How did genitives become datives in Greek?

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In the Ancient and Classical Greek (CG) system of nominal inflection, genitive and dative are consistently distinguished across paradigms by means of case marks. In Standard Modern Greek (SMG), instead, the dative is expressed by means of the inherited genitive (singular) and accusative (plural) inflectional forms with pronouns, and by means of a prepositional phrase headed by *se* ('to') with full nominals. This has the effect that, in SMG, the singular forms of the enclitic personal pronouns are homophonous for the genitive (licensed within the nominal domain) and the dative (licensed within the clausal domain) (cf. 1).

(1) a. *to   vivlio   **tu***   'his book' (SMG)
     the-NOM book-NOM   he-GEN

   b. ***tu**   edhosa ena   vivlio*   'I gave him a book' (SMG)
     he-DAT gave-1sg one-ACC book-ACC

According to Humbert (1930) –the last comprehensive study on the diachrony of the Greek dative to date–, the morphological exponents of the dative case are lost in Greek by the 10th century CE. However, Humbert also shows that the dative survives in the written language much longer than in the spoken varieties, where it falls out of use at an earlier date (cf. also Merlier 1931, Horrocks 2010).

In this paper I analyze data coming from the Koiné Greek of the New Testament (NTG), and argue that already at this stage (I cent. CE) significant phenomena for the historical process of genitive-dative syncretism can be observed. In particular, I focus on the emergence of a new pattern in NTG, proposing that it can be interpreted as an external possession construction: the 'extraposed genitive', occurring in a pre-determiner position, as in (2).

(2) *hautē de tois   dakrusin ebrexen **mou**   tous   podas* (NTG, Lc 7.44)
   she   but the-DAT tears-DAT wet-3sg   I-GEN the-ACC feet-ACC

   'but she has wet my feet with her tears'

Throughout the history of Greek, adnominal genitives could be displaced to a DP-peripheral position for information-structural reasons: according to Manolessou's (2000) analysis for Ancient Greek and Horrocks & Stavrou's (1987) analysis for SMG, these genitives occupy Spec, DP, a Focus position (3). This interpretation is attested –although rarely– in NTG (cf. 3.b), but much more frequently (90% of the instances in the Gospel of John) the genitives in pre-determiner position are unemphatic clitic forms of the 1st-2nd person pronouns and of the pronoun *autos* used as a 3rd person pronoun. This contrasts with the unmarked post-nominal positioning of pronominal genitives at all stages of Greek, and with the generalization of noun-genitive order in NTG (cf. Manolessou 2000).

(3) a. ***anthrōpou tinos**   **plousiou** euphorēsen   ē   chōra*   (NTG, Lc 12.16)
    man-GEN   some-GEN rich-GEN   produced_well-3sg the-NOM land-NOM

   'the land of a rich man produced plentifully'

   b. ***tu**   vivliu   i   kritiki*   'the review *of the book* (not of the proposal)' (SMG)
    the-GEN book-GEN the-NOM review-NOM

The corpus of the four Gospels analyzed until now also shows that, when found in the pre-determiner position, these genitives convey an affectedness flavor, as the possessor receives an additional bene-/malefactive reading (4.a). Moreover, the *possessum* is most typically represented by terms denoting body parts, kinship relationships, and personal belongings, thus the construction is specialized in the expression of inalienable possession (4.b).

(4) a. *ouk an **mou** apethanen ho   adelphos* 'my brother would not have died' (NTG, Io 11.32)
    not MOD I-GEN died-3sg   the-NOM brother-NOM

   b. *pōs ēnoixen **sou**   tous   ophthalmous?* 'how did he open your eyes?' (NTG, Io 9.26)
    how opened-3sg you-GEN the-ACC eyes-ACC

Cross-linguistically, these features are typical of external possession constructions (König & Haspelmath 1998, Guéron 2005), where the possessor is 'construed simultaneously as a syntactic and semantic argument of V and as a semantic argument of N' (Guéron 2005: 594); European languages typically mark such possessors with the dative case (cf. 5).

(5) a. *Je **lui** prends la main* 'I take his hand' (French)
    I   he-DAT take-1sg the hand

   b. *die   Kugel   durchbohrte **dem Feinde** das Herz*   (German)
     the-NOM bullet-NOM perforated-3sg the-DAT enemy-DAT the-ACC heart-ACC
    lit. 'the bullet perforated the heart to the enemy'

The observation that NTG extraposed genitives take the place of the receding *dativus sympatheticus* of Indo-European ancestry goes back to Havers (1911). Crucially for the analysis presented here, NTG extraposed genitives represent a 'bridging context' for the extension of genitive forms to the expression of dative functions, since they establish a link between a special use of the *adnominal* genitive and one of the uses of the *sentential* dative (*dativus sympatheticus*). Thus, they pave the way for a reanalysis of the genitive clitic as a structurally dative element licensed in a Low Applicative position within the argument structure of the verb. In the formal implementation of my proposal, I try to offer an account of the interaction between syntactic requirements and prosodically-driven displacements (cf. Taylor 1996, Alexiadou & Stavrou 2000), and I connect three different diachronic processes deploying at the same stage: (i) the rise of an exclusively post-nominal positioning for adnominal genitives; (ii) the demise of the dative; (iii) the fixation of verb order in the clause. The interplay of clitic positioning and verb order had already been indicated as the main factor for the reanalysis by Merlier (1931) and Horrocks (2007, 2010). Unlike Horrocks (2007: 629), who considers the ethical dative or the dative of advantage/disadvantage as the first dative values to be taken over by genitive forms, my analysis capitalizes on the syntactic and semantic properties exhibited cross-linguistically by external possession constructions.

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