

When clitics collide

On *to have* in Piedmontese*

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1. Subject and object clitics in Piedmontese

Piedmontese, a Western Romance language spoken in Northwest Italy, has two series of personal pronominal clitics on verbs: Subject and Object.¹ Different from Object Clitics, the presence of the Subject Clitics is obligatory on all

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Piedmontese examples and data are from the author and are reported in the standard orthography, followed by their phonemic transcription in IPA; /' / marks the (main) accent. Examples in non-standard varieties of Piedmontese and elicited data from other languages are in IPA transcription only. Quoted material, as well as examples from literary texts, follows the transcription of the original sources.

The following abbreviations are used: ART: Article; DEF: Definite; F: Feminine; IMPF: (Past) Imperfect tense; IMPV: Imperative mood; IND: Indicative (main) mood; INDEF: Indefinite; M: Masculine; O: Object Clitic; PL: Plural; PART: Participle; PARTIT: Partitive Clitic; PRES: Present tense; SG: Singular, or: Subject Clitic; =: Clitic Boundary.

1. I follow here traditional usage in calling these elements "clitics". It has been argued (e.g., by Halpern 1995, among many others) that the verbal clitics of Romance languages are rather "inflectional affixes", whose positioning is a matter of morphological selection, in order to distinguish them from the "bound word clitics", whose attachment to the host is governed by prosodic considerations. The distinction is immaterial to the present discussion.

inflected verbal forms.² Subject Clitics are always proclitic to the verbal form; Object Clitics are proclitic to the verb in inflected verbal forms and enclitic to it in uninflected ones. Different from the clitics, the independent pronouns are always emphatic or used in disambiguation and syntactically optional.

Subject is also marked by agreement suffixes on the verb, as in:

- (1) *i faso*
 /i=fázu/
 1SS=do.IND.PRES.1S
 "I do"
 vs. the unacceptable

(1') **faso*

The Subject Clitic is likewise obligatory with an independent pronoun or with a full NP:

- (2) *chiel a dis*
 /kjæl a=díz/
 he 3SS=say.IND.PRES.3S
 "he says"

vs.

(2') **chiel dis*

- (3) *la masnà a dis*
 /la=mazná a=díz/
 ART.DEF.F.SG=child 3SS=say.IND.PRES.3S
 "the child says"

vs.

(3') **la masnà dis*

The 3s Object Clitics, which may be either enclitic or proclitic, distinguish direct and indirect forms; the former further distinguish gender (Masculine vs. Feminine). Both the direct and the 3s indirect Object Clitics lose their final

2. Within the GB framework the Subject Clitics of Piedmontese and similar languages have been considered part of the agreement (which is realized discontinuously, by the clitics and by the verbal suffixes) — and not the "true" subjects. These languages would therefore pattern with Italian, Spanish, etc., rather than with French, in being Null-Subject languages. The syntactic status of the Subject Clitics is largely immaterial to the present discussion.

vocalic element before another vowel, as shown in (4–6).³ The Subject and Object Clitics are shown in Tables 1 and 2.⁴

- (4) *i lo s-cianco*
 /i=lu=stʃánku/
 1SS=3SO.m=tear.IND.PRES.1S
 "I tear it (M)"
- (5) *i la s-cianco*
 /i=la=stʃánku/
 1SS=3SO.F=tear.IND.PRES.1S
 "I tear it (F)"
- (6) *i l'ardrisso*
 i=l=ardrísu/
 1SS=3SO=order.IND.PRES.1S
 "I put it in order"

For all the persons except the 3s the same clitic is used for both direct and indirect objects:

- (7) *am ved*
 /a=m=væd/
 3SS=1SO=see.IND.PRES.3S
 "he sees me"

Table 1. Subject and Object Clitics: 1st and 2nd persons, and 3rd plural

	Subject	Object			
		Enclitic		Proclitic	
1s	<i>i /i/</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>/me/</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>/m/</i>
2s	<i>it /it/</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>/te/</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>/t/</i>
1P	<i>i /i/</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>/ne/</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>/n/</i>
2P	<i>i /i/</i>	<i>ve</i>	<i>/ve/</i>	<i>v</i>	<i>/v/</i>
3P	<i>a /a/</i>	<i>je</i>	<i>/je/</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>/j/</i>

3. The loss of gender agreement before vowels is of course true of other Romance languages and dialects, cf. French *je l'aime* 'I love him/her' vs. *je le/la vois* 'I see him/her', or Italian *l'amo* 'I love him/her' vs. *lo/la vedo* 'I see him/her'.

4. The tables depart in significant ways from the one given by Parry (1997: 241), which will be discussed below in 2.2.

Table 2. Subject and Object Clitics: 3rd persons singular

	Subject	Direct Object		Indirect Object	
		<i>pre-cons.</i>	<i>pre-voc.</i>	<i>pre-cons.</i>	<i>pre-voc.</i>
3s.M		<i>lo</i> /lu/			
	<i>a</i> /a/		<i>l'</i> /l/	<i>je</i> /je/	<i>j'</i> /j/
3s.F		<i>la</i> /la/			

- (8) *im diso*
 /i=m=dízu/
 1ss=1so=say.IND.PRES.1s
 "I say to myself"

Different from the Subject Clitics, an Object Clitic is not possible with a sentential object NP:

- (9) *i vèddo un/èl fieul*
 /i=váddu aŋ=/əl=fjól/
 1ss=see.IND.PRES.1s ART.INDEF.M.S/ART.DEF.M.S=boy
 "I see a/the boy"
 vs. the unacceptable
 (9') **i lo vèddo un/èl fieul*
 1ss=3so=see.IND.PRES.1s ART.INDEF.M.S/ART.DEF.M.S=boy

The Object Clitic is likewise absent when an ambitransitive verb is used intransitively:

- (10) *i vèddo*
 i=váddu
 1ss=see.IND.PRES.1s
 "I see", *"I see him/her/it"

As anticipated, the Object Clitic is postverbal in the nonfinite verbal forms, as well as in Imperative and Jussive verbal forms, in which no Subject Clitic is present. The Imperative is an autonomous paradigm, while for the Jussive the Present Indicative is used, but without Subject Clitics:

- (11) *ciap-lo*
 /tʃáp=lu/
 catch.IMPV.S=3so.M
 "catch it!"

- (12) *fom-lo*
 /fúm=lu/
 do.IND.PRES.1p=3so.M
 "let's do it!"

cf.:

- (13) *i foma*
 /i=fúma/
 1ps=do.IND.PRES.1p
 "we do"

2. The special case of *to have*

"to have" (*avèj* /*aváj*/) is different from all other verbs insofar as all its inflected forms are obligatorily preceded by an element *l'* homophonous with the prevocalic allomorph of a 3rd Singular Object Clitic:⁵

- (14) *i l'hai un fieul e doe fije*
 /i=l=áj aŋ=fjól e dúe fie/
 1ss=l=have.IND.PRES.1s ART.INDEF.M.S=boy and two.F girls
 "I have a son and two daughters"
 vs. the unacceptable
 (14') **i hai un fieul e doe fie*

While the presence of *l'* before an inflected form of "to have" is obligatory, *l'* is not simply part of the stem of "to have": *l'* is the default solution and the only one acceptable with the null object interpretation "I have". But with a plural object the normal 3p Object Clitic *j'* (glossed '3PO') is found (the prevocalic allomorph of *je*), and a partitive object is represented by *n'* (again, a prevocalic allomorph of *ne*; gloss: 'PARTIT'). For a 3rd Singular Object the rather clumsy

5. Parry (1995: 140) lists those few constructions (mainly with nonfinite verbal forms) in which Clitic Climbing is found in literary Piedmontese, but local varieties may differ on this point.

orthographic solution *a'l l'ha* is used, in which the first *l* is the Object Clitic, and the second is the “null” element obligatorily preceding “to have”. In the literary variety the preverbal Object Clitics therefore pattern as follows (examples with a 3rd Singular Present form of “to have”):

Singular Object	Plural Object	Partitive Object
<i>a'l l'ha</i>	<i>a j'ha</i>	<i>a n'ha</i>
/a=l=l=áj/	/a=j=áj/	/a=n=áj/
“s/he has it/him/her”	“s/he has them”	“s/he has of it/them”

No agreement is found when a full object is present; in this case the neutral form with *l'* is used; cf. the following other unacceptable variant of (14):

- (14'') **i j'hai un fieul e doe fie*
 /i=j=áj aŋ=fjól e dué fie/
 1ss=3PO=have.IND.PRES.1s ART.INDEF.M.S=boy and two.F girls

In many varieties of Piedmontese no ‘doubling’ of *l* and no such forms as *a'l l'ha* exist; one and the same element is also used as an Object Clitic of 3rd person Singular; cf. (16) and (16'), as a reply to (15):

- (15) *it l'has ël bijët?*
 /it=l=áz əl=bjæt/
 2ss=l=have.IND.PRES.1s ART.DEF.M.S=ticket
 “do you have the ticket?”

