

The pseudo-partitive construction in Sardinian*

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1. Introduction

The "standard" (traditional) literature on Sardinian argues that a "partitive object"-construction exists in this language, see (1), also quoted in Mensching (2005:94; 2008):

- | | | |
|--|--------------|-------------------------|
| (1) a. e inùe s' ahàttada de àbba vriska? | (Urzulei) | (Wagner 2001:328) |
| b. e inùe s' agàttaa de àbba vriska? | (Samugheo) | |
| and where REFL=finds of water fresh | | |
| 'and where can one find (some) fresh water?' | | |
| c. e inùi ind' ádi de àbba vriska? | (Séulo) | (ibidem) |
| d. e aù'i nd' áda de ákwa vriska? | (Cruccuris) | |
| and where PARTV= has of water fresh | | |
| 'and where is there (some) fresh water?' | | |
| e. ñamminde de binu | (Busachi) | (ibidem) |
| give=me=PARTV= of wine | | |
| 'Give me (some) wine!' | | |
| f. non č' ind' áda de bane ? | (Barbagia) | (ibidem) |
| not there= PARTV= has of bread | | |
| 'Is there no bread?' | | |
| g. bi nd' á de bane | (Logudorese) | (Blasco Ferrer 1984:84) |
| there PARTV= has of bread | | |
| 'there is some bread' | | |
| h. [...] non bi nd' a' de omine | (Logudorese) | (ibidem) |
| not there= PARTV has of man | | |
| 'there is no man/human being (in him)' | | |

Discussion of the phenomenon by Wagner and Blasco Ferrer (see the quotations in (2) and (3)):

1. The structure in (1) is a "partitive object" construction lacking the definite article.
2. It often shows the adverbial clitic derived from Latin INDE.
3. Two theories on its origin:
 - I. Inherited from Latin (Wagner).
 - II. Borrowed from Catalan (Blasco Ferrer).

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- (2) I dialetti centrali e camp. rustici introducono l'oggetto partitivo con de, ma soltanto quando si tratta dell'acqua o di viveri. La frase «dove c'è acqua fresca?» fu resa dappertutto nella Barbagia con: *e inùe s'ahàttada de àbba vriska?* (Urzulei); e *inùe s'agàttada de àbba vriska?* (Samugheo); [...] L'uso, limitato all'acqua e ai viveri, è press'a poco quello della penisola iberica: cogiò del aqua (Cid 2801); *dar de la fruta* (Santa Teresa), solo che il sardo non usa, in questo caso, l'articolo, ma si attiene strettamente alla tradizione latina. Non sarà un puro caso che gli esempi latini si riferiscano pure alle vivande: *sede, et comede de venatione mea* (Volgata, Gen. 27, 19); *adferte de piscibus* (Volgata, Joh. 21, 10); *catelli edunt de micis* (Matt. 15, 27). I dialetti cittadini e periferici non conoscono più questi costrutti e dicono *dàmmi àbba vriska* (log.), *dónami ákwa vriska* (camp.); non č' est àbba (ákwa), ecc.
(Wagner 2001[1950]:328; underlining added by me)

- (3) **27.1.4.2 Il partitivo.** Al posto del genitivo partitivo s'impiegava già in lat. arcaico il costrutto prepositivo con DE e EX [...]. Il modulo, operante anche nella letteratura (Cicerone, Cesare: PAUCI DE NOSTRIS CADUNT) si consolida con Greogio de Tours e si continua nelle lingue romanze. In sd. l'oggetto partitivo è introdotto con DE, e spesso anticipato dall'pronome avverbiale inde (specie in camp.), ciò che rende la costruzione sospetta di calco dallo catalano. Ecco alcuni esempi (v. Wagner 1951: 372; Piras LS [1983] / I: 106): [...]
(Blasco Ferrer 1984:84; underlining added by me)

Some further comments:

1. These authors relate the putative Sardinian 'partitive objects' to the (late) Latin partitives in (4):

- (4) a. alieno loco cum equitatu Helvetiorum proelium committunt, et **pauci de nostris** cadunt.
'and a few of our people fell' (Caesar, De bello gallico 1:15,2)
- b. surge sede et comede **de venatione mea** ut benedicat mihi anima tua
'arise, I pray thee, sit and eat [part of] of my venison, that thy soul may bless me' (Vulgate, Gen. 27:19)
- d. adferte **de piscibus** quos prendidistis nunc
'Bring [part of] of the fish which ye have now caught.' (Vulgate, John. 21:10)
- e. nam et catelli edunt **de micis** quae cadunt de mensa dominorum suorum
'yet the dogs eat [part of] of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table' (Matt. 15, 27).

