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RRL, XLVI, 1–4, p. 1–136, Bucarest, 2001
THE UNFOLDING OF THE PREPOSITION AND AFFIX *DE* IN LATIN, GALLO-ROMANCE AND HAITIAN CREOLE

BENJAMIN HEBBLETHWAITE

From Latin onward into the Romance languages, *de* is a frequent and polysemous (bound and free) morpheme. This paper presents data and analysis on the behavior of this ubiquitous morpheme, the preposition and affix *de*. This diachronic study (1) examines the tenacious and unchanging meanings and uses of *de* and (2) examines its fluctuating and submerging meanings and uses.

*De* is putatively from *Indo-European* (*IE*) and evidenced from → Latin (6th century Before the Common Era [BCE]+) → *Gallo-Roman (120 BCE – 400+ Common Era [CE]) → Old French (842+) → French (1500+) → to Haitian Creole (1625+), etc. (Baldí 1999: 1; Cohen 1947: 62-3). This paper examines the transmission and loss of core meanings and syntactic structures within a strain of the Romance language family. When *de* is absent or usage diverges, I examine various alternative syntactic and lexical settings licensed by Universal Grammar.

The most productive and unchanging of the linked *de* morphemes in the above languages is the prefix *de*- [de + base], for example in Modern French, *descendre*. *De*- and *de* are more sporadic. The particle *de-* is subcategorized to take an infinitive Verb Phrase [VP] complement, i.e. [de_VP], as in, *elle essaie de faire ça* ~ ‘she tries to do that.’ The preposition *de-* is subcategorized to take an Noun Phrase [NP] complement, i.e. [de_NP], as in, *la fille du père* ~ ‘the daughter of the father’ or *elle parle du patron* ~ ‘she speaks about the boss.’ Note that in the previous examples both an N or V may select *de*, as in [NP _de_NP] and [VP _de_NP], however, as this *de* uniformly selects NP, I treat it on the basis of its own subcategorization frame, [de_NP]. However, even though they both select NP, *de*- [VP _de_NP], what I will call *verb_de* is not identical to *de*- [NP _de_NP], what I will call *noun_de*. Whereas *verb_de* helps refine a verb’s semantic relationship with its direct object NP, *noun_de* bonds two contiguous NPs in a genitive/ablative relationship (of possession, withness, etc.).

1 The symbol “*“ means that the ancestor language or form is hypothetical, unattested. Speculatively, it may be that Africa is the origin of *de* in light of new genetic evidence that indicates Europeans, Asians and others “could be traced to African ancestors who lived between 89,000 and 35,000 years ago” (in Bloomington, IN., *Herald Times*, Tuesday, May 15, 2001, article citing *Science*, May 11, 2001).

2 The “+” symbol means that if the morpheme binds with the base, they become one word.

3 The “-“ symbol means that the morpheme is not bound to the preceding or following words.

RRL, XLVI, 1–4, p. 45–68, București, 2001
NOUN de Ø shows considerable variation across the language set because of its alternation with zero-marking: the obligatory structure [NP de NP] of Modern French, la fille du père, has an optional zero [Ø] equivalent [NP Ø NP] in Latin and early-mid Old French and an obligatory zero structure in Haitian Creole:

Latin: faciat parietae Ø calce and faciat partites de calce ~ ‘she makes walls of lime’
Old French: l’escu Ø Lancelot and l’escu de Lancelot ~ ‘the shield of Lancelot’
Haitian Creole: fi Ø papa a and *fi de papa a ~ ‘the daughter of the father’

Section (I) addresses the origins of de according to *Indo-European theory and early Latin attestations. As a pre- and post-posed adverb in *IE, de is said to have increased its functions in becoming a preposition and affix in Latin, a topic to be addressed in section (II).

Using Old French (OF) sources, section (III) observes how the vestiges of the internominal Ø Case-marking inherited from Latin, over a few centuries, gives way to the overt semantic saliency held by de Ø. De Ø becomes full-fledged in Modern French (MF) (IV), evolving as one of the most pervasive and essential morphemes in the language. De Ø and de Ø continue to be productive from OF through MF. The zero construction is almost completely filled by de and à in MF.

Section (V) explores de in Haitian Creole (HC), a language forged through the contact of African slaves with French and Gallo-Romance colonists. In HC the various meanings of de Ø are fully intact and productive. The infinitival particle de Ø is extinct in HC. V dé is selected by a far more restricted group of verbs than French, where V de abounds. NOUN de Ø, while existing as a genitive preposition in rare cases, ceases to be a productive genitive ablative Case-marker.

The dispersion of the affix and preposition de provides important insights into the nature of morphemic continuity over the past 2000 years. I will argue that the applicability of de’s semantic content (i.e. “movement down; to → from; separation”) to numerous syntactic and morphological positions is an important reason for de’s prominence among Romance morphemes. De’s core meanings and syntactic functions are enmeshed with basic phenomena in the time/space continuum. Additionally, the phonetic saliency of de, that is, its consonant + vowel segmental structure (as opposed to vowel + consonant), is another plausible reason for its long-standing productivity.

4 The word “zero [Ø]” refers to a syntactic, morphological and semantic structure in which meaning is expressed without the use of an overt preposition or other functional word. Zero is described as an “empty lexical category” (Tremblay 79).
5 The symbol ‘*’ before a string indicates ungrammaticality, and not hypotheticalness.
6 The word Gallo-Romance refers to people from France (and Gallo-Romania) who spoke a Gallo-Romance language, i.e. Picard, Norman, Champenois, Saintongeais, Wallon, Lorrain, Gascon, Provençal, etc.
7 The question of whether de has produced new hypersemes is under investigation (i.e. the main sub-meanings of de are “hypersemes”).
I. ORIGINS OF DE

The following paragraphs present the earliest recorded meanings and uses of de. De emerges variously through time and space, for examples outside of the Romance languages see Irish, Welsh, Anglo-Saxon and Germanic (see footnote 9 and Rey 1993: 555; Evans 1969; Dinneen 1904). Other than the above, the activity of de is centered in Romance *IE languages (Rey).

With no attestations, it is unclear what the original functions of de were in *IE. Several authors suggest that suffixal Case-marking came before the use of prepositions like de (Parigger 1941; Climent 1945; Jensen 1990, etc.). In *IE, words like de, ex and ab were adverbs accentuating the notion of separation (Parigger 9, Woodcock 1985, etc.). According to Parigger, a more fixed relationship to particular verbs emerged with constructions referring to pain. The adverbs-cum-prepositions allowed a more exact localization of discomfort, for example, dolebo ab oculis ~ "pain from/in the eye," or laborabo ex intestinis ~ "discomfort from/in the intestines" (10).

In proto-Latin de was a particle functioning as a "pre-verb and a pre- and postposition." (Baldi 1999: 359). The preverbal position of this morpheme gave rise to the fusing of de + base (i.e. deO) as the "juncture tightened between the two" (359). This occurs when the semantic "charge" or "weight" of the morpheme binds or links to a base, becoming essential to its meaning. Baldi provides a reconstructed *IE example of the preverbal adverbial in fusing with a base: *IE *dömHom hen gunti [home to X comes] > domum in venit > domum inventit (359). Vincent (1999) calls this process "unverbization" (1122).

As a verb or noun's complement, the particle de emerged to refine the meaning of the verb or noun and aid it link to its complement. From Latin onward prepositions step in to meet the demand of perceptibility pressure (Parigger 1941: 9).