- (16) *i'l l'hai*
 /i=l=l=áj/
 1ss=3SO=l=have.IND.PRES.1s
 “I have it, I got it”

vs. non-standard:

- (16') /i=l=áj/
 1ss=3SO=have.IND.PRES.1s

The same opposition — with ‘doubling’ of *l* in the literary variety and its absence in other varieties — is found with topicalized, left-dislocated object NPs:

- (17) *un travaj i'l l'hai*
 /aŋ=traváj i=l=l=áj/
 ART.INDEF.M.S=job 1ss=3SO=l=have.IND.PRES.1s
 “a job, I got it”
 vs. non-standard:

- (17') /aŋ=traváj i=l=áj/
 ART.INDEF.M.S=job 1ss=3SO=have.IND.PRES.1s

In both standard and non-standard varieties, with topicalized objects the preverbal element agrees in number with the object:

- (18) *ij sòld i j'hai*
 /i=sóld i=j=áj/
 ART.M.P=money 1ss=3PO=have.IND.PRES.1s
 “the money, I got it”

- (18') **ij sòld i l'hai*
 /i=sóld i=l=áj/
 ART.M.P=money 1ss=l=have.IND.PRES.1s

As for other verbs, the nonfinite verbal forms, the Imperative, and the Jussive, admit only postverbal clitics; e.g. *avèj-lo* /aváj=lu/ “to have it”, which admits only the ‘full’, pronominal interpretation. In this regard, “to have” simply behaves as all other verbs, e.g. *ciapé-je* /tʃapé=je/ “to catch them”.

That *l'* is not an object pronoun is confirmed by the fact that the referential status of the object does not influence its occurrence: it is found with indefinite and non referential objects as well as with definite, referential ones. As in other languages, while quantifiers may be topicalized for stylistic or pragmatic reasons in front of the verb, they cannot be syntactically left-dislocated:

- (19) *i conòsso gnun*
 /i=kunósu ɲɲɲ/
 1ss=know.IND.PRES.1s nobody
 “I do not know anybody”
 or

- (19') *gnun, i conòsso*
 /ɲɲɲ i=kunósu/
 nobody 1ss=know.IND.PRES.1s
 vs. the impossible left-dislocated:

- (19'') **gnun, i lo conòsso*
 /ɲɲɲ i=lu=kunósu/
 nobody 1ss=3SO=know.IND.PRES.1s

On the other hand, left-dislocation of a quantified object does not affect the presence of *l'* in front of “to have”:

- (20) *i l'hai gnente*
 /i=l=áj nǎnte/
 1ss=l=have.IND.PRES.1s nothing
 "I do not have anything"

or:

- (20') *gnente, i l'hai*
 /nǎnte i=l=áj/
 nothing 1ss=l=have.IND.PRES.1s

vs.

- (20'') **gnente, i hai*
 /nǎnte i=áj/
 nothing 1ss=have.IND.PRES.1s

The element *l'* is also found when "to have" is used as an auxiliary of transitive verbs. In this position Object Clitics always appear postverbally (to the right of the participle); in GB terms, Piedmontese avoids Clitic Climbing. Compare French *je l'ai pris*, Italian *l'ho preso* with their Piedmontese translation:

- (21) *i l'hai pijà-lo*
 /i=l=áj pjá=lu/
 1ss=l=have.IND.PRES.1s take.PART=3SO.M
 "I took it"

l' before the auxiliary is not a copy of the postparticipial Object Clitic, as it is invariable and obligatory:

- (22) *i l'hai ciapà*
 /i=l=áj tǎpá/
 1ss=l=have.IND.PRES.1s catch.PART
 "I caught", *"I caught it/him/her"
- (23) *i l'hai ciapà-lo/ -la/ -je*
 /i=l=áj tǎpá=lu/=la/=je/
 1ss=l=have.IND.PRES.1s catch.PART=3SO.M/3SO.F/3PO
 "I caught him/her/(it)/them"

Corresponding sentences with Clitic Doubling are ungrammatical:

- (23') **i j'hai ciapà-je*
 /i=j=áj tǎpá=je/
 1ss=3PO=have.IND.PRES.1s catch.PART=3PO

The same applies with other persons, as well as with a partitive object:

- (24) *i l'hai avù-ne pro*
 /i=l=áj avý=ne pru/
 1ss=l=have.IND.PRES.1s have.PART=PARTIT enough
 "I have had enough (of it/them)"
- vs.
- (24') **i n'hai avù-ne pro*
 /i=n=áj avý=ne pru/
 1ss=PARTIT=have.IND.PRES.1s have.PART=PARTIT enough

With an NP object, neither a preverbal clitic different from the default *l'* nor a postverbal clitic are acceptable — although the latter is possible with a non-coreferential reading of the clitic:

- (25) *i l'hai cogià le masnà*
 /i=l=áj kuǰá le=mazná/
 1ss=l=have.IND.PRES.1s put-to-bed.PART ART.DEF.F.P=children
 "I have put the children to bed"
- (25') **i j'hai cogià le masnà*
 /i=j=áj kuǰá le=mazná/
 1ss=3PO=have.IND.PRES.1s put-to-bed.PART ART.DEF.F.P=children
 but
- (25'') *i l'hai cogià-je le masnà*
 /i=l=áj kuǰá=je le=mazná/
 1ss=l=have.IND.PRES.1s put-to-bed.PART=3PO ART.DEF.F.P=children
 "I have put the children to bed for him/her/them", *"I have put the children to bed"

The verb "to be" behaves in a partially similar way: the element *l'* is found in the 3rd person singular of the Present Indicative, and an element *j'* in all forms of the Indicative Imperfect and Future. Here the presence of a clitic is obviously phonologically conditioned: it is found only when the following verbal form is vowel-initial, and it is absent when consonant-initial. Nonfinite forms (which in any case are consonant-initial) again have no such preverbal element. The use and spread of these forms is rather similar to that of the corresponding forms of "to have": they are found both with forms of "to be" and in the use of "to be" as an auxiliary in compound tenses; moreover, actually neither *l'* nor *j'* are found in all contexts. More particularly, the 3sg form appears without *l'* in the presentative constructions *a-i é* (/a=j=é/) "there

is", *a-i era* (/a=j=éra/) "there was", in which the locative particle *i* (glossed "there") is used:

- (26) *a l'é na fja*
 /a=l=é na=fia/
 3SS=l=be.IND.PRES.3S ART.INDEF.S.F=girl
 "she is a girl"
- vs.
- (27) *a-i é na fja*
 /a=j=é na=fia/
 3SS=there=be.IND.PRES.3S ART.INDEF.S.F=girl
 "there is a girl"

Notwithstanding the orthographical notation (with enclitic *-i* instead of proclitic *j-*), the two elements are homophonous. In the remainder of this article, attention will be focused on the development of the modern morphology of "to have", but probably much of the analysis can be applied to "to be".

To summarize so far:

- An element *l'* is obligatorily found on all (finite) forms of "to have" and the finite vowel-initial forms of "to be";
- This element is phonetically identical to the prevocalic allomorph of the Object Clitic of 3SG and, in certain varieties, it admits a pronominal interpretation;
- In those same varieties, ambiguity therefore arises between the interpretation of *l'* as the 3rd Singular Object Clitic ("I have it, have got it"), and the one as a semantically null element is far from troubling, "to have" is not a typical transitive verb: first of all, its object is most typically non-referential; furthermore, "to have" is not an ambitransitive verb — it is rarely, if ever, used without an object.
- In all varieties — even the literary one — *l'* is missing only if another pronominal clitic is found, in particular: *j'* for a 3rd Plural object or *n'* for a partitive object.