These are 'set/entity partitives', cf. Carlier & Lamiroy (2014:480): "the partitive construction with the preposition *de*, *ex* or *ab* can be used when there is a contextually specified partition set".

❖ However, Wagner's and Blasco Ferrer's descriptions of the Sardinian construction and the translations of the examples rather evoke the impression of 'partitive articles' of the Central and Eastern Occitan type (i.e. without a definite article):¹

- (5) Mangi **de pan** e bevi **d'aiga**. (Languedocien / Provençal) (Sauzet 2014)
eat-1SG of bread and drink-1SG of water
'I eat bread and drink water.'

2. Similarly, the Old Spanish examples given by Wagner (such as *cogiò del aqua*, Cid 2801) are real partitives, also cf. Old French/Old Italian. See Carlier & Lamiroy (2014:480, 497, 506): "extraction from a contextually (deictically or anaphorically) defined partition set" (2014:502) = grammaticalization stage III.

¹ At first sight, the Sardinian examples also resemble Old Romance examples (e.g. in Old Italian) such as those given by Meyer-Lübke (1899:387-388), but note that all his examples contain NPs modified by adjectives (e.g. *tu hai di belle femine*, Novellino), see the corresponding rule in Modern French.

3. Lack of article:

Wagner’s argumentation “il sardo non usa, in questo caso, l’articolo, ma si attiene strettamente alla tradizione latina [i.e. the partitive construction without an article, see (4)]” is, of course, invalid, since Latin did not have articles.

4. **Most importantly**, Blasco Ferrer observes the frequent presence of (*inde*) (< Lat. INDE; ≈ Fr. *en*, Ital *ne*):

- Only 2 of Wagner’s examples lack (*inde*)!

- Wagner’s sentence from Samugheo in (1b), was not confirmed by speakers of that village:

- (6) a. *E inue s' agatat de abba frisca? (speakers from Samugheo)
 and where REFL= finds of water fresh
 ‘And where can one find (some) fresh water?’
 b. E inue si nd' agatat de abba frisca?
 and where REFL= PARTV= finds of water fresh
 ‘And where can one find (some) fresh water?’

In my own inquiries, sentences such as (1a,b) were not confirmed by any speaker, either of the **Barbagia dialects, or of other Sardinian varieties**

- ⇒ Two possibilities: 1) Wagner saw a ghost
 2) The structure he had in mind existed at the beginning of the 20th century and is now lost.

All the other examples are clitic right dislocation (CLRD) structures!

- (7) e inūi ind'ái Ø, de ábba vríska?
 └──────────▲

Structure already described by Jones (1993), Mathieu (2004), Mensching (2005, 2008), Mensching & Remberger (2016:290-291):

- (8) “Indefinite plural or non-count nouns which function as direct objects can be dislocated with the partitive clitic *nde* as the resumptive pronoun; [...] Note that the quantified noun [...] must be introduced by the preposition *de* ‘of’.”
 (Jones 1993:17)

Provisional term for this structure: *Pseudo-partitive dislocation*

4. Blasco Ferrer’s idea that the structure was taken from Catalan

Since this structure is shared both by Catalan (cf. Martí 1995, 2010, among others) and Italian (cf. Benincà 1988:164-168, Renzi 1988:380,381, Cardinaletti & Giusti 1991), it could

A) also be an Italianism

B) be a shared structure of Catalan, Italian, and Sardinian (not language-contact induced)

- (9) a. Cat. Ja ne tinc, de fesols. (https://an.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleonasmo)
 alreadyPARTV= have-1SG of beans
 ‘I already have beans’

- b. It. Ne ha, di pazienza. (Renzi 1988:380)
 PARTV= has of patience
 ‘He has patience’

In the rest of the talk, I will argue for option B) above.