II. DE IN LATIN

Out of the Latin prefix deO (also appearing as di-, dis-), at least the following hyperonymies (i.e. semantic generalizations) can be extracted:

8 Irish prefix di-: (1) negative, (2) intensive; Irish Case-marker preposition di: di = de + i, of, off or from her, it; 2) di- = do + i, to or for her, it (see Dinneen). In Welsh there are hundreds of examples of the prefix fused with a base: di- = without, not, un-, non; examples of some verbs: diaddwy = without respect; diasgein = unhurt; diachio = unhitch, unhook (see Evans).
9 But note that de heads an ablative construction in early Latin texts, dico amum ridiculam dictum de dictis melioribus (Plaut. Capt. 482) (Parigger 15).
10 Vincent cites "Gabelentz's law": "Alle Affirmativen waren ursprünglich selbständige Wörter ~ All grammatical markers were in origin independent words" (1113).
11 Nominal, adjectival and adverbial derivation also operates through contiguity.
12 "Perceptibility pressure" is a translation of Parigger's expression "aanschouwelijkheidsdrang" (9).
$de^a =$ Inversive/privation (desipio = "to be foolish, silly, to act foolishly");
$de^b =$ Privative (deformis = "deformed").
$de^c =$ Intensifier (deparcus = "excessively" or defendo = "to repel, ward off; to protect, defend") (Oxford Latin Dictionary).
$de^d =$ Motion down/away (i.e. deflecto = "to bend down or aside").
$de^e =$ Removal (despolio = "to plunder, despoil").
$de^f =$ Thoroughness (debello = "to wage war to the end; to fight it out").

The following bases (having lexical entries independent of the prefix $de$) are suggestive of the productive prefixed form of $de$ in Latin: degredior = "to lower" (i.e. de (a) + gressum = step); deiungo (b,c,e) = "to separate, unite" (i.e. de + iungo = to unite, link, tie); deerro = (f) "to deviate, digress"; demens (c) = "without judgment"; demiror (d,f) = "to greatly admire" (see dévisager in MF) (Mir 1993: 124).

Salient suffixal Case morphology allowed for the omission of prepositions like $de$ in Latin. The following example exhibits both strategies, final and $Ø$ Case-marking, i.e. [NP ex NP] in alternation with [NP $Ø$ NP]: faber faciat parietes $Ø$ calce et caementis, pilas ex lapide = "Let the workman make the walls $Ø$ with lime and cement, but the pillars out of stone" (Woodcock 1985: 29). Case and prepositions are interlocked – both present and absent – in the grammar of literary Latin. Prepositions require Case-marking on their noun and adjective complements. Compound verbs with prefixed morphemes $dé$, $ad$, $ante$, $sub$, $in$, etc., also trigger the prefix’s prepositional Case-requirement in complements (Pharr 1998: 56-65). Latin grammar in this way suggests from within itself the common origin of this particle: whether prefix, postposition or preposition, $de$’s subcategorization frame controls its complement.

The preposition $de$ in Classical Latin originates as an adverb functioning as a verbal disambiguator. Expressions such as cedit urbem, could be taken ambiguously, i.e. "He retires to the city" and "He surrenders the city." Adverbs-cum-prepositions, such as $de$, $ad$, $in$, $ab$, and $ex$, etc., were inserted to exact meaning (Woodcock 1985: 3). For example, movere de senatu = "to move from the senate," or, movere ex agro = "to move from the field," or te ab eo vindico ac libero = "I vindicate you and set you free from that" (examples from Mir 1993; Simpson 1968). As the adverb became obligatory it grammaticalized into a preposition heading and Case-marking its own phrase. The importance of bound Case-marking would gradually dwindle as phonetic erosion effaced Case-marker suffixes. By the 4th century, Vulgar Latin used $de$ with the accusative (i.e. direct

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13 The productivity of $de$ may be exemplified in the following foreign borrowings into Latin: dopso "knead" ~ [...] Old High German zispen; destino "make fast" ~ from *stiano "set" ~ sessed (M.Ir.), stian-n-dan (Got.) (Wharton 1890: 28).

14 For example, prepositions requiring the ablative Case were $dē$, $abs$ (ab, $ā$), $cum$, $cōram$, $praes, prō, sine, ex$, etc. (Pharr 1998: 63), the accusative Case $ante$, $apud, ad$, etc.
object) as a general oblique Case-marker (Woodcock 1985: 29). Woodcock describes the English and Romance languages as the “logical conclusion” of Latin’s suffix-to-preposition shift in Case-marking.

The preposition *de* has the following meanings (Oxford; English translations mine):

1) away from, off, down from: 
   *cadunt alitis de montibus umbrae*
   “Shadows fell off a tall mountain”
   *adspiciam notam de litore puppim*
   “I will see the famous stern from the shore”

2) from (to-from):
   *me de mea sententia detruserunt*
   “They held me back against my opinion”

3) from (a state, situation): [against]
   *non solum de die sed etiam in diem bibere*
   “To drink beginning in the day and for the day”

4) starting with or at:
   *de exemplo meo ipse aedificato*
   “I build this according to my own example”
   *agrum de nostro patre colendum habeat*
   “He received the field to be cultivated from our father”

5) after, according to:
   *tua pecunia aedificatum esse navem*
   “The boat is to be built with your money”
   *templum de marmore ponam*
   “I will erect a temple of marble”

6) a. person from whom:
   *qui...nocem facere posit de die*
   “who... could make night from day”
   *pauci de nostris cadunt*
   “a few of us fell (dead)”

b. fund from which:
   *eam de genere summo auscenti dabo*
   “I will give her to the youth who is of the highest breeding/birth”

7) from, out of:
   *de illa quaero*
   “I ask about those things”
   *de lingua Latina securi es animi*
   “You are at ease of mind with regard to Latin language”

8) partitive of, out of, from:
   *a. person from whom:
   *b. fund from which:
   *c. material from which:

9) origin of family, race:

10) about, concerning:

11) with regard to:
The \textit{de} structure \([de\_NP/ADJ\text{ or } de\_ADJ/NP]\), i.e. \textit{de mea sententia} - "in my opinion," and \([ADJ\_de\_NP]\), i.e. \textit{altis de montibus} - "(down) from a tall mountain," and \textit{Argolica de gente negabo} - "I was denying (being) from the Argile people," show that while not strictly ordered, \textit{de} does require adjacency (Virgil in Pharr 1998).

The following syntactic trees represent the phrase structure within which the preposition \textit{de} and its complement operate in classical Latin. I assume the Universal Base Hypothesis that claims Universal Grammar supplies one (specifier-head-complement-ordered) base structure (Kayne 1994; Zwart 1997). In trees (1) and (2) below I assume that \textit{de} is the head of a Prepositional Phrase [PP]. PP selects Determiner Phrase [DP] as its complement, following the DP hypothesis which states that "all nominals are D projections" (Radford 1997: 258; Abney 1987). DP selects NP (or AgrP/NumP + NP) as its complement. In tree (1), movement accounts for the leftward position of the Case-assigned adjective \textit{altis}, with respect to the Case-assignor \textit{de}.\footnote{This paper assumes that the adjective \textit{altibus} is base-generated in specifier of NP, i.e. \textit{r} - "trace," and then moved leftward through Specifier of DP to Specifier of PP.}

The tree (2) exemplifies the head-complement structure that will finally become the overarching structure in French and other Romance languages:

\begin{figure}[h]
\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
  \node (PP) {PP}
    child {node (AP) {AP\textunderscore\textit{altis}}
      child {node (P) {P\textunderscore\textit{de}}
        child {node (D) {D\textunderscore\textit{montibus}}
          child {node (N) {N\textunderscore\textit{tua}}
            child {node (NP) {NP\textunderscore\textit{pecunia}}}}}}}
      child {node (N) {N\textunderscore\textit{tua}}};
\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}
\end{figure}

In tree (1) I assume that the Adjective Phrase \textit{altis} moves from the base-generated specifier position of NP to the specifier position of the PP, forming a chain on its way up. The specifier of PP eventually ceases to be a landing site for \textit{de}, rather than straightform Latin particle, not + \textit{hinc}, i.e. \textit{des thereafter," assumes the many prepo the followin "voluntarily."