3. Competing Analyses of *a l'ha*

It is apparent that, at least synchronically, two different and homophonous elements occur: the 3rd Singular Object Clitic and either a euphonic element or

a special allomorph of either the verb "to have" or of the Subject Clitics. As will be shown below, any interpretation in terms of a single element cannot account for the whole range of facts summarized in points (a) – (d) above.

3.1 *a l'ha* as /al=a/

Early forms of Piedmontese shared with other Romance varieties a liquid element in its 3rd Singular Subject Clitic, as still found in French *il* and in many varieties spoken in Northern Italy. In all of these languages the homophony between this liquid element and the prevocalic allomorph of the 3rd Singular Object Clitic is a constant source of ambiguity, with the possibility for reanalysis. Following this diachronic picture, one could assume *l'* to be part of the preceding Subject Clitics, as proposed by Parry (1997:241). In short, *a l'ha* would be morphemically /al=a/ '3ss=has'.

According to this analysis, *l'* would be the Subject Clitic when no object is present (notwithstanding the orthographical notation of the standard variety): *a l'ha* would be morphemically al=a ('3ss=has'), and Standard Piedmontese *a'l l'ha* 'he has it' would be (although Parry is silent about it) al=l=a ('3ss=3so=has').

The major drawback of this analysis is that it postulates, in an ad hoc manner, an allomorph of the 3rd Singular Subject Clitic exclusively for the verbs "to have" (and, partially, "to be"). Although these verbs are salient enough to admit a special allomorphy, this would be expected to appear, if ever, on the verbal form, and not on any pronominal element, a problem partially overcome within a GB framework, where the Subject Clitics are considered the realization of a "second agreement" node alongside the verbal affixes.

As to those varieties which admit an interpretation of *a l'ha* as containing an Object Clitic ('s/he has it'), this could probably be accommodated assuming that a further Object Clitic *l'* is erased after the Subject Clitic al= (orthographically *a l'*):

$$\text{al} = (3\text{ss}) + \text{l} = (3\text{so}) + \text{a ('has')} \rightarrow * \text{al} = \text{l} = \text{a} \rightarrow \text{al} = \text{a 'he has it'}$$

or, alternatively, that the special allomorph of 3SG al= is reduced to a= (the form found with all other verbs) before the Object Clitic l=:

$$\text{al} = (3\text{ss}) + \text{l} = (3\text{so}) \rightarrow \text{a} = \text{l} =$$

and then:

$$\text{a} = (3\text{ss}) + \text{l} = (3\text{so}) + \text{a ('has')} \rightarrow \text{a} = \text{l} = \text{a 'he has it'}$$

Another problem with this analysis is that, if *a l'ha* were **al=a*, as according to Parry, then one would expect such forms as **al j'a* "s/he has them" and **al n'a* "s/he has of it/them". Phonologically, these forms are perfectly admissible. Actually, the clusters [l=j] and [l=n] are commonly found when an uninflected form of a verb whose stem ends in /l/ is followed by an object clitic, as in the following imperative of the verb *calé* /kalé/ "to lower":

- (28) *cal-je*
 /kál=je/
 lower.IMPV.S=3PO
 "lower them!"

The cluster [l=j] is further found in the lexicon, and also word-initially in the verb *lijé* (generally /lje/) "to bind" and its derivatives, such as *liass* /ljas/ "string".

In short, it seems that any analysis of *l'* as part of the Subject Clitics is not acceptable as a synchronic description of facts.

3.2 *a l'ha* as /a=a/, or: *l'* as a euphonic element

Another solution is simply to treat *l'* as a euphonic element, as proposed, e.g., by Burzio in a footnote to his *Italian Syntax*: 'A euphonic *l* is inserted between clitics and "be" or "have" in certain cases, whence for example *lan*, *lé* [*sic*; = *l'han*, *l'é*; MT]' (Burzio 1986:172, fn.47).

Burzio does not discuss the problem of the *l'/j'/n'* alternation, which could be accommodated in his framework by assuming that euphonic *l'* is introduced in derivation only after the insertion of an Object Clitic (either *l'*, *j'*, or *n'*) has failed to apply, turning the sequence **a ha* into *a l'ha*:⁶

- | | | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|---|---------------|
| <i>a</i> (3SS) + <i>l'</i> (3SO) | + | <i>ha</i> (have.IND.PRES.3S) | → | <i>a l'ha</i> |
| <i>a</i> (3SS) + <i>j'</i> (3PO) | + | <i>ha</i> (have.IND.PRES.3S) | → | <i>a j'ha</i> |
| <i>a</i> (3SS) + <i>n'</i> (PARTIT) | + | <i>ha</i> (have.IND.PRES.3S) | → | <i>a n'ha</i> |
| <i>a</i> (3SS) + <i>ha</i> (have.IND.PRES.3S) | → | <i>*a ha</i> | → | <i>a l'ha</i> |

6. Having considered *l'* in *a l'é* 'he is' as euphonic, Burzio is then compelled to register as an irregularity the absence of *l'*, noting that *a l'é* is realized as a glide in some environments, whence *ié* (Burzio 1986:137, sentence 98a.). The sentence containing this form is written by Burzio *a y na ié*...and corresponds to *a-i na j'é*... 'there are many of them' in the standard orthography.

This analysis is perfectly acceptable as a mere description of facts, but at the cost of introducing a euphonic element without any motivation in the phonology of the language. For example, the insertion of *l'* in the 2nd Singular form results in *it l'has* "you have (it)", which contains a cluster /tl/ only found at clitic boundaries, while a form such as **it has* would of course be perfectly acceptable.

Moreover, the euphonic hypothesis leaves unexplained why *l'* is not found with *all* of the other vowel-initial verbs, for which instead no 'euphonic' element is found:

- (29) *a ardrissa*
 a=ardrísá
 3SS=order.IND.PRES.3S
 "s/he puts in order"

vs.

- (30) *a l'ardrissa*
 a=l=ardrísá
 3SS=3SO=order.IND.PRES.3S
 "s/he puts it in order", **"s/he puts in order"*

Of course, it could well be argued that the high frequency of "to have" warrants a 'special treatment' and a particular necessity to avoid hiatus; but, in general, it seems evident that *l'* is not synchronically 'euphonic' in any acceptable sense of the word — although it may well have been in preceding stages of the language.

The problem may be illustrated by looking at a language in which the 'euphonic hypothesis' seems to hold well: in the dialects of Liguria the same /l/ element of Piedmontese is found.⁷ In the Genoese variety, Subject Clitics are obligatory but the series is not complete: 1SG Ø, 2SG *ti*, 3SG *u~a*, 1PL, 2PL, 3PL Ø, polite 2SG/PL *ja*.⁸ An element /l/ is inserted in the 3SG *only* and before *all* vowel-initial verbs (Forner 1997:250):

- (31) *ul=amía*
 "s/he looks (at him/her/it)" (Genoese)

and

7. The following partial account is derived from Forner (1997), as well as from elicitation of native speakers. I thank Massimo D'Este, Davide Sivero and Carlo Stagnaro for their kindness in providing and checking the Genoese data.

8. According to my informants, the 3rd Plural Subject Clitic is /i/; Ø would only be possible in heavily Italianized speech.

- (32) *ul=amía u=fidʒo* (Genoese)
 “s/he looks at the boy”

/l/ is found with intransitive verbs, too:

- (33) *ul=íntre* (Genoese)
 “s/he enters”

In Genoese the element /l/ is clearly a euphonic element, and is homophonous with the prevocalic allomorph of the 3rd Singular Object Clitic *u*; this results in a systematic ambiguity with all vowel-initial verbs: a sequence [ulV_{Verb}] may be analyzed as either /ul=V_{Verb}/ or /u=l=V_{Verb}/. In Piedmontese the corresponding sequence [alV_{Verb}] is unambiguously interpreted as /a=l=V_{Verb}/; ambiguity only arises in the case of [alV_{‘to have’}].