2. “Pseudo-partitive dislocation” in Sardinian

- 2 basic types: - dislocation of a bare NP
 - split-DP/QP/NumP (i.e. 3 subtypes of split constructions)

2.1 Dislocation of a bare NP

A'-movement of a bare NP to the left or right periphery:
 → Insertion of the preposition *de* + resumption by the clitic (*inde*)

- (10) a. Bimus abba. b. *Bimus de abba.
 drink-1PL water drink-1PL of water
 ‘We drink water.’
 (11) a. De abba, nde bimus. CLLD (Jones 1993:17)
 of water PARTV= drink-1PL
 ‘We drink water.’
 b. Nde bimus, de abba. CLRD (ibidem)
 PARTV= drink-1PL of water
 ‘We drink water.’

Noun types (all examples are grammatical both with CLRD and CLLD)²:

plural nouns

- (12) a. Inue nde tenet de berbeghes, Giuanni?
 where PARTV= has of sheep G.
 ‘Where does Giuanni have sheep?’
 b. De fustinagas, nd' agatas in butega.
 of carrots PARTV= find-2SG in shop.
 ‘You will find carrots in the shop.’

singular mass nouns

- (13) a. Nde giughes, de dinare, oe?
 PARTV= carry-2SG of money INT.TAG
 ‘Have you got money?’
 b. De casu, no bi ndh' amus. (DitzLCS s.v. de)
 of cheese not there= PART= have-1PL
 ‘We do not have cheese.’

² If not mentioned otherwise, the examples are taken from my own inquiry of speakers, cf. Mensching (2008).

singular abstract nouns

- (14) Predu nd' at, de passèntzia.
P. PARTV= has of patience.
'Predu has patience.'

Singular generic nouns

- (15) Sos preïderos no si ndhe ponèn prus, de àbbidu. (DitzLCS, s.v.)
the priests not REFL= PARTV= put more of frock.
'The priests don't wear a frock any more.'

4.2 QP/NumP/DP-splitting

An NP is extracted from a QP/NumP/DP, leaving the rest of the constituent in situ.

- (16) Apo pagas berbeghes. b. *Apo pagas de berbeghes
have-1SG few sheep have-1SG few of sheep
'I have few sheep.' 'I have few sheep.'
- (17) De berbeghes, nd' apo pagas.
of sheep PARTV= have-1SG few
'I have few sheep.'

- Extraction from QPs/NumPs

singular

- (18) Nde bufamus meda, de binu.
PARTV= drink-1SG much of wine.
'We drink lots of wine.'

plural

- (19) a. Nd' at duas, de sorres.
PARTV= has two of sisters.
'He has two sisters.'
- b. De turistas, nde sun arribados chimbe.
of tourists PARTV= are arrived five.
'Five tourists have arrived.'
- c. De istudentes tuos, nd' apo connotu tres.
of students your PARTV= have-1SG known three.
'I have got to know two of your students.'

- Extraction from DP with adjective stranding

- (20) a. Est beru chi nd' ais una minore, de domo.
is true that PARTV= have-2PL a small of house
'It is true that you have a small house.'
- b. De piras, Tziu Luisi nde tenet bellas.
of pears, Uncle L. PART= has beautiful.
'Uncle L. has beautiful pears.'

3. Other Romance languages

3.1 Italian and Catalan

Cf. Benincà (1988), Renzi (1988), Cardinaletti & Giusti (1992), Martí (1995,2010), among others.

The structures are almost identical³ to those of Sardinian w.r.t. properties and distribution (CLLD or CLRD, only CLLD shown below)

1. Bare NPs (sing.)

- (21) a. It. Di vino, *ne* trovi da Caporello. (cf. Beninca 1988b:154)
of wine, PARTV= find-2SG at C.
'You find wine at Caporello's.'
- Cat. D' aigua, te 'n portaré de seguida. (Martí 1995:252)
of water you.SG= PART= bring-1SG-FUT immediately
'I'll bring you water immediately.'