In Latin morphemes meaning. \textit{P} \textit{de}, many oil previously a replacing \textit{ex} interwoven segments on vulnerable \textit{V}.

\footnote{This is "consequently, "somewhat abstr Form such as \textit{in} affixal preposition \textit{ex} \textit{minimis} - "of the "for good behav Branyon 56-61).}

\footnote{Not all, I}

\footnote{This occi}
Adjective Phrases. In (2) I assume that tua is the head of a DP maximal projection rather than the specifier of NP, this accounts for \[ D\' tua [\text{NP} bona [\text{NP} pecunia]] \] straightforwardly (here I gloss over AgrP/NumP).

Latin includes numerous examples of de bound to a base (preposition, particle, noun, adjective) to form an adverb, for example dehinc - "from there" (de + hinc, i.e. demonstrative adjective), denique - "finally," demum - "exactly, at length," desuper - "upon," etc. With the adverb deinde - "from that place, thereafter," de is front and back compounded to the preposition in. As de gradually assumes the role of primary genitive/ablative marker, it follows that it will head many prepositional phrases that function as adverbial phrases. Mir (1993) cites the following, de integro - "anew," de improviso - "suddenly," de industria - "voluntarily" (124).17

In Late Latin, the phonetic erosion of word-final Case-marking bound-morphemes resulted in semantic ambiguity. Prepositions began to crucially direct meaning. Preexisting adverbs-cum-prepositions arose to the task.18 In addition to de, many other prominent prepositions (in French, for example) take up functions previously available by Case-marking, i.e. à, dans, avec, en, pour, etc. De begins replacing ex and ab for semantic and phonetic reasons: de’s meanings are interwoven with basic time/space relations and the harder consonant-vowel (CV) segmental structure of de was a natural competitor and replacement for the vulnerable VC segmental structure of ex and ab (Rey 555).

III. De IN OLD FRENCH

*Vulgar Latin transmits de to Old French [OF]; in turn, as OF evolves into MF, the uses of de expand.19

Early OF texts attest to the expanded role and function of de. An early form of Gallo-Romance is identified by 842 in the Serments de Strasbourg. The Serments shows both overt noun de, i.e. [NP de NP], and case marking, i.e. [NP Ø NP]. For instance, Ø in this Latinate genitive use, Pro Deo amur - "For the love of God." Still, de is frequent in this text, de suo part non los tanit (de Ø) ~

16 This is true with Latin prepositions-cum-adverbs, i.e. postiridie - "the next day," proinde - "consequently," insuper - "above," subadroganter - "somewhat arrogantly," subabsurde - "somewhat absurdly," inde - "hence, from there," abhinc - "hereafter," absolut - "perfectly," etc. Forms such as in + de, pro + in + de and in + super show affixal prepositions affixing to other affixal prepositions.

17 Other examples are de rebus - "of things," de fide - "of faith," de gratia - "by favor," de minimis - "of the most insignificant things," de bono et malo - "come what may," de bono gestu - "for good behavior," de claro die - "by the light of day," de facto - "existing by fact," etc. (see Branyon 56-61).

18 Not all, however. Some, such as ex, only remained as a prefix.

19 This occurs within a continuum in which Modern French [MF] is the apex.
"for his part he does not keep them" (pro suo parte in Latin) and a'ist di in avant (de(0)) — "from this day forward" (A.-B. 28). Saint Eulalie (880-82) also contains Ø constructions: li Deo intim ~ "the enemies of God" (Ayre-Bennett [A.-B.] 31). 

verb de(0) also appears: Qued avuisset de nos Christus mercit ~ "that Christ will have mercy on us" (A.-B. 31). In the mid-eleventh century text La Vie de Saint Alexis, de(0) is common, le dol del pedra e de la medre (de(0)) ~ "the grief of the father and of the mother," de ta juvente bélal (de(0)) ~ "due to/because of your beautiful youth," and départie, delivres, desirat (de(0)) (A.-B. 46-48).

De(0) remains robust to this day in MF.

Etymological dictionaries of OF and MF reveal the productivity of de(0). The following verbs are accompanied by the hyperoseme category that they fall into, their English gloss, and the date of their first textual attestation:

débaucher [f] ~ "to debauch" (1195), débattre [d,f] ~ "to debate," etc. (1050), déchiqueter [b,c,d,e,f] ~ "to rip up" (1338), dédure [f,d] ~ "to deduce" (1050), déguerpir [a,f] ~ "to clear off, scatter, chase" (1120), départir [b,c,e] ~ "to abandon, depart from" (1050), dégantier [b] ~ "to remove one's gloves" (1330) (Rey).

Particularly noteworthy are non-Romance borrowings to which de has prefixed. The verb dégringoler [a] ~ "to tumble (down)" (1595), a product of late middle French, shows the prefixation of de- to a word of Netherlandic origin, crinkelen ~ "to crinkle, crunch" (Rey). Likewise, guerpir from verpon, meaning "to throw," is Francique, i.e. Germanic (Petit Robert). The original meanings of the prefix are preserved and productive.

The origin of infinitival de(0) in OF is not well understood to my knowledge. Martineau (2000) provides an electronic corpus-based study of the competition exhibited between à, de, and Ø in pre-infinitive position. Her study shows the changing selectional requirements of a small class of verbs diachronically. The following charts present her statistical results for commencer, continuer, tâcher, cesser, refuser, souhaiter and désirer (166-177).

Examples of the three competing structures for commencer are: à = ...commença tresfort et soudainement a plorer... ~ "began to suddenly cry very hard"; de = ...commença de rire... ~ "began to laugh"; Ø = ...commença Ø grouiller... ~ "began to grumble" (166).

20 A few other examples from the same text: d'els ait mercit ~ "they received mercy from them," de nos averir feruns ~ "we'll make [gifts] from our goods," de lur tresurs ~ "off/from their treasures," etc.

21 The bracketed numbers refer to the hyperosemes introduced on page 4, i.e. (a) inversive/privative, (b) reversal/privation, (c) intensifier, (d) motion down/away, (e) removal, (f) thoroughness.

22 What seems to be the French prefix de may be an agglutinated Dutch infinitival particle subjected to voicing, i.e. om te → crinkelen.
in avant contains... 
. B. J. 31). 
artists will... de Saint...rief of the...e of your...et...)

de. The...fall into...!

