clean the room  
'I had the room cleaned'

*Italian*

One may further inquire why, of all verbs, it is the causative one which selects this particular embedding. In essence, causative constructions allow a hyper-complex predicate to be formed, expressing the direct causation (or perception) of a caused event. This must be at the root of their selection properties (as in other treatments it underlies VP-movement or V incorporation or complex predicate formation). In some languages, including Italian in the Romance family, causativization allows movement of the embedded object to matrix subject position, as in (32); the oblique introducing the embedded external argument is indifferently *a* or *da*. For the reasons reviewed in connection with simple passives, the obliquization (or arbitrarization) of the external argument removes it from the movement path, so that VP-movement is not required for this particular purpose either.

- (32) La stanza è stata fatta pulire ( a / da Maria )  
 the room is been made clean to / by Maria  
 'One has had the room cleaned (by Mary)'

Italian

Syntactic asymmetries between *faire-à* and *faire-par* constructions across Romance are difficult to find. One has to do with the interpretation of sentences like (33a). The reading where the clitic is the agent of writing and Maria the recipient is fine; the reading where the roles are reversed, so that the clitic is the recipient and Maria is the agent is impossible. However this is exactly the reading of (33b) where Maria is introduced as a *by*-phrase.

- (33) a. Gli ho fatto scrivere a Maria  
 to.him I.have made write to Maria  
 \*'I made Maria write to him' / 'I made him write to Maria'  
 b. Gli ho fatto scrivere da Maria  
 to.him I.have made write by Maria  
 'I made Maria write to him'

Italian

Rouveret and Vergnaud (1980) explain the asymmetry in (33a) as a result of the Specified Subject Condition (essentially Minimality) preventing cliticization from crossing the external argument Maria; whatever allows movement across the external argument in passives allows (33b). However this famous explanation is immediately falsified by examples like (32) (not available for French, which is the language actually studied by Rouveret and Vergnaud). Vice versa, it may be that something trivial, such as a processing requirement of minimal attachment explain why one of the two readings of (33a) preempts the other.

On the basis of the analysis of causative structure sketched above, we confirm our tentative analysis of the free alternation of *a* and *da* in (29), or in (32), involving the use of the *a* phrase as an oblique agent/causer. This configures an example of common lexicalization (or syncretism) of goals/locations and agents, easily understood in present terms, since *a* and *da* have the same general relator content. By contrast, the syncretism is unexpected in terms of some more specific source content shared by motion-from complements and agents, as in Caha (2009).

### 3. Crosslinguistic evidence

The purpose of this section is twofold. First, each of the conclusions we have reached on the basis of the Italian *a/da* sentential system can be shown to have *prima facie* crosslinguistic support. On the other hand, we need to go no further

than other Romance languages to find significant differences with respect to the Italian *a/da* system. Here we concentrate on French.

Let us proceed backwards, from the last conclusion drawn in Section 2.3, concerning the possibility for goals and agents to coincide. Fairly straightforward examples of the expression of agents/causers by datives is to be found in ergative alignments. An important stream of historical and typological literature connects Indo-European ergative structures with possession structures (Benveniste 1966). The etymology of the Hindi ergative postposition *-ne* is often connected to the Sanskrit instrumental. However Butt and Ahmed (2011) argue that a much better origin is to be sought in the *-ne* dative still preserved in some Indo-Aryan languages, for instance Haryani as in (34).<sup>14</sup>

- (34) a. sad:h nae bud:hiaa ki jhu~pr:ii kii kun mae laat maaryi  
 Sadhu ERG old.lady GEN cottage GEN corner in leg hit  
 ‘The Sadhu kicked the corner of the old lady’s cottage.’  
 b. yaah bi raam pyaarii nae e de diye  
 this.PL too Ram Piyari DAT PRT give give.IMP  
 ‘Give these to Ram Piyari too.’ *Haryani* (Butt and Ahmed 2011: 561–2)

Nor is the coincidence of goals and agents an Indo-European specialty. In (35), we provide one example of a syncretism between goal of motion and demoted agent from a non-Indo-European language, namely Nigerian Arabic.