2. Bare NPs (plur.)

- (22) a. It. Di libri, non ne leggo.
of books not PARTV= read-1SG
'I don't read books.'
- b. Cat. De llibres, no en llegeixo.
of books not PARTV= read-1SG
'I don't read books.'

3. QP splitting

- (23) a. It. Di sedie, ne abbiamo portate molte nel magazzino (Benincà 1988b:165)
of chairs PARTV= have-1PL brought many in.the warehouse
'We brought many chairs to the warehouse.'
- b. Cat. De mitjons, en tinc molts. (Martí 1995:252)
of socks PARTV= have-1SG many
'I have many socks.'

4. NumP splitting

- (24) a. It. Di ritratti di quel collezionista, ne possiedo due. (Cardinaletti&Giusti 1992:124)
of portraits of that collector PARTV= possess-1SG two
'I possess two portraits of that collector.'
- b. Cat. D'amics, en tinc cinc.
of friends PARTV= have-1SG five
'I have five friends.'

³ There are some differences, which may be important in a future formal analysis but cannot be considered here. In Italian, as pointed out by Benincà (1988b:165), if the quantifier or numeral is in the singular, the dislocated noun is, nevertheless, plural: *Di libri, possiamo schedarne qualcuno*. However, this does not hold for French, cf. Lagae (2001): *J'en ai lu un, de livre*.

5. Extraction from DP with adjective stranding

- (25) a. It. Di pere, Luigi ne ha (di) belle.
of pears, L. PARTV= has of beautiful-PL.
 'Luigi has beautiful pears.'
 b. Cat. De peres, en tinc de bones.
of pears PARTV= have-1SG of good-PL
 'I have good pears.'

3.2 French

Cf. Kayne (1975:110), Jones (1995:220-225), Lagae (2001), Mathieu (2004), among others.

1. Bare NPs (sing.)

- (26) Fr. *De vin, tu en trouves chez François.
of wine you PARTV= find at F.
 'You find wine at François's.'

2. Bare NPs (plur.)

- (27) Fr. *J' en veux, de livres.
 I PARTV= want-1SG *of* books
 'I want books.'

3. QP splitting

- (28) a. Fr. De chats, elle en a plusieurs.
of cats, she PARTV= has several
 'She has several cats.'
 b. Fr. De modèles, tu en trouves quelques-uns chez Monoprix.
of models you PARTV= find-2SG some at M.
 'You find some models at Monoprix.'

4. NumP splitting

- (29) Fr. De sœurs, il en a deux.
of sisters he PARTV= has two.
 'He has two sisters.'

5. Extraction from DP with adjective splitting

- (30) a. Fr. De maison, vous en avez vraiment une petite. (Kayne, 1975:110)
of house you-PL PARTV= have-2PL really a small.
 'You really have a small house.'
 Fr. De poires, j' en ai de bonnes.
of pears I PARTV= have-1SG of good-PL
 'I have good pears.'

3.3 Interim summary

	Sardinian	Italian	Catalan	French
bare N (sing.)	x	x	x	-
bare N (plur.)	x	x	x	-
QP splitting	x	x	x	x
NumP splitting	x	x	x	x
DP splitting /adj. stranding	x	x	x	x

❖ Basic insight:

'Pseudo-partitive dislocation' correlates with the existence of 'partitive clitics' (cf. Martí 1995:255, who did not consider Sardinian, though).

Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian do not have this construction and do not have partitive clitics either:

- (32) a. Sp. [¿Tienes ases?] – Ases, no tengo. (topic)
aces not have-1SG
 '(During a card game:) Do you have aces? Aces, I do not have.'
 a.' *De ases, no tengo
of aces not have-1SG