" etc.
- "to
120),
] \"to

ich de has...ct of late
nundic origin,
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competition...show's the
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inner, tâcher,
ser are: à =
only cry very

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sived mercy from
- "off" from their

page 4, i.e. (a)
; (e) removal, (f)
ininitival particle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>commencer</th>
<th>% of Â</th>
<th>% of DE</th>
<th>% of Ø</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old French</td>
<td>98.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle French</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIIth century</td>
<td>90.7%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical French</td>
<td>80.8%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern French</td>
<td>97.6%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of the competing structures for the verb continuer are: à =...continuait à luy dire... ~ “continued to say to him”; de =...continuant de la reprendre et injurier... ~ “continuing to grab and injure her” (168).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>continuer</th>
<th>% of Â</th>
<th>% of DE</th>
<th>% of Ø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old French</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle French</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIIth century</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical French</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern French</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of the competing structures for the verb tâcher are: à =...tascher à l’espousier... ~ “attempt to marry her”; de =...tascher de parvenir... ~ “attempt to attain”; Ø =...tascher mettre... ~ “to try to put” (170).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>tâcher</th>
<th>% of Â</th>
<th>% of DE</th>
<th>% of Ø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old French</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle French</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIIth century</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical French</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>94.7%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern French</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>99.4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of the competing structures for the verb cesser are: à =...cessez a sacrifier à mei... ~ “cease to sacrifice for me”; de =...cesserés jamais de crier... ~ “you will never cease crying”; Ø =...cesseront travailler... ~ “(they) will cease to work” (170).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cesser</th>
<th>% of Â</th>
<th>% of DE</th>
<th>% of Ø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old French</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle French</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIIth century</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>90.3%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical French</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern French</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of the competing structures for the verb refuser are: à =...refusoiënt a dire... ~ “refused to say”; de =...refusant d’oïr... ~ “refusing to hear”; Ø =...refusé le vestir... ~ “(she had) refused to dress him” (170).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>refuser</th>
<th>% of ḳ</th>
<th>% of DE</th>
<th>% of Ø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old French</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle French</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVth century</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical French</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>98.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern French</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>99.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of the competing structures for the verb souhaiter are: *de = souhaiter de s'en esloigner*... = “to hope to go far from there”; *Ø = ...aït souhaité s’immortaliser = “had hoped to immortalize himself”* (170).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>souhaiter</th>
<th>% of ḳ</th>
<th>% of DE</th>
<th>% of Ø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old French</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle French</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVth century</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical French</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern French</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>61.4%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, examples of the competing structures for the verb désirer are: *a = désirant a complaire... ~ “desiring to please”; dé = ...désirant d’achever... ~ “desiring to complete”; Ø = ...desire parvenir... ~ “desires attaining”* (173).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>désirer</th>
<th>% of ḳ</th>
<th>% of DE</th>
<th>% of Ø</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old French</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle French</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>41.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVth century</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical French</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern French</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Matineau statistically demonstrates the remarkable progression of déØ at the beginning of the XVII century (Classical French) – exceptions being commencer, continuer and désirer where dé declines (175). She argues that déØ takes on considerable importance in Classical French for all types of verbs due to its new status as préposition de base [unmarked preposition] for introducing the infinitive (176). She notes that a property of the infinitival complements introduced by déØ is the virtually generalized absence of object-of-the-infinitive clitic-raising, as opposed to a and Ø which allowed object-of-the-infinitive clitic-raising until the period of Classical French, for example:

```
ad: ...lay, racommande à faire mal; ...
...h-im-DAT restart to do-INF wrong...
```

The prepositional morpheme as parler tout le
de: ...il ne cesseroit de le poursuivre ti ... 
...he NEG cease-COND to him-ACC pursue-INF 
‘he would not cease to pursue him’
Ø: ...lesi desirons complaire ti ... 
...them-D.O. want to please-INF 
‘we want to please them’ (177).

Martineau furthermore notes that with the rise of deθ in Classical French, object-of-the-infinitive clitic-raising diminished considerably with verbs that took à and Ø (177). Martineau also proposes explanations for commencer, continuer and désirer. She suggests that verbs like désirer were fashioned after other verbs of volition, such as vouloir ~ “to want,” by force of analogy (178). Likewise, the preposition à was retained with commencer and continuer analogous to other structures where the preposition à marks direction and an aim to attain (179). Via grammaticalization, however, such semantic attributes are fairly opaque in MF (179). Before moving on to deθ in OF, note that the origins of deθ remain to be explained. Togeby (1968) proposed linking the greater use of prepositions with infinitives to the devoicing of the infinitive’s final r beginning around 1300 (cited in Martineau 2000: 180). The preposition would then distinguish the infinitive from the past participle (180). Martineau points out, however, that Togeby’s hypothesis fails to explain de’s appearance in front of verbs that retain distinct infinitive/past participle endings, i.e. prendre/pris, in addition to verbs that do not mark the infinitive prepositionally, i.e. daigner (180). She concludes calling deθ the unmarked preposition for introducing an infinitive and notes that more in depth research is necessary (180).

An important characteristic displayed by deθ is its phonetic fusion with masculine singular and plural definite determiners. This begins in OF and is retained in MF. For example, masculine singular: de + l’ = del, de + lo = do, de + lo = dou, du, with only du retained in MF; and masculine plural: de + les = dels, des with only des retained in MF (Bartsch 1951: 319). The feminine singular would ultimately withstand this fusion: of the competing forms, de la, de le and de l’, only de la would remain in MF. The feminine plural would reduce from de las and des to des alone (320).

The preposition verbe deθ has an important role in providing a semantic link between a verb and its direct object in OF through MF. verbe deθ is not a bound-morpheme as it can be separated from the verb, here by an adverbial phrase, i.e. il parle tout le temps de ~ “he talks all the time about…”

The following list of the constructive functions of deθ and θ is based on Jensen (1990):

a. de + complement join with verbs of separation.
b. de (θ) links a verb to its complement and introduces subject matter with parler and savoir (Jensen 453): d’un son fil veuill parler ~ “he wants to talk about one of his sons” (Saint Alexis 15); et ne dites rien
de Lancelot — “and don’t say anything of/about Lancelot” (Mort Artu 87.53) (Jensen 452),
c. de + infinitive (Θ), which does not hold “precise semantic value” (Jensen 453): li rois semont ses chevaliers d’aler chacier en la forest de Kamaalot — “the knight invites his knights to go to the forest of Camelot” (Mort Artu 88.29),
d. verbal locutions (Θ): avoir talent de ~ “have the desire to,” avoir mestier de ~ “to be useful (to someone),” avoir peur de ~ “to be afraid of” (Jensen 454).
e. instrument and means (Θ): celui tien ad espous qui nos redenst de son sanc precis ~ “this one holds to the bride who redeems us with his precious blood” (Saint Alexis 66) (in Jensen 451); Galaad li trenchre de l’espee le poign semestre ~ “Galahad cuts off the left hand [fist] with the sword” (Queste 43.6); marks the cause or manner: de doel mura[i] ~ “I’ll die of grief” (Roland 1867) (Jensen 451-2).
f. comparison (Θ): plus estoit blance d’une flor ~ “more white than a flower” (Bel Inconnu 2231) and plus de .iii. milliers ~ “more than 4 thousand” (Roland 1685) (Jensen 451).
g. point of departure, the marking of distance, to-from (Θ): […] que l’en oist le son de deux lieues loing ~ “that he heard its sound from two leagues length” (Mort Artu 188.5) (Jensen 1990: 452);
h. point in time (Θ): D’ist di en avant ~ “from this day forward” (Serments de Strasbourg).