- (35) a. Mašee-t le beet rafiig-í  
 went-1SG to house friend-1SG.POSS  
 ‘I went to my friend’s house’  
 b. al-ákil ma bin’ákil le-i  
 DEF-food not eaten by-1SG  
 ‘This food can’t be eaten by me’ *Nigerian Arabic* (Palancar 2001: 35)

Italian dialects also provide evidence of goals being syncretic with sources. Thus in the variety of Avigliano Umbro in (36), *da* introduces non-locative goals, as in (36b), and DOM objects, as in (36a). In (36c)–(36d), location at deictic or human referents is expressed by *da*, independently of whether it is a state-in, as in (36d), or a motion-to, as in (36c). Otherwise, *da* specializes for motion-from, as in (36e).

14. Of course, this line of inquiry, relating ergativity to nominal structures, is not just relevant for Indo-European languages. In the words of Johns (1992: 68) “similarities in case and agreement between transitive clauses and possessive phrases is a long-standing issue in Eskimo linguistics ... The first of these similarities is that the case assigned to the specifier (possessor) of a possessed noun is the relative case, the same case that is assigned to the actor in the transitive construction”.

Importantly, the language does have the *a* preposition, which lexicalizes motion-to, as in (36f), or state-in.<sup>15</sup>

- (36) a. *camo da esso*  
           call DOM him  
           ‘I call him’  
       b. *lo rajo da mmi fratello*  
           it I.give to my brother  
           ‘I give it to my brother’  
       c. *vajo lla da esso*  
           I.go there to him  
           ‘I go to him there’  
       d. *stonno lla da esso*  
           they.are there by him  
           ‘They are by him’  
       e. *vengo da su / ju kkasa*  
           I.come from up / down home  
           ‘I come from up/down home’  
       f. *vajo a ttodi*  
           I.go to Todi  
           ‘I go to Todi’

*Avigliano Umbro*

The language of Avigliano is consistent with the view that oblique adpositions introduce an undifferentiated elementary relation of inclusion interacting with the event structure in which they are embedded to produce more finely articulated meanings. Their distribution appears to be governed by selectional restrictions, which differ from language to language. In Avigliano Umbro, it looks like *a* has a locative VP restriction (i.e. motion-to, state-in); *da* pretty much occupies the other slots (i.e. non-locative goal, source).

A key proposal of our analysis introduced in Section 2.2 is the idea that attachment at VP of *vP* determines goal vs. source interpretation. Prima facie evidence in favour of a structural distinction comes from Tswana, as described by Creissels (2006). Tswana has an applicative suffix *-el*, licensing for instance benefactive (37b) or cause (37c).

- (37) a. *ke bereka thata*  
           1SG work hard  
           ‘I am working hard’

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15. The data are from Manzini and Savoia (2005), who report the same facts for Macchie Amelia.

- b. ke berekela bana  
1SG work.APPL 2child  
'I am working for the children'
- c. ke berekela tiego  
1SG work.APPL 9delay  
'I am working because of the delay'

*Tswana*

Now, there are verbs of motion that, in their non-derived form, imply a source argument, as in (38a). In order to express a motion-to meaning, the root form of the verb is instead combined with the applicative morpheme (38b). These facts point to a structural asymmetry of goals and sources, since goals require an applicative derivation. In present terms, an applicative is needed to introduce a location at the result of the event – though location at the causation is for free.

- (38) a. Ke tlaa huduga ko Kanye  
1SG FUT move OBL Kanye  
'I am going to move from Kanye'
- b. Ke tlaa hudugela ko Gaborone  
1SG FUT move.APPL OBL Gaborone  
'I am going to move to Gaborone'

*Tswana*

Finally, let us go back to the very general idea that adpositions are general relators and that different locative interpretations arise only depending on their context of embedding. Creole languages are good sources of supporting data. As reported in the APiCS (Michaelis et al. 2013: APiCS feature 81) many Romance based Creoles mark state-in, motion-to and motion-from identically. For instance, Haitian Creole uses the relator *nan* to encode both motion-to and motion-from in (39). In this respect, *nan* differs from the French adposition *dans*, to which it is etymologically related, which expresses motion-to and state-in, but not motion-from (see also Zribi Hertz & Jean-Louis 2018 for relevant data from Martinican Creole).