3.3 *a l’ha* as... *a l’ha*

Still another solution is simply to accept the native intuitions and the standard orthography at their face value, and consequently to assume that *l’* is some kind of ‘pronominal’ element. This view is found in non-scholarly, pedagogical grammars; e.g., Brero (1988:75) simply states that in the conjugation of “to have” the ‘pronominal particle’ *l’* is obligatorily inserted. It will be noted that this description is non-committal on the syntactic role of *l’*, and it does not account for its semantically void interpretation. On the other hand, although it deals with the standard variety, this interpretation correctly describes the fact that in many non-literary varieties of Piedmontese *l’* can have a perfectly pronominal interpretation as a 3rd Singular Object Clitic (in which /a=l=a/ is also “s/he has it”).

It is obvious that the presence of *l’* can only find its explanation in the history of the language. Moreover, when other facets of the syntax of Piedmontese are taken into account, it becomes clear that the obligatory presence of a look-alike of an object clitic on the verb “to have” is intimately intertwined with other facts of Piedmontese syntax.

4. A comparative view

4.1 Clitic Climbing

The presence of the object clitics enclitically after a participle (cf. Section 2) is a rare pattern in Romance languages, which Piedmontese shares with certain

Franco-Provençal dialects, among which Valdôtain, and some varieties of Friulan (cf. Roberts 1994:379). Valdôtain has been the object of considerable discussion within a GB framework by Roberts (1993, 1994). Valdôtain is syntactically quite different from Piedmontese in a number of ways. For one thing, in (at least many varieties of) Valdôtain, Subject Clitics are not obligatory: generally, they are absent with simple verbal forms, while they are present with periphrastic forms. As for the Object Clitics, they always precede a simple main form (as generally is the case in Romance), while with an auxiliary they either follow the participle (as in P) or show ‘Clitic Climbing’:

- (34) *gnunc l’a viú-me* (Valdôtain)

or

- (34’) *gnunc m’a viú* (Valdôtain)

“No-one has seen me” (Roberts 1994:384)

(in which the Subject Clitic is *l’* in (34), and the Object Clitic is post-participial *-me* in 34. and pre-auxiliary *m’* in 34’.)

In Piedmontese the only possibility is:

- (35) *gnun a l’ha vist-me*
 /ɲɲ a=l=á vist=me/
 no-one 3SS=l=have.IND.PRES.3S see.PART=1so

As Clitic Climbing does not apply in Piedmontese, the sequence [alV_{‘to have’}] does not give rise to ambiguity when “to have” is followed by a participle.

Roberts notes that in Valdôtain “it is impossible for an OCL [Object Clitic; MT] to appear to the right of the participle [i.e., to avoid Clitic Climbing; MT] if the SCL [Subject Clitic; MT] does not appear” (Roberts 1994:384). In other words, Subject and Object Clitics are in complementary distribution. The avoidance of Clitic Climbing in Valdôtain is a recent phenomenon: Valdôtain is in close contact with Piedmontese, and Roberts (1994:379) notes that those varieties which are more influenced by Piedmontese are stricter in having post-participial clitics, and that, where allowed, the alternative with Clitic Climbing is considered more archaic. The resulting alternation between the two series of clitics is called by Roberts (1994) ‘OCL-for-SCL’, and is also found in certain dialects of Northern Italy in which Subject Clitics are obligatory. For example in Friulan: /o kɔɲós/ “I know” but /lu kɔɲós/ “I know him” vs. */o lu kɔɲós/ (Vanelli 1997:284). Interestingly, a few Friulan varieties also have post-participial Object Clitics, again paralleling the situation in Valdôtain. (Many

more varieties simply pile up preverbal clitics.) In a Clitic-Climbing language such as Genoese ambiguity arises again in the use of “to have” as a participle:

- (36) *u(=)l=a amiá* (Genoese)
 “s/he has looked (at him/her/it)”

The origin of the demise of Clitic Climbing in Piedmontese is far from clear (cf. Parry 1995 for competing hypotheses). The classic analysis goes back to Meyer-Lübke (1900:III, 439–440), and is summarized as follows by Parry (1995:136):

Since the third-person singular subject clitic was *a* before consonants, *al* before vowels, and since third person object clitics *lo* and *la* were reduced to *l* in pre-vocalic contexts, *Al ha mangià* “He/she has eaten” and *a l’ha mangià* “He/she has eaten it” sounded identical. The problem, presumably, became more acute when, as a result of the morphological reanalysis of *al ha* as *a l’ha*, the *l’* was generalized in Turinese to all the other persons of the verb *avèj* in order to avoid the hiatus which would otherwise occur between all subject clitics (except the second person singular) and the verb forms. ... According to this hypothesis, clitic copying in the perfect periphrasis then spread to involve all the other clitics.

Meyer-Lübke’s functional explanation makes a point — but one must admit that ambiguity is only a secondary factor in the postpositioning of Object Clitics: Genoese was seen above to display constant ambiguity between an ambitransitive interpretation and one with a pronominal object on all vowel-initial verbs, and still to cling to Clitic Climbing.

4.2 Clitic Doubling

Piedmontese has another partial difference from many neighboring varieties: it does not have mandatory Clitic Doubling, i.e., obligatory doubling of a nominal object through a pronominal clitic. In many dialects of Northern Italy this is most common with indirect objects; cf. the following sentence in Trentino:

- (37) *ghe scorto le manighe ala camisa* (Trentino)
 “I’ll shorten the shirt sleeves” (Cordin 1993:131)

(where the form without the Object Clitic *ghe* is unacceptable). Also Genoese seems to resemble Trentino in having generalized Clitic Doubling:

- (38) *ge=akurtífu e=mánege a=a kamíza* (Genoese)
 “I shorten the shirt sleeves”
 (/ge/ is the Indirect Object Clitic of 3rd Singular)

The same sentence in Piedmontese is:

- (39) *i scurso le manie a la camisa*
/i=skýrsu le=mánje a=la=kamíza/
1ss=shorten.IND.PRES.1s ART.DEF.F.P=sleeves to=ART.DEF.F.S=shirt

(39’), with Clitic Doubling, is a possible alternative, obligatory only with a topicalized (generally left-dislocated) NP, as in (40):

- (39’) *i j’è scurso le manie a la camisa*
/i=jə=skýrsu le=mánje a=la=kamíza/
1ss=3so=shorten.IND.PRES.1s ART.DEF.F.P=sleeves to=ART.DEF.F.S=shirt
- (40) *le manie, i j’è scurso*
/le=mánje i=jə=skýrsu
ART.DEF.F.P=sleeves 1ss=3po=shorten.IND.PRES.1s
 “the sleeves, I shorten them”

or, in a slightly different sentence, with an indirect object reading of *j’*:

- (41) *i j’è scurso le manie ëd la camisa*
/i=jə=skýrsu le=mánje a=la=kamíza/
1ss=3so=shorten.IND.PRES.1s ART.DEF.F.P=sleeves to=ART.DEF.F.S=shirt
 “I shorten the shirt sleeves for him/her”

4.3 The extension of the Subject Clitics

With the exception of Piedmontese and, partially, of Valdôtain, all of the above-mentioned varieties show the usual constellation of Romance features: Clitic Climbing as well as extensive use of Clitic Doubling. These same varieties also have a restricted set of Subject Clitics, with at least a few forms showing Ø allomorphs. For example, in Trentino the Subject Clitics are: 1s Ø, 2s *te*, 3s.M *el*, 3s.F *la*, 1p Ø, 2p Ø, 3p.M *i*, 3p.F *le* (Brandi and Cordin 1989:113). Similarly, Genoese was seen above to have a limited series, with Ø in all the plural forms. Moreover, all these varieties use Subject Clitics in a much more restricted range of syntactic configurations than Piedmontese.

That the limitation of Clitic Climbing and the extension of Subject Clitics are linked is of course not a new idea. First, many analyses of Romance clitics within a GB framework have insisted on the correlation between Clitic Climbing and the Null-Subject parameter: only Null-Subject languages, such as Spanish or Italian, have generalized Clitic Climbing. As mentioned by Kayne

(1989) and argued by Parry (1995), Null-Subject languages with limited Clitic Climbing, such as Piedmontese, are an obvious exception. Another piece of evidence concerning the relationship between obligatory Subject Clitics and the postpositioning of Object Clitics comes from Valdôtain, where, as a result of the postpositioning of Object Clitics, the Subject Clitics — which would be otherwise deleted by the presence of the Object Clitics (OCL-for-SCL) — are preserved.