Below is a listing of the genitive/ablative noun de meanings and functions in OF, i.e. [NP de NP]. The presentation of de below with accompanying examples is based on Jensen (1990: 450-56), Godefroy (1883: de entry), and Joly (1998: 234-5).

1) prep. a. “relation d’origine” ~ “relation of origin,” “genitive”: fil de roi ~ “son of the king” (Yv., 2050); Joly calls this b. a “relation de propos” ~ “relation of subject or topic” (Joly): la verité de son père ~ “the truth of her father” (Queste 20, 6); c. Jensen describes the following use as an example of ‘generic’ use: en la cité de Jerusalem ~ “in the city of Jerusalem” (450, Queste 70.1); d. Joly, “relation d’espèce” ~ “relation of kind”: semblance d’ome ~ “appearance of a man” (Queste, 36, 22, 12); e. agitative or objective relation: la raison de Uterpandragon ~ “the betrayal of Uterpandragon” (Lanc, VI); f. marks the substance, material: en un grant capel de coton ~ “in a big cloak of cotton” (Jensen citing Villehardouin 68).

2) prep. degree of difference, partitive relation: le Roi des Rois ~ “the King of Kings” (Queste).

3) prep. “expressions of quantity”: ensemble od vos xx. milie de Francs ~ “together with your 15 thousand Francs” (Jensen 450).
Other semantic attributes could be added. The structure \([NP_{de\_NP}]\) encapsulates the strictly linear internominal realization of \(de\Theta\). In most cases \(NP^1\) is the semantically possessed or the focus and \(NP^2\) is the possessor or the object. The possessed-possessor structure \([NP_{de\_NP}]\) was not entirely fixed in Old French, three competing strategies vied for position as genitive markers: (1) \(NP_{de\_NP}\); (2) \(NP_{\emptyset}\_NP\); (3) \(NP_{a\_NP}\).

\(de\) in (1) determines personal nouns, personal pronouns and nouns, for example: (a) \(la\ porte\ de\ son\ chastel\) — “the entrance of his castle” (Yv 901); (b) \(la\ duré\ dou\ monde\) — “the hardness of the world” (Qweste, 37, 31); (c) \(l'orgel\ de\ li\) — “the pride of his” (J. et B., 1001) (from Joly 1998: 238-9). Note of course that \(de\) triggers the oblique/accusative form of the pronoun \(li\) in (c) above.

The Absolute Genitive or Juxtaposition Genitive in (2) is a kind of \(\emptyset\)-marking that is only employed with something belonging to a human (proper or common name, pronoun), perhaps suggesting that the possessor noun is subcategorized with a [-animate] feature: \(l'escu\ \emptyset\ Lancelot\) — “Lancelot’s shield/the shield of Lancelot” (Artu 44, 59); animal: \(li\ destriers\ \emptyset\ Guillelme\) — “the war horse of William” (Alis 1523) (from Joly 1998: 234-5).

Note that on rare occasions the possessed can also precede: \(l'autrui\ joie\ prise\ petite\) — “For another’s joy he cares little” (Swanson 2001: 5). A.-B. (1996: 28) calls the Absolute Genitive ‘vestigial,’ but Jensen observes its use in the poetry of Villon (1461) (cited in Swanson 7).

The preposition \(a\) (3) filled positions that are only licensed by \(de\) in Modern French: \(l'estel\ a\ la\ dame\) — “the abode of the woman” (Artu 45, 15), \(la\ feme\ au\ chevalier\) — “the wife of the knight” (Lanc VII, 2) (from Joly 1998: 237).

Evidence of the coexistence of parallel genitive-marking structures can be seen in texts in which more than one structure surfaces: \(les\ piez\ des\ chevax\) (Lanc, III, 6) and \(les\ piez\ as\ chevax\) (Lanc, XIV, 6) — “the hooves of the horses” (Joly 1998: 237).

Swanson’s (2001) electronic corpus-based analysis of the genitive structures across several centuries reveals the period of change (in bold print) toward the exclusive use of \(de\). Her results reveal that the period of change from \(\emptyset\) to \(de\) occurred sweepingly in the 14th century. Her data also show that \(a\) was never a significant genitive marker.

23 Other examples: body: \(l'espoule\ \emptyset\ Ami\) — “the shoulder of Amy” (Am. et Am., 1808); abstract: \(la\ biauté\ \emptyset\ madame\ Ysoult\) — “the beauty of madame Ysoult!” (Trist. 88, 13), \(la\ honte\ \emptyset\ son\ cosin\) — “the shame of his cousin” (Yv., 748-49); parentage-alliance: \(fils\ \emptyset\ le\ roi\ Ban\ de\ Benoye\) — “the son of the king Ban of Benoye” (Qveste 63, 9) (from Joly 234-5).

24 Other examples: \(suer\ aus\ deus\ freses\) (Artu, 57, 2); \(fils\ a\ baron\) (Am. et Am. 2758); \(charesie\ au\ marcheant\) (Ren 9768) (from Joly 237).
The compounding structure [de + base = adverb/preposition] inherited from Latin (i.e., desuper — from above; demum — at length) produces new adverbs in OF. For instance, delez (de + lez) ~ “next to,” deriere (de + arriere) ~ “behind,” devant (de + avant) ~ “before, in front of,” etc. 25 Kibler (1984) notes that the above forms are sometimes recompounded, i.e. dedevant ~ “in front of/from in front of,” dedessus ~ “on top of/from on top of” (107). Godefroy also provides numerous examples of de heading an adverbial phrase, i.e. de rechiff ~ “once again,” del font ~ “completely,” d’outrage ~ “with excess,” etc. (1883: 425-430). 26

In OF the prefix de Θ remains steadily productive, de Θ increasingly takes an infinitival complement, and, by late OF, pre-nominal de Θ dominates over à and Θ. The next section presents de’s attainment in MF.

### IV. DOMINANCE OF de IN MODERN FRENCH

The preposition de belongs to a class of frequent (grammatical function) words that make up 60% of MF (Mitterand 1965: 15). In MF de is a “high and even dispersion” word (Juilland 1970: LV).


De [de base] remains a productive prefix across grammatical categories: dénouer (v.) ~ “to untie,” dérivation (n.) ~ “derivation,” dérégler (adj.) ~ “out of control,” etc. A large stock of de-words have been inherited from OF or borrowed from Latin. Renaissance French of the 16th century borrows heavily from Latin (and Gallo-Romance) (Ayres-Bennett 1996: 141-177). Many neologisms have also come forth: dépiger [b,o] ~ “to unstick, to unpick” (1791), déparer [b,c,d] ~ “to slide, to go wrong” (1739), dépister [b,d,f] ~ “track s.o. down” (1737), démarquer ~ “to remove labels, to mark down, to copy or plagiarize” (1878), délabaliser [b,c] ~ “to delabalyze (ling.)” (1900), déramer [a,b,c,d,f] ~ “to advance by pushing on the oars instead of pulling them” (20th century), etc.

The previous section on OF examined the rise of de as the unmarked preposition introducing infinitives over à and Ø based on Martineau (2000). Grevisse (1964) supplies an incomplete list of well over 100 verbs that select de to introduce the infinitive in MF (section 758: 678-79).

De occurs when the infinitive is used as a subject, i.e. D’être tête-à-tête à leur table (...) les dérida ~ “To be close together at their table (...) they cheered them up” (section 754: 674).