- (39) a. Jézi désann soti **nan** kannòt la  
J. descend exit P boat the  
'Jézi comes out from the boat.'
- b. li tounin **nan** kannòt la  
he return P boat the  
'He returns to the boat'

*Haitian Creole* (Wälchli & Zúñiga 2006: 288)

More to the point, in Bislama, an English creole spoken in Vanuatu (Crowley 2004) the preposition *long* signals a wide range of non locative semantic roles including goal dative (39a), instrumental (40b), object of experience (40c), benefactive (40d).

- (40) a. Bae mi no save givim mane **long** yu  
 FUT I not can give money P you  
 'I can't give you the money.'
- b. Mi katem bred **long** naef  
 I cut bread P knife  
 'I am cutting bread with the knife.'
- c. Mi les **long** ol man blong smok  
 I sick P the.PL man of smoke  
 'I'm sick of smokers.'
- d. Mi ded **long** yu  
 I die P you  
 'I'm dying for you.'

*Bislama*

The preposition *long* can further indifferently express state-in, motion-to and motion-from, as illustrated in (41a). If a motion reading is specifically intended over a locative reading, this can be unambiguously expressed by incorporating the directional verbs *go* 'go' (41b) or *kam* 'come' (41c). A state-in meaning can be unambiguously expressed with the use of the serial verb *stap* (41d).<sup>16</sup>

- (41) a. Maki i bin wokbaot **long** bus.  
 Maki PM PST walk P bush  
 'Maki walked in/to/from the bush.'
- b. Maki i bin wokbaot i **go long** bus.  
 M. PM PST walk PM go P bush  
 'Maki walked to the bush.'
- c. Maki i bin wokbaot i **kam long** bus.  
 M. PM PST walk PM go P bush  
 'Maki walked from the bush.'
- d. Maki i bin wokbaot i **stap long** bus.  
 M. PM PST walk PM stop P bush  
 'Maki walked in the bush.'

*Bislama*

In other words, in Bislama one way in which the specific meaning of the preposition *long* can be established is through a serial verb construction. Thus the interpretation depends on the semantics of the verb.

We are now in a position to consider a range of questions arising if we try to apply the model developed for Italian in Section 2 even just to other Romance languages. For instance French uses *de* for sources as illustrated in (2b)=(11a), reproduced below as (42). At the same time *par* introduces causers/agents, as in (43a); interestingly *par* also has a locative meaning, but a perlocative one, not

16. The gloss PM in (41) stands for 'predicate marker'.

examined so far, as illustrated in (43b–c). Though here we used Italian as our case study, because of the interests of its *da* adposition, the French pattern is even better attested in Romance. Thus, perlatives and agents/causer have the same *por* lexicalization in Spanish.

- (42) Je viens **de** la maison / **de** Paris  
 I come from the house / from Paris  
 ‘I come from the house/from Paris’
- (43) a. Jean a été tué **par** Pierre / **par** une foudre  
 Jean has been killed by Pierre / by a lightning  
 ‘Jas was killed by Pierre/a lightning’  
 b. Je me promène **par** les bois  
 I myself walk through the woods  
 ‘I wander through the woods’  
 c. Je suis entré / sorti **par** la fenêtre / la porte  
 I am entered / exited through the window / the door  
 ‘I entered/got out though the window/the door’ French

In (42), where *de* is used as a locative source, the pattern can in principle be described in exactly the same terms as the Italian *da* pattern. Like *da*, *de* is a general relator; in its role of source it will select for vP. Still in (43) we need to know how French *par* should be characterized in its perlative use – and what determines its choice for the expression of the agent/causer. Let us begin with this second issue. Perlative *par* seems to express a trajectory without a telos as in (43b–c), so that it seems evident that some lexical restriction must be put in place to indicate that *par* denotes a trajectory (cf. Pantcheva 2011).<sup>17</sup> Note that a proposition semantically equivalent to (43b) could be expressed through the simple containment locative *dans* ‘in’, as in (44). (44) says that my walking is locatively included in the woods; (43b) then expresses a slightly more complex content, namely that my walking is included in a trajectory identified by the woods.<sup>18</sup>

17. An anonymous reviewer asks: “could syntax express distinctions such as extended trajectories, final and initial boundaries, minimal transitions, etc. as distinct heads?”. Part of the answer is that a certain amount of work which may otherwise be imputed to cartographic hierarchies of functional heads is done by the intrinsic content which is associated even with the simplest preposition and by the interactions with the different sub-events to which it attaches. The question then is whether more complex content is expressed either by empty functional structure, perhaps the silent categories of Kayne (2010), or by lexical restrictions. Our working hypothesis is the latter. Silent categories/hierarchies double conceptual content as structural content while providing no obvious explanatory advantage though this operation.