The demise of Clitic Climbing in Piedmontese has been specifically addressed by Parry (1995), who has suggested that Clitic Climbing may come to be avoided in languages with obligatory Subject Clitics by the “reluctance to interrupt *unnecessarily* (that is, with clitics not dependent on the finite verb) the close sequence of subject clitic and verb” (Parry 1995: 143; emphasis in the original). In other words, once the Subject Clitics have become a necessary element of the verbal complex, they tend to stay as close to the verbal form as possible. Other developments, such as the postpositioning of negatives, seem to support her argument. But, on the other hand, both obligatory Subject Clitics and postverbal negatives are much more widespread in Romance than postparticipial Object Clitics are. They are definitionally restricted to transitive verbs, which take the auxiliary verb “to have”. Moreover, one may ask what counts as *necessary* in Parry’s proposal: after all, inflected verbs do not show any sign of postpositioning their non-subject clitics in Piedmontese. Only non-inflected verbal forms do — and these typically appear after the auxiliary “to have” (non-inflected verbal forms have postverbal clitics in Piedmontese just as they do in languages without Subject Clitics, such as Italian, and against French; cf. Piedmontese *pije-je* and Italian *prenderli* vs. French *les prendre* “to take them”).

While both Meyer-Lübke’s functional explanation (the necessity to avoid ambiguity) and Parry’s hypothesis (the ‘necessity’ for Subject Clitics to stay as close as possible to the verb) hold part of the truth, they do not seem to explain fully why in Piedmontese only Clitic Climbing came to be excluded for Object Clitics with compound tenses (i.e., with a form of “to have” followed by a participle).

The following sections will propose a scenario which treats the historical development of these features in a unified way — while taking into account the curious morphology of “to have”.

5. The diachronic picture

5.1 A look at premodern Piedmontese

To summarize so far, modern Piedmontese differs from many neighboring — and for other aspects similar — Romance varieties with regard to the following parameters:

- a. the obligatory presence of a full series of Subject Clitics;
- b. the limitation of Clitic Climbing to inflected verbs;
- c. the limited use of Clitic Doubling (as well as for the absence of an expletive in the use of “to have” with a pronominal object).

At least as points a. and b. are concerned, they are rather recent: pre-auxiliary Object Clitics (eventually doubled after the participle) were possible as late as the early-19th century (cf. Parry 1995: 141); one finds, e.g.:⁹

- (42) *n’è mai rivane d’incontreve!*
“it never happened to us to meet you!” (modern: *a l’é mai...*)

and

- (43) *chi v’ha portave sì...?*
“who brought you here?”
(modern: *chi a l’ha portave sì?*; both examples from the works of Edoardo Ignazio Calvo, 1773–1804)

Clitic Climbing is still found nowadays in peripheral varieties of Piedmontese, possibly as a result of influence from neighboring dialects.

As regards Clitic Doubling and the use of expletives with “to have”, premodern Piedmontese does not seem instead to have been different from the modern varieties: Clitic Doubling was of course found, but only with dislocated NPs — as it is still possible today (cf. (40):

- (44) *a chiel-sì venta chë j’afé a-j vado ‘dcò bin*
“to this one, business must surely be going as fine as to me”
(Giuseppe Arnàud, end of 18th century)

Here the Subject Clitic *a* is followed by the Indirect Object Clitic *j* referring to the left-dislocated independent pronoun *a chiel-sì* “to this one”.

9. These and the following quotations from early Piedmontese texts are taken from Brero (1981–1982).

The movement toward the obligatoriness of the Subject Clitics is common to Piedmontese and to many varieties of Northern Italy — although Piedmontese has possibly carried it further than any other language. While the syntactic status of Subject Clitics in premodern Piedmontese is not completely clear, it seems safe to say that they were pronominal elements, mainly found in the absence of a NP, and that they acted as syntactic subjects.¹⁰ Thus, we find in poetry from the 17th century (*Canson ëd Madòna Luchin-a*):

- (45) *Luchin-a va a la piassa*
 “Luchin -a goes to the marketplace”

without Subject Clitic (modern: ... *a va a la...*), and immediately after an example of Clitic Climbing with a compound verbal form:

- (46) *cand a j'ha vist*
 “when she has seen them...”
 (modern: *quand (che) a l'ha vist-je*)

The Clitic was always absent with a subject Relative Pronoun:

- (47) *ij giovent ch'han fàit la preuva*
 “the youth who tried it”
 (modern: *che a l'han...*) (*Canson dij Dësbaucià*, 17th century)

and an interrogative pronoun:

- (48) *chi v'ha portave sì...?*
 “who brought you here?”
 (modern: *chi a l'ha...*) (Edoardo Ignazio Calvo, 1773–1804)
- (49) *e voi, chi seve?*
 “and you, who are you?”
 (modern: *chi i seve?*) (Edoardo Ignazio Calvo, 1773–1804)

In other cases the Subject Clitic seems to be simply optional:

- (50) *a stà mal chi ha fàit la bòta / ma stà pes chi ha arseivù*
 “who gave the beating suffers / but who got it suffers more”
 (modern: ... *ma a sta pes chi a l'ha...*) (*Canson dij Dësbaucià*, 17th Century)

In a way reminiscent of Valdôtain or Friulan ‘OCL-for-SCL’, the Subject Clitic was also generally missing when an Object Clitic was found:

- (51) *v'assicur ch'a-i manca nen*
 “I assure you that it is not missing”
 (modern: *i v'assicuro...*) (Ignazio Isler, 1702–1788)

As in other Romance varieties, the 3rd Singular Subject Clitic was the most common. The plural persons except for the 1st had Ø allomorphs:

- (52) *le stra son tute sternè*
 “all the roads are paved”
 (modern: *a son ...*) (Ignazio Isler, 1702–1788)

Just as today, in premodern Piedmontese the 3rd Singular Subject Clitic was *a* (sometimes *i*) with both consonant- and vowel-initial verbs. Very few examples of *l'* before vowel-initial verbs are found:

- (53) *s'l'andasso a costa dansa*
 “if they were to go to this dance”
 (modern: *se a andeisso...*) (*Canson dla Balovria*, 17th century)

And just as in the modern language, an exception was made for the verbs “to have” and “to be”. Here the 3rd Singular Subject Clitic was *always* followed by *l'*. But the status of the latter is far from clear: the presence of a 3rd Singular Subject Clitic implicated that of *l'* interposed between it and “to have”, but the reverse did not hold, and *l'* could be found even in the absence of the Subject Clitics. Thus, after a relative pronoun neither a Subject Clitic nor *l'* were found (cf. (50)), while in absolute initial position *l'* occurred even in the absence of the Subject Clitic, as in:

- (54) *l'han tavòta 'l golé fiap*
 “they always have a sore throat”
 (modern: *a l'han...*) (*Canson dij Dësbaucià*, 17th Century)

The examples of *l'* without a preceding *a* are just too numerous to account for on the basis of poetic license due to prosodic constraints or the reflex of different local dialects.

Etymologically, *l'* is certainly the last remnant of a Latin deictic turned into a Romance pronominal of 3rd person (and preserved as a 3rd person Subject Clitic in many varieties spoken in Northern and even Central Italy); one may note, however, that very little evidence has been preserved of *l'* in archaic Piedmontese documents from the 13th to the 15th centuries. What seems certain is that in premodern Piedmontese *l'* was NOT (or no longer) a Subject Clitic. I assume it had already turned into a semantically void element, whose

10. Cf. Poletto (1995) for similar observations on the Venetian dialects of the Renaissance.

role was to be the host of verbal cliticization. In other words, for the 3rd Singular of the verbs “to be” and “to have” it was the verbal form that underwent cliticization, rather than being the element which attracted the clitics.¹¹ One may speculate that the phonological poverty of the 3rd Singular Present Indicative of “to be” and “to have” (both monophonemic /e/ and /a/, respectively) was crucial in turning them into clitics, and *l’* was the element to which the verbal form attached in the absence of another suitable host.