When ce is used in front of the verb être, de is required for introducing an infinitival attribute, i.e. l’héroïsme du pauvre, c’est d’immoler l’envie ~ “the heroism of the poor is to immolate desire” (section 522, 2nd ed.: 453-4).

Certain verbs construct the infinitival complement indifferently with à and de such as commencer ~ “to begin,” continuer ~ “to continue” (see Martineau 2000 above for counterevidence), s’efforcer ~ “to strive,” s’ennuyer ~ “to be bored,” forcer ~ “to force,” obliger ~ “to oblige,” solliciter ~ “to solicit” (see Grevisse for examples, section 760: 688-689).

Some verbs admit either à or de based on meaning: décider à = “to determine to do something” versus décider de = “to stop and determine what one must do” (other such verbs given in section 761: 690-94).

The infinitive can be used with or without a preposition depending on the impersonal expression: il faut Ø partir ~ “it is necessary to leave,” versus, il vous suffirait de l’entendre ~ “it was sufficient for you to wait for her,” versus, il reste à/de, which can take either à or de based on meaning, i.e. il nous reste à dire ~ “it remains for us to say,” versus, il me restait d’attendre ~ “I just had to wait” where the former indicates an action to be taken and the latter a fact that took or takes place (section 764: 697).

Many transitive verbs require that de introduce an infinitive, i.e. il mérite de réussir ~ “he deserves to succeed” (section 922: 910-11).

Finally, de is optional in front of an infinitive used as the second term of comparison, i.e. j’aime mieux les souffrir [les maux] que de les mériter ~ “I more prefer to suffer [evils] them than to deserve them” versus plutôt souffrir que Ø mourir ~ “rather suffer than die” (section 922: 913).

The affix de’s hypersemes are repeated here for convenience: (a) inversee/privative, (b) reversal/privation, (c) intensifier, (d) motion down/away, (e) removal, (f) thoroughness.
The use of de increases robustly in MF. As we have seen, with the decline of the juxtaposition Genitive in late OF, the preposition de becomes obligatory in genitive Case assignment. The loss of d and the shift away from à to obligatory de with various types of Case-marking is already complete by the beginning of the MF period.

In contrast to de, à takes on goal-oriented meaning and implies a higher degree of mental participation from the subject: i.e. s'emporesser de ~ “to hurry to do something” vs. s'emporesser à ~ “to do something enthusiastically” (Kemmer 1996: 367). À takes on the role of dative marker. In MF the interminarial preposition de fixes states whereas à fixes properties (Cadiot 1997: 44-45). Cadiot uses the following schema to represent the different functions of the prepositions:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{NP}^1 & \quad \text{NP}^2 \\
\text{a)} & \quad \text{Verre de vin} \sim \text{“Glass of wine.”} \\
\Rightarrow & \\
\text{b)} & \quad \text{Verre à vin} \sim \text{“Glass for wine/wine-glass.”} \\
\leq & \quad (45)
\end{align*}
\]

De supposes the presence of content while à does not. À empties the content referred to by NP² of all reality, of all extension (45).

While sometimes contrasting with à, in some cases, Verbe de behaves on the surface as a frozen unit or as a mere agent of complementation, consider the following semantic conflation: s'éloigner de Paris ~ “to head away from Paris,” with, se rapprocher de Paris ~ “to approach Paris/to head to Paris” (Cadiot 1997: 11). Then again, a verb's subcategorization of a preposition can be crucial to the delivery of meaning: Je te sépare de ce groupe-là ~ “I separate you from that group.”

The Robert Collins French-English Dictionary provides the following list of uses:

1) Place: Nounde
   Le magasin de Londres ~ The shop in London.
2) Destination: Nounde
   L'avion de Bruxelles ~ The plane to Brussels.
3) Belonging: Nounde
   Les oreilles du lapin ~ The ears of the rabbit.
4) Content: Nounde
   Une bouteille de bière ~ Bottle of beer.
5) Matter: Nounde
   Un vase de cristal ~ Crystal vase.
6) Quality: Nounde
   Un homme de goût ~ A:man of good taste.
7) Agent: Nounde
   Le film de Fellini ~ The Fellini film/the film by Fellini.
8) Alienable possession: Nounde
   Le portrait de Washington ~ The portrait of Washington.
9) Accompaniment: Verbe de
   Il l'attrape de la main gauche ~ He grabs her with the left hand.

21 Note that in English, the the equivalents of the French verbs, i.e. “se rapprocher de” = “to approach Ø Paris” and “s'éloigner de” = “to get far from Paris,” subcategorize for distinct morphemes, Ø and from.
10) "par": \text{VERB} de\text{O} \quad \text{Il gagne 90 F de l'heure} \sim \text{He earns 90 F per hour.}

11) Duration: \text{VERB} de\text{O} \quad \text{Elle travaille de jour} \sim \text{She works during the day.}

12) From – to: \text{VERB} de\text{O} \quad \text{De... en; de... à} \quad [\text{n.b. 9-11 are postverbal de}]

In MF the productivity of de with expressions and collocations continues. Adverbial expressions with de are common, for example: \text{Elle boit de plus en plus} \sim \text{"She drinks more and more."} \text{Il regarde de près} \sim \text{"He looks (from) up close," etc.}^{29} Examples of prepositional collocations in which de is final are numerous: \text{dans le dos de} \sim \text{"on the back of," loin de} \sim \text{"far from," au-dessus de} \sim \text{above, "on the top of," en face de} \sim \text{"in front of, in face of," proche de} \sim \text{"close to," en dessous de} \sim \text{"on top of," etc. The Case requirement of the NP following the prepositional collocation accounts for the obligatory de.}

Grevisse (1964) lists many examples of elided de\text{O} in MF. He claims that the rapport between the two terms is sufficiently suggested by juxtaposition: \text{le boulevard} \ O \ \text{Voltaire} \sim \text{"the Voltaire boulevard," le match} \ O \ \text{France-Belgique} \sim \text{"the France-Belgium match," nous parlâmes littérature} \sim \text{"we spoke about literature,"} (section 911: 882). In vernacular MF de is sometimes elided after \text{en face (de), près (de), proche (de) and vis-à-vis (de), for example: en face \ O \ la chambre à coucher} \sim \text{"in front of the sleeping room," près \ O \ l'escalier} \sim \text{"near the stairs," proche \ O \ la paroisse} \sim \text{"close to the parish" and vis-à-vis \ O \ l'église} \sim \text{"opposite the church"} (section 911: 883). De is optional in front of an adjective in expressions of the type: \text{trois jours (de) libres} \sim \text{"three days free" (section 922: 912). Ellipsis of de almost always occurs in front of the name of the month, i.e. \text{le huit \ O \ mai} \sim \text{"the eighth of May" (section 923: 918).}

A few OF \ O \ fossils remain in MF, such as \text{tirer profit} \sim \text{"to make a profit," la Fête-Dieu} \sim \text{"Corpus Christi," l'Hôtel-Dieu} \sim \text{"general hospital," l'église Notre-Dame} \sim \text{"church of our Lady," le bain-marie} \sim \text{"double boiler," Dieu merci} \sim \text{"thank God," etc. but such constructions are not productive (Rosenberg 1999, Swanson 2001: 7).}

In review, while retaining the \ O \ structure in restricted contexts, de\text{O}, \ O \ and \ O \ flourish as one of the most frequent morphemes in MF. The next section examines the fate of de in Haitian Creole.