18. The distinction between what Talmy (2000) calls verb-framed languages (Romance) and satellite-framed ones (Germanic) is crucial to a proper appreciation of the data. The concept

- (44) Je me promène **dans** les bois  
 I myself walk in the woods  
 'I wander in the woods'

*French*

How can a trajectory be recruited to introduce agents and causers? Here it may be relevant to note that sentences like (43c) allow the ablative *de*, as shown in (45), to depict what seem to be the same situations.<sup>19</sup>

- (45) a. Le bruit entre **de** la fenêtre  
 The noise enters from the window  
 'The noise enters from/though the window'  
 b. Il est sorti **de** la porte  
 he is exited from the door  
 'He got out through/from the door'

*French*

Overall, we may conclude that expression of a source, via *de*, and of an open-ended trajectory, via *par*, may involve attachment at the causation structural layer, i.e. vP. This then provides the link with the fact that it can also lexicalize the agent/causer. The comparison between Italian and French raises the issue of the arbitrariness of lexical choices cross-linguistically (ablative *da* and perlocative *par* as the agent/causer in French and Italian respectively). As it turns out, the facts seem to fit current conceptions of parameters as degrees of freedom left open by Universal Grammar (Berwick & Chomsky 2011). We may also expect that there are languages which are like French, except that they lexicalize agents via *de*.

A more delicate question is posed by the arbitrariness of the lexical choices within a given language. Thus it is not obvious why source and genitive (NP-modifier) might be lexicalized by *de* in French. We shall return to this question in Section 4, after examining a sentential occurrence of Italian *da* which was not considered in Section 2, namely as introducing highly ranked referents as locatives (locative DOM).

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that the woods have been traversed must be expressed in Romance by telic verbs like *traverser*. It cannot be expressed by an atelic verb, unlike English (cf. *I walked through the woods*).

19. The same data can be reproduced in Italian, as in (i)–(ii).

- (i) Passeggio **per** i boschi / nei boschi  
 I.wander through the woods / in.the woods  
 'I wander in/through the woods'  
 (ii) Sono entrato / uscito **per** la finestra / dalla finestra  
 I.am entered / exited through the window / from.the window  
 'I entered/got out through/from the window'

## 4. Locative DOM

Before we consider locative DOM, as defined in Section 1, we take a detour into data concerning complex prepositions (cf. fn. 3). These strengthen the conclusion that languages like Italian with no obvious DOM phenomenon in the verbal domain, may nevertheless present it in the prepositional domain. This syntactic parallelism between prepositions and verbs in differentially marking high (or low) ranked referents is in fact a welcome result, to the extent that it provides an element of structural unification between different types of categorial projections.

### 4.1 Complex adpositions

In (46), the bare embedding of lexical DPs alternates with the embedding of pronouns via the genitive preposition *di* ‘of’. In general, there is a set of Italian prepositions (*senza* ‘without’, *dopo* ‘after’ and others, see Rizzi 1988: 535–536) which employ a genitive *di* layer in order to embed personal pronouns, namely deictic elements, though other non-deictic complements are embedded bare.<sup>20</sup>

- (46) a. Il cane corre verso il / \*del suo padrone  
           the dog runs toward the / of.the its owner  
           ‘The dog runs toward its owner’  
       b. Il cane corre verso (di) me / voi / lei  
           the dog runs toward of me / you / her  
           ‘The dog runs toward me/you/her’ Italian

In the terms of Svenonius (2006); Franco (2016) the complex preposition is an AxPart, as schematized in structure (47). The specific implementation of DOM inside Italian PPs can be summarized as in (48). In present terms, highly ranked elements on the definiteness scale (deictic pronouns) are encoded as including the spatial (or temporal, etc.) axis lexicalized by the AxPart. If we consider the connection of AxParts to nouns, then *di* in (47) is the expected choice for case embedding.