It is therefore no surprise that, e.g., no *l’* was needed after a relative pronoun (cf. (50)), and that, on the contrary, *l’* was found in absolute initial position — where the following verbal form had no other element to cliticize to.

Whenever the verbal form was preceded by a Subject Clitic, the latter, being a clitic, could not act as a host of verbal cliticization. *l’* was therefore stuck between the Subject Clitic and the form of “to have”, providing the necessary linking element between the two.

For an analysis of the future development, the important point is that, different from the modern language, *l’* had not yet been extended to the other forms of “to have” and “to be”:

- (55) *i hai na patron-a avara*
 “I have a greedy master”
 (modern: *i l’hai...*) (*Canson ëd Madòna Luchin-a*, 17th century)
- (56) *i oma pi pen-a scasi / ch’a n’han j’aso e muj*
 “we feel (“have”) almost more pain / than donkeys and mules do”
 (modern: *i l’oma...*) (*Canson ëd Madòna Luchin-a*, 17th century)

Before the introduction of obligatory Subject Clitics the paradigm of “to have” therefore was:

- 1Sg *hai*
 2Sg *has*
 3Sg { *l’ ha*, ... *ha* }
 ...

This implies that for persons other than the 3rd Singular *l’* was *always* an Object Clitic, as in:

11. That the Auxiliary is adjoined to the clitic, rather than the opposite, has been proposed, e.g., for Valdôtain by Roberts (1993:331) — although in Valdôtain *l’* is a Subject Clitic.

- (57) *mi l’hai vist andé a la pieuva*
 “I saw him (*l’*) walking in the rain”
 (modern: *mi i l’hai vistlo...*) (*Canson dij Dësbaucià*, 17th Century)
- (58) *quand mi l’hai artirà*
 “when I took her (*l’*)”
 (modern: *quand (che mi) i l’hai artirala*) (Carlo G. Tana, 1649–1713)

Ambiguity was therefore restricted to the 3rd Singular, and both in the use of “to have” as a main verb and as an auxiliary of transitive verbs, as in the hypothetical following sentence derived from (58) above:

- (58’) *quand a l’ha artirà*
 “when s/he (*a*) took him/her (*l’*)”

While the first case of ambiguity is still today shared by those non-literary varieties, in which /i=l=áj/ is both ‘I have’ and ‘I have it’ (cf. (16’), (17’)), the second would be in due time resolved by the postpositioning of the Object Clitics. For the time being, one might presume that, since a form such as *ha fait* (‘he/she has done’) was possible in context, and the form *l’ha fait* was only necessary in absolute initial position, the presence of a preceding subject followed by *l’* and the verb was sufficient to disambiguate the sentence: *X l’ha fait* was unambiguously “X has done it”.

5.2 The development of modern Piedmontese

We are now in a position to correct a few points in Meyer-Lübke’s (1900) hypothesis:

- l’* was never added to all vowel-initial verbs, but always just to “to be” (limited to the 3rd Singular) and “to have”;
- even in premodern Piedmontese, the 3ss was never *al*, but always *a* (or *i*), and the element *l* was not a clitic (therefore, the orthographic choice of writing the sequence /a=l=áj/ as *a l’ha*, rather than **al ha*, comes out to be not strange at all, all things considered);
- l’* was not found on the forms of “to have” other than the 3rd Singular. As will be shown below, its spread actually occurred only *after* the postpositioning of the object clitics after the participle; therefore, if anything, it was a result, rather than a cause, of the demise of Clitic Climbing.

Along the way to modern Piedmontese the Subject Clitics underwent a double development: syntagmatically, they extended the range of syntactic configurations in which they were obligatory — until reaching the situation sketched in Section 1 above; paradigmatically, they became a complete set, with no Ø allomorphs.

When Subject Clitics became an obligatory part of the inflectional mechanism of verbs, both *ha* (when a suitable host preceded) and *l'ha* became impossible; instead of simply to get rid of *l'* (and therefore to treat “to have” as all the other vowel-initial verbs, allowing **a ha* on the model, e.g., of *a ardrissa*), the only form became the modern *a l'ha* “s/he has”, yielding the paradigm:

	without 3rd Sing. Object Clitic	with 3rd Sing. Object Clitic
1Sg	<i>i hai</i>	<i>i l'hai</i>
2Sg	<i>it has</i>	<i>it l'has</i>
3Sg	<i>a l'ha</i>	<i>a l'ha</i>
...		

Ambiguity was still restricted to the 3rd Singular, although its frequency had now increased: *a l'ha vist* was now *always* ambiguous between an interpretation with a pronominal object (“s/he has seen him/her/it”) and one as an ambitransitive verb (“s/he has seen”).

I argue that, alongside the necessity to avoid ambiguity (as according to Meyer-Lübke’s hypothesis), what made the postpositioning of Object Clitics possible was a change in the morphonological conditioning of *l'*: after Subject Clitics became obligatory, the rules which controlled the insertion of *l'* before the 3rd Singular form of “to have” and “to be” ceased to be operative — after all, the presence of the 3rd Singular Subject Clitic *a* with a following hiatus was well accepted for all the other vowel-initial verbs. Stuck as it was between the Subject Clitic and the form of “to have”, *l'* was apparently analysed as the first segment of the vowel-initial forms of these verbs; interestingly, in this period we find a few cases in which *l'* was extended to nonfinite forms, as in:

- (59) *l'avèj dla sipria*
“to wear (“have”) powder”
(modern: *avèj...*) (Edoardo Ignazio Calvo, 1773–1804)

Such forms later disappeared.

But there was a serious drawback to the analysis of *l'* as the first segment of the vowel-initial forms of “to have” and “to be”: other elements could occupy

the position of *l'* before the form of “to have”, namely, the Object Clitics *m'* (1st Singular), *t'* (2nd Singular), etc., as well as the 3rd Singular *l'* — homophonous with the semantically null *l'*. Neither was it possible to analyze the latter in terms of the former: i.e., it was not possible to interpret all instances of *l'* before “to have” as Object Clitics: Piedmontese being a non-(extensively)-Clitic-Doubling language an analysis in terms of an Object Clitic was excluded whenever a nominal object followed. And then as now, the element before the verb never agreed with the number of a nominal object: **a j'ha le ca* “s/he them has the houses” was excluded.

Conversely, an available option was apparently the reanalysis of the Object Clitic *l'* in terms of a semantically null *l'*. What was needed was the possibility to shift the expression of the object to some other position; and here the analogy with a nominal object — which of course always *followed* the verb — came into play.

I argue therefore that the postpositioning of the Object Clitics (and ultimately the demise of Clitic Climbing) was triggered by analogy with the similar postverbal position of a nominal object, as in *a l'ha vist la ca* “s/he has seen the house”:

a l'ha vist : *a l'ha vist la ca* = *a l'ha vist* : X
“s/he has seen” “s/he has seen the house” “s/he has seen him/her/it”

where X is the form with a postponed Object Clitic *-lo* (M), *-la* (F), i.e. *a l'ha vistlo/-la* “s/he has seen him/her”. This move disambiguated *a l'ha vist*, which was preserved in its modern objectless interpretation “s/he has seen”:

a l'ha vist → *a l'ha vistlo/-la* → *a l'ha vist*
1. “s/he has seen”, “s/he has seen him/her” “s/he has seen”
2. “s/he has seen him/her/it”

To have an independent full pronoun, such as *chiel* (/kjæl/), *chila* (/kíla/) follow the verbal form, was obviously another available solution,¹² but it was apparently, then as now, reserved to emphatic contexts and for disambiguating purposes, as in (61), as an appropriate answer to (60):

- (60) *chi ch'a l'ha vist?*
/ki k=a=l=á vist/
who that=3SS=l=have.IND.PRES.3M see.PART
“whom has s/he seen?”

12. I owe this suggestion to an anonymous reviewer.

- (61) *a l'ha vist chiel*
 /a=l=á vist kjæɫ/
 3SS=l=have.IND.PRES.3M see.PART he
 "s/he has seen *him*"

Apparently, there was no chronological gap between the postposition of a 3rd Singular Object Clitic and that of any other Object Clitic — at least as far as the subject was a 3rd person Singular. Clitic Doubling and the postposition of any Object Clitic may be understood in terms of paradigm coherence; a hypothetical paradigm without postposition of the Object Clitics other than the semantically ambiguous 3rd Singular would have been:

- am ha vist* "s/he has seen me"
at ha vist "s/he has seen you"
a l'ha vistlo "s/he has seen him"
an ha vist "s/he has seen us"
 ...