V. De IN HAITIAN CREEOLE

Haitian Creole [HC] is useful to this analysis as it presents a recent example of African-Romance language formation that illustrates the resultant continuity and decline exhibited by the morpheme de. Proto-HC began forming after 1625 on the

\text{procher de} \sim \text{"to prize for distinct

29 Other examples of de fronting adverbial phrases: de temps en temps \sim \text{"from time to time," de moins en moins \sim \text{"less and less," d'une manière \sim \text{"in a manner/ way/-ly" d'une façon \sim \text{"in a way/sense/ly,-," de trop \sim \text{"too much," etc.}
Caribbean island, Hispaniola, when the Gallo-Romance population established its earliest settlements in the west, raiding and buying Spanish-controlled slaves from the east. Spain and other superpowers recognized French control of Saint-Domingue, the western third of Hispaniola, by 1700. HC has a complex development as successive waves of slaves influenced the language: hispanicized Africans at first and Bantu-speaking West Africans after circa 1690.30 Lefebvre (1998) emphasizes the influence of the Bantu language Fongbe in HC genesis. The final layer of formation was probably introduced with the extremely heavy slave imports that characterize the period just prior to the Haitian Revolution, i.e. 1750 – 1792.31

The verbal prefix de remains unchanged and productive in derivation. The following list focuses on Haitianisms as they provide the best proof of de’s ongoing productivity as a prefix.

- de² = inversive, i.e. deploge ~ “unplug,” derekonnet ~ “to fail to recognize”; deteke ~ “get rid of pests, ticks.”
- de³ = privative, i.e. degrese ~ “degrease, to remove fat (from an animal)”;
- de⁴ = intensifier, i.e. derefize ~ “to refuse, reject”; depafini ~ “ruin”; deboundare ~ “to kick s.o.’s ass”; dekoupe ~ “to cut up”; deichoure ~ “to rub vigorously.”
- de⁵ = motion away from; motion down/away, i.e. deboulé ~ “to roll down,” desann ~ “descend, go down”; dewoule ~ “to unroll.”
- de⁶ = removal, i.e. derapine ~ “to weed, to clear land”; dekonsonbre ~ “to demolish”; devide ~ “to empty out”; desounen ~ “to separate a dead person from her/his principle Vodou spirit.”
- de⁷ = thoroughness, i.e. dekrenmen ~ “to wear out,” detyedi ~ “to make lukewarm” (See Valdman 2001; DeGraff 2000).

De, which subcategorizes for an infinitive [\_VP], is extinct in HC. Verb de, which subcategorizes for a noun [\_NP], remains with a small number of verbs of French origin. Examples include are pale de ~ “to speak/speak about,” dekoule de ~ “to ensue,” depamm de ~ “to depend upon,” nou benefisye anpil de ~ “we benefit a lot from,” pran konsyans deu [sic] yo ~ “to become aware of them.”

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30 These waves of slaves brought different types of influences to regional varieties of HC. The possessive marker proun, i.e. [f(e) Pron], word order of the North, i.e. ifrê ran mwen ~ “my little brother,” in contrast with the [ProN _on] order of Central/South/Pont-au-Prince HC, i.e. ifrê mwen an ~ “my little brother,” may be an example of this.

31 Haitian independence was declared on January 1st, 1804.

32 The word depaflini is particularly interesting as it shows the prefixation of two intensifiers, both of which are also prepositions, i.e. de- and pa- “Dans l’ancien français, la particule par était augmentative, et l’on disait: on est par vaillant” (Phelizon 30). This is an example of how French-based Creole research impacts our knowledge of spoken French and Gallo-Romance in the 17th and 18th centuries.
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in the 17th and
(Valdman in preparation).33 The (non-French) Haitian expression, gen de (bagay)
~ “there are some things,” combines the verb gen with the French indefinite plural
des ~ “some,” giving a paritive meaning. Gen de shows that while verbde3 is
highly restricted, it has nevertheless been nativized in HC.

It should be noted that the agglutination of de contrasts with de's productive uses.
HC agglutinates and prefixes many particles of French origin: a) phonetic
liaison consonants, zansêt (les>ancêtres) ~ “ancestor,” nepe (un>épé) ~ “sword,”34
and b) once French morphemes, tìde a (>idée) ~ “the idea,” lannè a (la>mer) ~
“the sea,” ledimanch (les>dimanches) ~ “on Sundays,” monché (mon>cher) ~ “my
friend, buddy, pal, man” monblan (mon>blanc) ~ “white person,” etc. In the same
way, de appears in many words bleached of most original meaning: koupèdkann,
i.e. coupee de canne (à sucre) ~ “cane-cutter,” Chammas ~ “Champ-de-Mars”
toponym35, anndan, i.e. en-dedans ~ “within,” etc.36

HC takes an important stock of its prepositions and adverbs directly from
French counterparts to which de has long been fused: deyò ~ “outside,” déyè ~
“behind,” douvan ~ “in front of,” depi ~ “since, from,” anndan ~ “(on the) inside.”
Again, de has produced some HC adverbs, i.e. delè ~ “sometimes,” and prefixes to
many adverbial phrasers: m fe sa dedwa ~ “I do that rightfully”; dekibwa ou fè sa ~
“By what right do you do that?” dekibrevyen... ~ “how come...?”; delatotopye ~
“from head to toe, from top to bottom, entirely, thoroughly, completely”; denwi
[denwi] ~ “by night”; dejiamegwi ~ “every little detail” (Valdman in
preparation).37 Note that de above is not considered to be an independent
morpheme headed a PP but rather a bound morpheme forming an adverb.
Sentence-initial adverbial phrases composed of VP + de also exist, notably,
gendelè, gende(paljwa ~ “sometimes, there are times.’ Also note the following:
dekilakylè ~ “why the hell,” i.e. Dekilakyè yo lage fatra a la a? ~ “Why the hell
did they leave the trash there?” (Valdman in preparation).

HC Complementizer Phrases with de- prefixed, having formed long before in
French or Latin, still retain a sense of ‘causality,’ ‘separation,’ ‘origin’ and
‘beginning’: dèskè ~ since, because; depi ~ since, as soon as; dayè ~ moreover.

33 This is not to say that any one preposition is paired up with a verb at the exclusion of other
“meaning refriners” in the same word class. As seen across the language set, prepositions direct
meaning so they naturally vary postverbally. For example: pale nan ~ “to speak in,” pale sou ~ “to
speak about/on,” pale pou ~ “to speak for,” pale dayò ~ “to speak outside,” pale anndan ~ “to speak
within,” pale akèvè/avèktake ~ “to speak with,” pale de ~ “speak about,” pale an ~ “to speak
in/with/in such a way” pale a ~ “to speak to,” etc.
34 Other examples: zorey (les>oreilles) ~ “ear,” nanm (un>son>âme) ~ “soul,” etc.
35 Note that [d n / NV C [+voice] and /NV #], i.e. anndan and lemmn. fann, etc.
36 Other examples: dakh ~ “okay,” dimwens ~ “at least,” dlo a ~ “the water,” diri a ~ “the
rice,” dif a ~ “the fire,” fendale a ~ “the end of the year” etc.
37 Other examples: depreferans ~ “preferably”; desèvis ~ “on duty”; diplis ~ “in addition,”
deppai ~ “in passing,” etc.
The French adjectival construction (quelque chose) de bon ~ "something good," is retained in HC while also prefixing and becoming a noun, i.e. yon debon ~ "a treat, something good." The French adverbial construction, de quoi ~ "some/anything," is retained in HC, and also becomes a noun: M gen dekwa peye ~ "I have the means to pay." Some adjectives appear with an agglutinated de: deryen ~ no-good; dijans ~ emergency; dijèn ~ hygiene, etc.