- (47)  $[_{AxPart} \text{ verso } [_{P(\subseteq)} \text{ di } [_{1/2P} \text{ me}]]]$   
 (48) DOM: Complex Adpositions  
 $[_{AxPart} [ \subseteq DP]]$  where DP = deictic

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20. Rizzi (1988) notes that it is possible to extend the use of the genitive *di* to demonstratives (e.g. *verso di questo*, ‘toward this’). Demonstratives are obviously very high in the definiteness hierarchy, whence the behaviour observed by Rizzi. This is consistent with what we know about the complex interplay of animacy and definiteness scales in Romance DOM (Manzini et al., 2020).

DOM in (48) further interacts with the fact that certain prepositions require or allow the  $\subseteq$  layer of embedding with all DP complements. This  $\subseteq$  layer may correspond to a *di* lexicalization or to an *a* lexicalization, as illustrated in (49) for two instances where the  $\subseteq$  layer is obligatory. Ultimately, lexical selection will play a role in the alternation of *di* and *a* in (49), which are just different instantiations of  $\subseteq$ .

- (49) a. prima **della** pioggia / **di** te / \***alla** pioggia  
           before of.the rain / of you / to.the rain  
           ‘before the rain/you’  
       b. davanti **alla** porta / **a** te / \***della** porta  
           in.front to.the door / to you / of.the door  
           ‘in front of the door/of you’

*Italian*

The interaction of *di* governed by DOM, as in (46), and of the selection patterns in (49) yields complex distributions of the type in (50). In (50a) the lexical DP can be embedded under an *a* layer, or bare – but cannot be embedded under a *di* layer. Nevertheless, (50b) shows that pronouns are preferentially embedded under a *di* layer, though bare embedding and *a* embedding remain (just) possible.

- (50) a. sopra/sotto al tavolo/ il tavolo/ \***del** tavolo  
           on/above/under to.the table/ the table/ of.the table  
           ‘on/above/under the table’  
       b. sopra / sotto **a** / Ø / **di** te  
           above / under to / Ø / of you  
           ‘above/under you’

*Italian*

Two different questions are raised by the data in (50). The first question is what determines the optionality of *a* in (50a). Some authors (Tortora 2005; Folli 2008) link it to different aspectual interpretations of the Ground, namely as denoting bounded space/time (Ø objects) or unbounded space/time (*a* objects). Garzonio & Rossi (2016), however, point out that there is a great deal of intra-speaker variation in judgments, and that many speakers do not perceive any different aspectual interpretations related to the presence/absence of *a*. In present terms, the Ø/*a* alternation depends on whether the AxPart selects a possessor-possessum embedding, by means of a relator  $\subseteq$ , as we expect, or is able to take the DP ground directly as its complement.

In our intuition (see also Garzonio & Rossi 2016), there is no aspectual difference between the two types of embedding. This is reminiscent of comparable alternations in the verbal domain discussed by Manzini & Franco (2016), whereby Italian *aiutare* ‘help’ selects accusative (bare) objects, while Latin *adiuvo* (transparently related to it) selects dative ones; German *helfen* selects dative –

while English has again accusative. In those languages where ‘help’ takes dative, a  $\subseteq$  structure of embedding is present (‘cause help to’) while in the accusative embedding languages it is not. Both the accusative and the dative selection correspond to structures fixed by Universal Grammar, but which of the two embedding is chosen must be learned by the child.

The second question raised by (50) concerns the contrast between the  $\emptyset/a$  alternation in (50a) and possibility of *di* in (50b). Garzonio & Rossi (2016), working with a layered PP skeleton along the lines of Cinque (2010), they derive the possibility of *di* in examples like (50b) by assuming that pronouns move from the base generated Ground position to a Deixis projection when introduced by *di*. It seems fair to say that Garzonio and Rossi’s DeicticP encodes cartographically the DOM generalization. In present terms, the latter takes the form in (48), where recall that we consider genitive to be the default choice in the context of the N-like AxPart.