Thus, just as *a l'ha vist* "s/he has seen him/her/it" became *a l'ha vistlo*, the unambiguous *a m'ha vist* ("s/he me-has seen") "s/he has seen me" gave rise to *a m'ha vistme* "s/he me-has seen-me". Schematically:

<i>a l'ha vist</i>	→	<i>a l'ha vistlo</i>	"s/he has seen him"
	↓		
<i>am ha vist</i>	→	<i>am ha vistme</i>	"s/he has seen me"
<i>an ha vist</i>	→	<i>an ha vistme</i>	"s/he has seen us"
		...	

At this stage the Object Clitic in front of "to have" generally agreed in person and number with the postponed Clitic Object, resulting in Clitic Doubling and without neutralization in favor of the neutral *l'*, as in the modern language:

- (62) *a-j ha ciamaje tute a l'ubidiensa*
 "he called them all to obedience"
 (modern: *a l'ha...*) (Edoardo Ignazio Calvo, 1773–1804)
- (63) *la nòrma ch'a j'han daje*
 "the rule they gave them"
 (modern: *che a l'han...*) (Edoardo Ignazio Calvo, 1773–1804)

- (64) *la natura a v'ha nen fave*
 "nature did not make you (Pl)"
 (modern: *a l'ha...*) (Vittorio A. Borrelli, 1723–after 1800)

By then, *l'* in *a l'ha vist* "he has seen" had become again a functionally useless element, and *a l'ha* was analyzed as 3SS=l=have.IND.PRES.3M. It will also be noticed that, at this stage, Piedmontese employed a very peculiar form of Clitic Doubling — limited as it was to the Object Clitics. The next step was to spread the functionally useless *l'* with any Object Clitic. Clitic Doubling was apparently short-lived and, at least in the literary variety, by the early 19th century *am ha vistme* "s/he has seen me" (lit. "s/he-me has seen-me") was definitely replaced by *a l'ha vistme* — the modern solution.

More crucial for further developments was the extension of the postpositioning of the Object Clitics to *all the forms of the paradigm of "to have"*: again on the model of *a l'ha vistlo* "s/he has seen him", the perfectly viable and unambiguous *i l'hai vist* "I have seen him/her/it" became *i l'hai vistlo/-la* ("I it-have seen-him/-her"). At this stage, both *i l'hai vist* and *i l'hai vistlo* were in use for "I have seen him", while *i hai vist* remained in the meaning of "I have seen". The paradigm of the past of a transitive verb such as *vèdde* "to see" therefore was:

without Object Clitics		with a 3 rd singular Object Clitic	
<i>i hai vist</i>	"I have seen"	<i>i l'hai vist ~ i l'hai vistlo</i>	"I have seen him"
<i>it has vist</i>	"you have seen"	<i>it l'has vist ~ it l'has vistlo</i>	"you have seen him"
<i>a l'ha vist</i>	"s/he has seen"	<i>a l'ha vistlo</i>	"s/he has seen him"
		...	

The same of course applied with any other Object Clitic, e.g.: *i j'hai vist ~ i j'hai vistje* "I have seen them", etc.

The demise of Clitic Doubling also applied with subjects other than the 3rd Singular, and *i l'hai vistlo* "I have seen him" soon won out over the form without Clitic Doubling *i l'hai vist*. As we know, the latter did not disappear, but took the place of *i hai vist* in the meaning "I have seen". In other words, the functionally useless *l'* spread to all the forms of the paradigm of "to have". It seems that, when *l'* was firmly established in all the forms of the auxiliary whenever an Object Clitic followed, as well as in the 3rd Singular Subject, the weight of paradigmatic leveling shifted in favor of having the same *l'* inserted between any other Subject Clitic and a form of "to have". Formally, what

happened may be described as a reverse application of the same proportional analogical change seen above for the postposition of the Object Clitics: it was seen above how *a l'ha vist* in the meaning 's/he has seen him' had been turned into *a l'ha vistlo*, and *i l'hai vist* 'I have seen him' had become *i l'hai vistlo*. Now, just as *a l'ha vist* was preserved in the meaning without an object ('s/he has seen'), *i l'hai vist* took the place of *i hai vist* as 'I have seen':

<i>a l'ha vistlo</i> :	<i>a l'ha vist</i>	=	<i>i l'hai vistlo</i>	:	X
"s/he has seen him"	"s/he has seen"		"I have seen him"		"I have seen"

where X is *i l'hai vist*.

The following sentence shows how the extension of *l'* actually followed the postposition of Object Clitics and the demise of Clitic Doubling:

- (65) *i l'hei paura che it abie nen capime*
 "I am afraid you didn't understand me" (modern: ...*che it l'abie*...)
 (Giovanni Zoppis, 1830–1876)

(65) may be contrasted on one hand with the modern

- (65') *i l'hai paura che it l'abie nen capime*

(with *l'* inserted between the Subject Clitic and the form of "to have"), and on the other hand with the form with Clitic Doubling which would obtained at an earlier stage (approximately, the end of the 18th century):

- (65'') **i hei paura che it m'abie nen capime*

Thus, the analogical spread of *l'* proceeded by steps, and was not fully in place as late as the first half of the 19th century. For the 1st Singular the form *j'heu* (still found today in local dialects) was preserved for a certain time before giving up to modern *i l'hai*; as already shown by (65) above, the 2nd Singular Subject Clitic *it* was the last to be regularized with a preverbal *l'*:

- (66) *it has parlà con Clarin*
 "you have spoken with Clarin"
 (modern: *it l'has*...) (Giovanni Zoppis, 1830–1876)

Analogical leveling of the paradigm had caused once again an increase of ambiguity: all the inflected forms of "to have" were now subject to the same ambiguity which was previously limited to the 3rd Singular: *i l'hai* came to mean both "I have it" and "I have".

Finally, at least in the dialect of the capital, Turin (upon which the written variety is molded), a further element *l'* as 3rd Object Pronoun was introduced, giving rise to modern literary *a l' l'ha* 'he has it', *i l' l'hai* 'I have it', etc.

6. Conclusions

All of these developments (summarized in Table 3) took place within a relatively short time (less than two hundred years, if we consider that 17th-century poetry shows no sign of them), and the present state was reached toward the mid 19th-century.

Ambiguity and the necessity to clearly identify an object have certainly played a role in bringing modern Piedmontese to abandon Clitic Climbing with compound verbal forms; but comparison with neighboring languages clearly shows that it was, at best, a secondary factor. The demise of Clitic Climbing was rather mainly the result of the reanalysis of an Object Clitic in terms of a semantically empty element *l'* and of paradigmatic leveling, ultimately caused by the introduction of obligatory Subject Clitics. Reanalysis was triggered by two conditions: a restricted set of occurrences, and an available alternative interpretation. While the presence of "inorganic" left-edge material with the auxiliary verbs "to be" and "to have" is a widespread phenomenon in many Romance languages, this fact alone could not bring about the same reanalysis witnessed in Piedmontese. It did not occur, e.g., in Genoese, where /l/ is found with all vowel-initial verbs, the intransitive ones included. In other words, the demise of Clitic Climbing in compound verbal forms was possible in Piedmontese, but not in similar Romance varieties whose *l'* did not have the restricted range of uses of premodern Piedmontese — i.e., only with a 3rd Subject Clitic, and, then as now, with a maximally restricted number of verbs only.