It is possible that the fusing of de to the adverbs, nouns, prepositions and adjectives presented above, may suggest a movement in the direction of the prefixation exhibited by de (Jesse Price 2001, p.c.). With words like delali-topye, a HC speaker could conceivably interpret the word-initial de as one of the de hypersemes, i.e. "motion down" and "thoroughly," that are inherent to the concept of doing something "from head to toe, entirely, etc." The prefix de in debon or deryen could be interpreted as a semantic intensifier as in de, the intensifier. On the other hand, there are examples in which de is fairly devoid of meaning, dijans (adj.) ~ "urgently," dijèn (adj.) ~ "hygiene."

HC scriptors are torn over the grammatical status and hence graphic representation of de. Emblems in the debate are peyi Ayiti versus peyi d'Ayiti versus peyi Dayiti ~ "Haitian nation, Nation of Haiti." Those opting for the duplex spelling peyi d'Ayiti consider de to be an assimilated, autonomous and productive morpheme. Other examples of a possessive interpretation are fet demefet de mè ~ "mother's day," katidantite/kat d idantite ~ "identity card," etc. A difficult case is how to represent expressions like anzingdekontraryete ~ "moody, a bit edgy, to show signs of anguish." If a competitor is flirting with your new significant other, ou anzingdekontraryete ~ "You are showing signs of anguish." Should this be written as an zing de kontraryete, thus being taken as a prepositional phrase [np an [np zing [np de [np kontraryete]]]] or is anzingdekontraryete now a fused predicative adjectival form, i.e. [ap anzingdekontraryete]? Both interpretations appear correct. The (ambiguous) debate on whether de and other morphemes behave productively or are merely agglutinated French Fossils in HC should continue.

An important reason why writing de/d as separate or fused is controversial, is due to the fact that the internominal use of the preposition nounde is rare in HC, in distinction to French (and in accord with Latin). In a vast majority of cases, the possessed + possessor structure [np1_NP] is expressed through the contiguity of the two NPs: Pale O Presidann an ~ "Le palais du president/The president's palace", lide O papa a ~ "l'idée du père/the idea of the father"; fi O papa a ~ "la fille du père/the girl of the father."[3]

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38 See the website Rezo entenèt kreyol ayisyen for interesting arguments in HC.
39 Other educated scriptors insist on using peyi Ayiti as it is the more 'basilectal,' it reflects the O Case-marking structure of authentic HC grammar.
40 The spelling of these phrases remains disputed among scriptors of HC, i.e. de jou an jou or dejou anjou or dejou anjou.
41 The following example shows the importance of O in HC: Moon ki abite O kelike kilométër O lat, sou wout nasyonal la ~ "Les gens qui abitent (8) quelques kilomètres d'ici, sur la route national/The r

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HC/French bilinguals, who are more likely to speak ‘French-fried’ acrolectal creole (as opposed to the (standard, biblical) basilectal variety), tend to borrow NP\(^1\) + de + NP\(^2\) structures from French, such as this one recently heard, \textit{m gentan ekri yon karamtèn de paj} ~ “I’ve already written (about) forty pages.” Journalistic Port-au-Princean Creole tends to display such structures, i.e. \textit{kanpe pou afè de bòg lan versus kanpe pou zafè bòg la} ~ “to stop because of the (Y2K) bug affair” (radio) or \textit{ministè de lentieryè} ~ “the minister of the interior” (Anonymous 1986: 14).\(^{42}\)

To recapitulate, in HC the prefix \textit{de} is alive and well, the infinitival particle \textit{de} is extinct, and \textit{de} is thinly distributed.

**CONCLUSION**

This paper shows the continuity and changes of a ubiquitous Romance morpheme. \textit{De} is an intriguing morpheme because of the intertwined relationship between its various semantic and grammatical functions. This diachronic study shows that while certain forms of \textit{de} are rock steady across the language set, i.e. the prefix \textit{de} or, others, such as the interordinal preposition \textit{nounde}, fall into disuse. Usefulness and semantic saliency provide likely accounts for the success of the prefix \textit{de}. The redundancy of the interordinal preposition \textit{nounde} and the efficiency of \textit{O} may be reasons for its optional omission in Latin, initially limited OF positioning and scarcity in HC. The infinitival \textit{de}, while increasing steadily from OF to MF, is extinct in HC.

Valdman (2001) refers to the process by which the prefix \textit{de} spreads into HC from French as \textit{autonomisation} ~ “autonomous-becoming” (46). For Valdman this is a creative retaking of French morphological material by those who have forged a new and fully constituted language (46). For \textit{autonomisation} to work, morphemes take root via language contact. In Saint-Domingue, the newly arrived slave, the \textit{bosal}, knew that French-based \textit{kreyòl} was the language of her survival. Regardless of the second-language learners’ culture (be it Celtic or transplanted West African in Saint-Domingue), the acquisition of Romance morphemes such as \textit{de} meant the chance to live and perhaps a degree of social mobility. \textit{Autonomisation} is a useful concept for describing the retaking of \textit{de}, but it is notable that HC makes scant use of \textit{de} and \textit{de}. This scarcity reflects what

\textit{nationale}/The people who live a few kilometers from here” (Valdman in preparation). Other examples, \textit{Trayson O lepâdragon an} ~ “La traison d’Uerpandragon/The betrayal of Uerpandragon,” \textit{mi kay la} ~ “Le mur de la case/The wall of the house.”

\(^{42}\) Another example: \textit{souvan yo konplis de gran sant komésyal yo} ~ “they are often accomplices of the large commercial centers” (a Haitian senator speaking on the radio) (Valdman in preparation).
DeGraff (2002) calls acquisition under duress where relatively restricted access to the native target results in reduction, i.e. HC prefers Ø Case-marking in those environments (15).

Language-internal reasons for the success of de may be its CV monosyllabic form. More importantly, the polysemous semantic range of de describes fundamental spatial and relational ties between subject and object. As a multipurpose morpheme, de was and is in an optimal position to assist lexical productivity and organize grammatical relations.

Systematic research on the origins, evolution, frequency and dispersion, that is, the unfolding of morphemes such as de may prove revealing for the mapping of language genesis and change.

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43 The origin of Ø Case-marking may be the result of partial Bantu L1 transfer. Note that in Fonjbe genitive nominal constructions, like HC, the possessed NP can precede and be contiguous to the possessor NP. Likewise, in both Fonjbe and HC, a definite determiner may follow the nouns. However, unlike HC, Fonjbe also requires a genitive morpheme, i.e. Nposser + [Nposser DEF GEN] DEF (Lefebvre/Brousseau 2002: 45). A review of pages 44-51 in Lefebvre/Brousseau (2002) shows how distinct Fonjbe is from HC, an issue I do not take up in any detail here. Lefebvre (1998) is forced to posit abstract, null functional projections in order to accommodate Surface Structure differences in her theory of relexification (see Lefebvre 1998: 105 based on Lumsden 1991).
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