## 4.2 Simple adpositions and *where* DOM

At this point we may go back to the data in Section 1, concerning the fact that animate locations are introduced by a distinct set of simple locative prepositions with respect to locations proper. In typological/functionalist terms (Luraghi 2011), animate referents cross-linguistically are taken to be bad landmarks, whence the necessity, in locative relations, of expressing them through specialized devices. In other words, the ontology of natural languages treats them as atomic individuals, as opposed to extended surfaces, unless some appropriate specifications are added. In Romance there are at least three different ways of introducing animate locations. One is through a (dedicated) AxPart, such as French *chez*; another strategy is the *wh*-pronoun for *where*, which we saw for the variety of Aidone in Section 1.2. Finally, there is the Italian system, whereby the *da* preposition gets extended to animate referents, independently of directionality.

It is not difficult to account for languages like French, which have a specialized item such as *chez*. It is sufficient to assume that the latter will select for locative inclusion by highly ranked referents. Items like French *chez* (or Persian *pish*, cf. fn. 10) are AxParts in the sense of Svenonius (2006), whose presence in a syntactic derivation is triggered by the referential properties of the Ground complement. In other terms, animate/human Grounds require a different (potentially, more complex) structure of embedding.

In relation to the Aidone data in (14), we considered a second way of introducing location at/from/to highly ranked referents, namely the use of the *wh*-word *where*; this occurrence of the *wh*-word *where* is a feature characterizing many Southern Italian dialects (Rohlf 1969 [1954]: §: 842), as illustrated in (51)–(53) for

the Lucanian dialect of Sasso di Castalda and Calabrian dialects of Morano and Cardeto. Informally, this way of expressing locative DOM seems to be connected to an elliptical strategy, in the sense that (51) is equivalent to saying something like ‘He is/come where I am’, thereby avoiding the use of human referents as locations altogether.

- (51) a.  $\varepsilon$  vvənutə ad'do mmikə *locative*  
 he.is come where me.OBL  
 ‘(S)he has come to me’  
 b. ad'do vajə? *interrogative*  
 where you.go  
 ‘where do you go?’ *Sasso di Castalda (Basilicata)*
- (52) a. jε vvinutu aḍḍu mia *locative*  
 he.is come where me.OBL  
 ‘(S)he has come to me’  
 b. aḍḍu vejji? *interrogative*  
 where you.go  
 ‘where do you go?’ *Morano (Calabria)*
- (53) a. iḍu vɛni ndi tia *locative*  
 he he.come where you.OBL  
 ‘I go to them’  
 b. aundi vai? *interrogative*  
 where you.go  
 ‘where do you go?’ *Cardeto (Calabria)*

There is an important formal difficulty with an ellipsis approach, namely that ‘where’ in (51) is followed by the oblique (prepositional objective) form of the 1st/2nd person pronoun *mikə*, *mia*, *tia*, as if it was a normal adposition. A possible explanation is based on the lexical properties of *where*, that as any interrogative element combines a lexical restrictor, here LOC, and an individual variable (Manzini and Savoia 2005, 2011). Moreover we may deal with *where* as an oblique locative in the scope of the inclusion operator  $\subseteq$ , as in (54a). In the case of 1st and 2nd person the inclusion relation is externalized by the oblique form they are endowed with.

- (54) a. aḍḍu = [ $\subseteq$  LOC [x]]  
 b. [ $_{VP}$  v [ $_{VP}$  vinutu [ 3SG [ $\subseteq$  LOC [ mia<sub>Obl</sub> ]]]]

The same formal issue arises in comparative structures of Italian of the type in (55a), where the interpretation is elliptical. We do not know of a standard account of the facts in (55). They suggest that there is no syntactic deletion derivation from

(55b) to (55a), but the ellipsis is reconstructed at the C-I interface. Even so, the reason why the objective rather than the nominative form of the pronoun surfaces in (53a) is not clear; saying that objective is the default case is essentially a restatement of the problem. In any event, what directly interests us is that whatever form the solution to (55a) takes, it is likely to apply to (51)–(53). We leave the matter open for further research.

- (55) a. E' alto come / quanto me / \*io  
           he.is tall how / how much me / I  
           'He is as tall as me'  
       b. E' alto come / quanto sono io / \*me  
           he.is tall how / how much am I / me  
           'He is as tall as I am'

*Italian*

So far, both the French and the Southern Italian way of resolving the problem of location/direction involving highly ranked referents are avoidance strategies. The French strategy is to locate the highly ranked referent with respect to an AxPart which is the (noun-like) location directly embedded in the event structure. The Southern Italian strategy is to embed the highly ranked referent as the logical subject of a locative predication (supported by the wh-item *where*).