It is well known that organisms often preserve functionally useless, or dormant, material, eventually exploiting and turning it to new uses as the need arises: following Gould & Vrba (1981), this is generally referred to as *exaptation* (cf. also Dennett [1995:276ff.] for a general overview and criticism). The concept has been adapted (rather than exapted) to linguistics by Lass (1990): languages, especially those with a rich morphology and which have undergone profound syntactic changes in a relatively short time (such as the Romance languages), are likely to have a lot of "junk", frozen accidents of language history. Even when their presence is the source of any kind of problems (ranging, e.g., from paradigmatic irregularity to ambiguity), speakers seldom

Table 3. Development of Clitics with "to have"

Stage 1.: no Subject Clitics

<i>l'ha vist</i> , ... <i>ha vist</i> "s/he has seen"	vs.	<i>l'ha vist</i> "s/he has seen him/her/it", <i>m'ha vist</i> "s/he has seen me", <i>l'ha vist la ca</i> "s/he has seen the house"
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Stage 2.: introduction of Subject Clitics

(<i>al</i>) <i>ha vist</i> "s/he has seen"	vs.	(<i>a</i>) <i>l'ha vist</i> "s/he has seen him/her/it", (<i>a</i>) <i>m'ha vist</i> "s/he has seen me", (<i>al</i>) <i>ha vist la ca</i> "s/he has seen the house"
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Stage 3.: Obligatory Subject Clitics

<i>a l'ha vist</i> 1. "s/he has seen" ~ 2. "s/he has seen him/her/it", <i>am ha vist</i> "s/he has seen me", <i>a l'ha vist la ca</i> "s/he has seen the house"

Stage 4.: reanalysis and postpositioning of the Object Clitic *l'*

<i>a l'ha vist</i> "s/he has seen"	vs.	<i>a l'ha vistlo</i> "s/he has seen him", <i>am ha vistme</i> "s/he has seen me", <i>a l'ha vist la ca</i> "s/he has seen the house"
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Stage 5.: demise of Clitic Doubling and Climbing

<i>a l'ha vist</i> "s/he has seen"	vs.	<i>a l'ha vistlo</i> "s/he has seen him", <i>a l'ha vistme</i> "s/he has seen me", <i>a l'ha vist la ca</i> "s/he has seen the house"
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Stage 6.: New Preverbal Object Insertion (in Literary Piedmontese only)

<i>a l'ha</i> "s/he has"	vs.	<i>a l' l'ha</i> "s/he has him/her/it"
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just throw them away. Always sticking to a least-effort strategy, they will rather try and cobble their language together using whatever material is available.

The historical developments discussed in this article show that in languages things can be much more complicated, and that functionless material can trigger the reanalysis of functional material without being exapted into a new function nor being definitely discarded: in Piedmontese an etymological subject pronoun had been reduced to a functionally useless element *l'* which was also homophonous with a 3rd person Object Clitic. After the emergence of a full set of obligatory Subject Clitics, this minor ambiguity was certainly enhanced, but still kept within manageable limits. With the ensuing collision between the Subject and the Object Clitic series, this element became pivotal in setting in

motion the chain of events which would eventually end up with Piedmontese giving away Clitic Climbing — only to sink once again into functional uselessness after having served its "purpose".

Just as in nature, tinkering is done in language with what is at hand and with no preestablished plans. And you rarely know in advance what you will end up with.

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Summary

The paper deals with a few aspects of the morphosyntax of clitics in Piedmontese (Western Romance) and their historical development. In Piedmontese an element =l= (orthographically *l'*) is obligatorily inserted between the Subject Clitics and all and only the inflected forms of "to have"; in several varieties of Piedmontese this element has a double interpretation synchronically, either as a semantically null element or as an Object Clitic of 3rd singular. Although the presence of such an element is not rare among neighboring Romance varieties, where it generally acts as a 3rd singular subject clitic, it is argued that in Piedmontese its peculiar distribution is intimately tied to other unusual morphosyntactic features, all of them having developed within the last two-to-three centuries. In particular, historical reanalysis of *l'* was crucial in the positioning of the object clitics after the participle in compound verbal forms (a rare pattern among Romance languages). Partially correcting traditional analyses (such as Meyer-Lübke 1900), it is argued that the necessity to avoid ambiguity and clearly identify a pronominal object was at best a contributing factor in triggering morphological change. The postpositioning of the object clitics was rather mainly the result of the extension in use of the subject clitics, and of the ensuing reanalysis of the element *l'*. This was made possible by two conditions: a restricted set of occurrences in which *l'* was found, and a ready-made alternative interpretation. Comparison with neighboring varieties shows that such a development was not possible in those Romance languages which did not have an element similar to *l'* in the restricted range of uses of premodern Piedmontese.

Résumé

Cet article traite de quelques aspects de la morphologie des clitiques en piémontais (une langue romane occidentale) et de leur développement historique. On trouve en piémontais un élément =l= (*l'* dans l'orthographe) obligatoirement inséré entre les clitiques du sujet et les formes fléchies du verbe 'avoir'. Dans plusieurs variétés du piémontais cet élément peut être interprété soit comme un élément sémantiquement vide, soit comme le clitique objet de la troisième personne singulier. Bien que la présence d'un élément similaire au *l'* piémontais n'est pas rare parmi les variétés voisines (où il joue généralement le rôle de clitique sujet de la troisième personne singulière), l'article démontre que la distribution inhabituelle de cet élément en piémontais est étroitement liée à un certain nombre d'autres particularités morphosyntaxiques qui se sont toutes développées durant les deux ou trois derniers siècles. En particulier, la réanalyse historique de l'élément *l'* a été décisive pour le positionnement des clitiques objet après le participe dans les temps composés — une solution fort rare parmi les langues romanes. Avec une révision partielle des analyses traditionnelles (par ex. Meyer-Lübke 1900), on démontre que la nécessité d'éviter toute ambiguïté et de distinguer

clairement un objet pronominal a joué tout au plus un rôle complémentaire dans le changement morphologique. Le positionnement des clitiques objet après le participe a été plutôt le résultat d'une extension de l'usage des clitiques sujet, ce qui a amené à une réanalyse de l'élément *l'*. Cette réanalyse a été permise par deux conditions: une distribution fort limitée de *l'* et la possibilité de l'amener à une analyse alternative. La comparaison avec les variétés voisines démontre que le même développement qu'on trouve en piémontais ne s'est pas produit dans ces langues romanes qui étaient dépourvues d'un élément comparable à *l'* dans les domaines d'usage bien limités qu'on trouvait en piémontais pré-moderne.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Artikel befaßt sich mit einigen Aspekten der Morphosyntax von Klitika im Piedmontesischen (Westromanisch) und mit ihrer historischen Entwicklung. Im Piedmontesischen ist es obligatorisch, ein Element =l= (orthographisch *l'*) zwischen Subjektsklitika und allen flektierten Formen (und nur diesen) des Verbs 'haben' einzufügen. In manchen Mundarten des Piedmontesischen ist dieses Element in zweifacherweise interpretierbar, und zwar entweder als semantisch leeres Element oder als Objektklitikum der 3. Person Singular. Obgleich das Element selbst in benachbarten romanischen Varietäten nicht selten vorkommt und dort im allgemeinen als Klitikum der 3. Person Singular fungiert, wird hier argumentiert, daß seine eigenartige Distribution im Piedmontesischen in engem Zusammenhang mit anderen ungewöhnlichen morphosyntaktischen Phänomenen steht, die sich allesamt innerhalb der letzten zwei bis drei Jahrhunderte entwickelt haben. Insbesondere war eine historische Reanalyse des Elements *l'* entscheidend für die Position von Objektsklitika nach dem Partizip in zusammengesetzten Verbformen, was in romanischen Sprachen selten vorkommt. Dieser Artikel berichtigt teilweise traditionelle Analysen (z. B. Meyer — Lübke 1900) und argumentiert, daß die Notwendigkeit, Mehrdeutigkeit zu vermeiden und ein Objektpronomen eindeutig zu identifizieren höchstens sekundär zu morphologischen Veränderungen beigetragen hat. Vielmehr war die Entwicklung nachgestellter Objektsklitika hauptsächlich das Ergebnis einer Ausweitung des Gebrauchs von Subjektsklitika und einer darauffolgenden Reanalyse des Elements *l'*. Dies wurde durch zwei Faktoren ermöglicht: eine begrenzte Anzahl möglicher Kontexte für *l'* und eine bereits vorhandene alternative Interpretationsmöglichkeit. Der Vergleich mit benachbarten Varietäten zeigt, daß eine solche Entwicklung in denjenigen romanischen Sprachen nicht möglich war, die kein dem *l'* ähnliches Element in begrenzt möglichen Kontexten nach Art des Früh-Piedmontesischen aufwiesen.

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