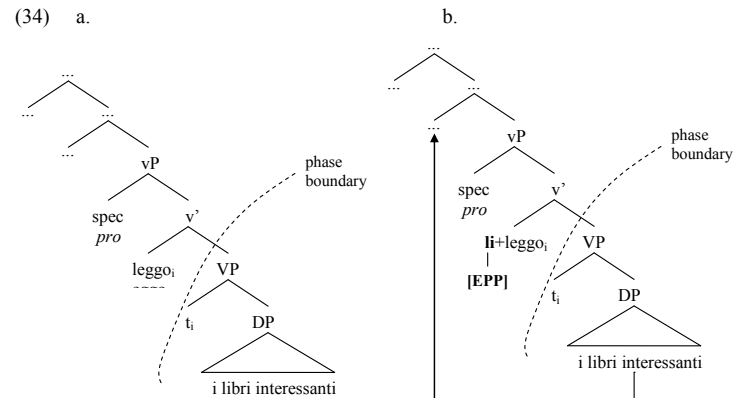
4. Towards a structural explanation

For preceding analyses, see, among others, Cardinaletti & Giusti (1991), Hulk (1996), Martí (1995, 2010), Jones (1995:220-225), Zamparelli (2000:100-104), Mathieu (2004).

❖ A minimalist movement approach towards CLLD (cf. Mensingh 2012):

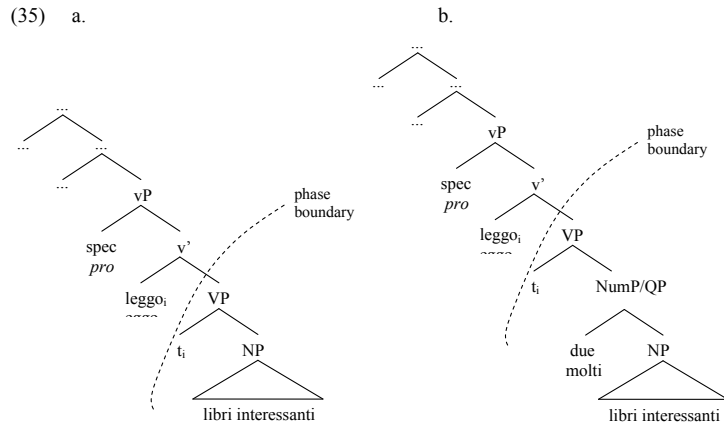
CLLD of a definite DP:

- (33) I libri interessanti, li leggo.



The clitic is a reflex of / introduces an [EPP]-feature (= movement inducing feature) that serves for the DP to cross the phase boundary.⁴

What happens when there is an indefinite NP instead of a DP as shown in (35a,b)?



An appropriate clitic is needed.

Problem: the only possible clitic is the ‘partitive clitic’ (*ne*), but: *ne* is incompatible with an NP.

- ⇒ The head *de* must be introduced.
- ⇒ In the probe-goal framework (Chomsky 2000 et seqq.), *de* could be an expression of (partitive?) case, assigned by the probe that is necessary to license the movement required by the [EPP]-feature; the partitive clitic would then be the spell-out of the probe.

Some problems:

1. Why does French only allow the splitting variant, but not the bare noun variant?

- (36) a. *J’ai lu [_{NP} livres] ⇒ a.’ *[[_{PP/KP} De livres]_i, j’en ai lu t_i.
 b. J’ai lu [_{DP} des [_{NP} livres]] ⇒ b.’ *[[_{PP/KP} De livres]_i, j’en ai lu [_{DP} des t_i].
 c. J’ai lu [_{DP/KP} des [_{NP} livres]] ⇒ c.’ [[_{DP/KP} Des [_{NP} livres]]_i, j’en ai lu t_i.

- (36a): The operation targets a (bare) NP, and French does not permit bare NPs.
- (36b): Extraction of NP would lead to ungrammatical determiner stranding.
- (36c): Of course, the whole DP can be dislocated, but this is another structure.

Unsurprisingly, the negated variant of (36a’) is grammatical (cf. Lagae 2001), because it is derived from *ne ... pas de livres*.

⁴ Note that this view very roughly corresponds to the older view in Cardinaletti & Giusti (1991), namely that the empty category (here: the trace) must be identified by the partitive clitic (a consequence of the ECP).