Standard Italian, as seen in the examples in (9), repeated in (56) for ease of reference, seems to take a different approach. Thus state-in, motion-to and motion- from are introduced by the same element *da* which surfaces in motion-from and agent/causer contexts in Section 2.2.

- (56) Sono / vado / esco dal parrucchiere.  
       'I am at / I go to / I come from.the hairdresser'

*Italian*

The strongest interpretation of the data in (56) would be to maintain that *da* 'from, by' consistently implies location at the causal component of the event, hence outside its telos. This construal, however, is not compatible with the structural analysis of motion-to interpretations. Therefore we must conclude that though *da* is normally constrained to attach to *v* (the causation node of the predicate), it does attach to the resultative complement of V in the specific case when it selects a human location, as schematized in (57a). The structure of motion-from contexts parallels that introduced for non-animates in Section 2.2, as in (57b) below.

- (57) a. [<sub>VP</sub> v [<sub>VP</sub> vado [ 1SG [<sub>⊔</sub> da [<sub>DP</sub> il parrucchiere ]]]]  
       b. [<sub>VP</sub> v [<sub>VP</sub> esco 1SG] [<sub>⊔</sub> da [<sub>DP</sub> il parrucchiere ]]]

Recall that throughout this contribution, *da* has been treated as one of several exponents of the  $\subseteq$  elementary predicate; hence both attachments in (57) are open to it. On the other hand, the lexical entry for *da* that we may have entertained on the basis of Section 2.2 (motion-from and agent/causer environments) proves too restrictive. Indeed Italian *da* is not constrained to select for vP, but can also turn up as selecting highly ranked referents with any attachment to the event. This is summarized by the disjunctive set of lexical specifications in (58). According to (58), *da* can select a vP as its external argument, i.e. a causation event. It can also select an animate when the latter needs to be interpreted as a location (an object extended in space). The two are not mutually exclusive, as can be seen from (57b) namely motion-from with animate location.

- (58) *da*:  $P, \subseteq$ ,  
 selects vP/CAUSE or [<sub>Loc</sub> mental state]

In the lexical entry in (58), we used the two fundamental theta-roles suggested by Reinhart (2003) namely [cause] and [mental state] so as to suggest that Italian *da* requires one of them to be positively valued for one of its two arguments.<sup>21</sup> This entry is more or less in keeping with what we know of light verbs or of other elementary predicates (such as *have* evoked in Section 1). While these have an unambiguously defined denotational core, the contexts with which it proves compatible are not fully predictable and must be learned for each language.

## 5. Conclusion

Focussing on how the Romance languages express the basic locative/directional meanings of state- in, motion-to and motion-from, we have provided evidence that the oblique adpositions involved in the encoding of motion events do not contribute a specific, fixed spatial meaning. Rather, locatives are specializations of a general relator, part-whole content. We have proposed that state-in, motion-to and motion-from are disentangled on the basis of the fact that P can attach at the level of the Resultative Phrase or higher, at the level of the Cause Layer, in a multi-tiered verbal structure. As part of this approach we have accounted for the common realization of locative and non-locative goals, of locative source and agent/causer adpositions, but also of goal and agent/causer adpositions specifically in

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21. As noted by an anonymous reviewer, the disjunctivity issue arises also for our French case study, where as things now stand *de* disjunctively selects for NP (genitive) and to vP (motion-from). We leave the matter open here – since we have in fact not considered in any detail what happens in DPs. Recall that event nominal have a full set of adpositional modifiers.

Italian (*a, da* adpositions). Finally, we have reviewed some major instance of what we have labelled locative DOM in Romance, namely the differential marking of highly ranked referents, both in complex and simplex adpositional phrases.

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## Address for correspondence

Ludovico Franco  
Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia  
Università di Firenze  
Via Della Pergola, 60  
50121 Firenze  
Italy  
[franco.ludovico@gmail.com](mailto:franco.ludovico@gmail.com)

## Co-author information

M. Rita Manzini  
Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia  
Università di Firenze  
benedetta.baldi@unifi.it

Leonardo M. Savoia  
Dipartimento di Lettere e Filosofia  
Università di Firenze  
lsavoia@unifi.it