2. The Solution can be extended to NumP- and DP-splitting, but not to all cases of QP splitting:

- (37) a. Appo bidu carchi pastore.
 have-1SG seen some shepherd-SG.
 ‘I saw some shepherds.’
 b. *De pastore(s), nd’ appo bidu carchi.
 of shepherd(s) PARTV= have-1SG seen some
 c. De pastore(s), nd’ appo bidu carchi unu.
 of shepherd(s) PARTV= have-1SG seen some one
 d. *Appo bidu carchi unu pastore.
 have-1SG seen some one shepherd

(Similar for Italian, see Benincà 1988:165, and French; cf. Kayne 1975:110, Jones 1995:225.)

Possible explanations:

- Base generation in the dislocated position:

- (38) [_{CP} De pastores_i [_{TP} *pro* nde_i appo bidu carchi unu_i]].

- “Kind phrase” (Zamparelli 2000:11):⁵

- (39) [_{QP} carchi unu [_{NP}KIND de pastore]]

5. Conclusions: Sardinian ‘pseudo-partitive dislocation’: a case of borrowing?

Examples such as those in (1a,b), repeated here as (40) given by Wagner ([1950] 2001) could not be proven to exist in (contemporary) Sardinian.

- (40) a. e inúe s’ aháttaða **de ábba vríska?** (Urzulei) (Wagner 2001:328)
 b. e inúe s’ agáttaða **de ábba vríska?** (Samugheo)
 and where REFL= finds of water fresh
 ‘and where can one find (some) fresh water?’

Instead, the type in (41), also quoted by Wagner and mixed up with examples such as (40) is grammatical and widespread.

- (41) a. non č’ **ind’ áda de bane ?** (Barbagia) (ibidem)
 not there=PARTV= has of bread
 ‘is there no bread?’

This is a common Romance type of dislocation structure that exists in all Romances languages that have partitive clitics.

⁵ Note that similar structures are possible without the partitive clitic, in case of definite DPs. Cf. Fr. *Tu peux prendre la mienne, de voiture* (Kayne 1975:110, fn. 55); Ital. *Puoi prendere la mia di macchina*; Sard. *Podes pigare sa mia, de macchina*. See ibidem and Emonds (1999) for the fact that this structure behaves differently from the examples we have seen so far.

Further evidence: Aragonese, see (42) (cf. <https://an.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleonasmo>, quoting Saura Rami 2003:273-274, Arnal Purroy 1989:307-308, Nagore Laín (1989):

- (42) a. Arag. Ya en tiene, de comida.
 already PARTV= has of food
 'He already has food.'
 b. Arag. En habeba mucha, de chen.
 PARTV= had-3SG much of people.
 'There were lots of people.'

- ❖ The Romance construction at issue is neither a partitive construction (since it does not indicate a part-whole-relationship), nor does the element *de* represent a 'partitive article'.
- ❖ Under my interpretation *de* (and the partitive clitic in the relevant structures) is a reflex of an extraction (or co-indexation) device.
- ❖ Alternatively, *de* indicates *type* (rather than *quantity* or *partiality*)

Since this structure seems to follow from the mere existence of partitive clitics (together with the clitic dislocation mechanisms of Romance), and Sardinian has partitive clitics, there is no need to assume borrowing.

Further arguments against borrowing from Catalan or Italian:

1. Catalan allows structures that Sardinian does not have:

Extraction of adjectives, adverbs and verbs,

- (43) a. *D' amable, ho és molt.* (Martí 1995:252)
of kind it= is much
 'Kind, he is very much indeed.'
 b. *De rapid, hi camina molt.*
of quick there= walks much
 'He is walking VERY quickly.'

De in elliptical structures

- (44) a. un *de* petit b. alguna *de* buida (Martí 1995:244)
 a of small some of empty
 'a small one' 'some empty one'
 c. molts de diferents d. tres de barats
 many of different three of cheap
 'many different ones' 'three cheap ones'

2. Similar evidence can be found against assuming borrowing from Italian, e.g.:

- (45) De pastore(s), nd' appo bidu carchi unu.
of shepherd(s) PARTV= have-1SG seen some one

According to Benincà (1988), the singular is not possible in Italian, see above, note 3.

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