Properhood of human unique nouns in Romance languages

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Abstract

This paper provides evidence that human unique nouns such as *king* constitute a peripheral group of lexemes within the word class of common nouns. In semantic definite contexts, they semantically resemble proper names with respect to monorefentiality and can therefore morphosyntactically behave like personal names. The properhood of inherently unique nouns has remained elusive in reference grammars and historical grammars of Romance languages. Different lines of diachronic and synchronic evidence support the properhood of human unique nouns: Differential object marking in Old Spanish, Old Portuguese, and Sicilian, possessive constructions in Old French, article-drop in unmodified prepositional phrases in Romanian, and proprial article in Old Romanian. By contrast, in Balearic Catalan, human and inanimate unique nouns morphosyntactically deviate both from proper names and non-unique nouns with respect to definite article forms. The findings reveal that properhood of human unique nouns is in line with an implicational scale based on the notion of dimensions of knowledge.

1. Introduction

Previous analyses of the morphosyntactic properties of inherently unique nouns have revolved around the use, or rather the absence, of the definite article in sematic definite contexts. This is the case in earlier stages of Germanic and Romance languages such as Old French (Gamillscheg 1957: 91-92; Buridant 2000: 109; GGHF 2020: 973, 1549) and Old High German (Gräf 1905: 14–27; Flick 2020: 151–156).[1] Examples are given in (1), where OFr. *soleill* 'sun' and OHG *súnna* 'sun' lack the definite article.[2] The absence of the definite article has been explained in terms of the grammaticalization of the definite article, according to which the definite article occurs with inherently unique nouns only at later stages of the grammaticalization pathway (see Szczepaniak 2009: 78 for German).

(1)   Lack of definite article with unique nouns in Old French and Old High German
        Old French (12th century, *Roland*, v. 980)
        Soleill n'-i   luis-t
        sun   NEG-PRON   shine-3SG
        'The sun does not shine there.'

        Old High German (11th century, *Boethius*, 17, 12)
        Únde   súnn-a ne-skîn-et
        and   sun-NOM   NEG-shine-3SG
        'And the sun does not shine.'

A word of caution, however, is that the definite article can be excluded from certain syntactic contexts. These include bare nominal coordination and article-drop in unmodified prepositional phrases. Such contexts were not always excluded in previous studies (see Footnote 14 for Old English). As a result, some scholars concluded that the definite article was typically absent from unique nouns in Old Italian (Rohlfs 1969: 25-26) and Old Spanish (Company Company 1991; Ortiz Ciscomani 2006). In bare nominal coordination, definites are coordinated without overt determiners (see Heycock & Zamparelli 2003 for a syntactic analysis and Märzhäuser 2013 for French, Spanish, and Portuguese). Examples from Old French and Old Spanish are shown in (2). Coordinated bare definites were considered as evidence for the lack of the definite article with unique nouns in Old French and Old Spanish (Buridant 2000: 109; Batllori 2002: 197, 200; Ortiz Ciscomani 2006: 361). Note, however, that Menéndez Pidal (1944: 304) points out that in Old Spanish the definite article can be blocked in coordination.

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[1]   In addition, the absence of the definite article with unique nouns has been reported for some survey sites from Ladin, as in *sọrẹdḷ flọrẹ́s* 'the sun goes down' (example taken from Rohlfs 1969: 26).

[2]   As pointed out by Carlberg (1874: 19), the *Chanson de Roland* contains one single instance of *soleil* 'sun' without the definite article (in subject position). Otherwise, it is accompanied by the definite article, as in *li soleilz est culchet* 'the sun has gone down'.

(2)   Lack of definite article with unique nouns in bare nominal coordination

        Old French (12th century, *Guillaume*, v. 804)
        Cel   e   terre fes-is
        heaven   and   earth   make-2SG.PST
        'Heaven and earth you made.'

        Old Spanish (13th century, *Mio Çid*, v. 331)
        Fez-iſt çielo   ⅽ   tierra
        make-2SG.PST   heaven   and   earth
        'You made heaven and earth.'

Article-drop in unmodified prepositional phrases is a common phenomenon found among the languages of the world (see Himmelmann 1998: 323-338 for Albanian, Nkore-Kiga, Romanian, Tagalog, and Germanic languages). This also applies for earlier stages of Romance languages (see Meyer-Lübke 1899: 211-213 for a comprehensive overview, Menéndez Pidal 1944: 299-300 for Old Spanish, Gamillscheg 1957: 91 for Old French, and Rohlfs 1969: 36 for Italian). Examples from Old French and Old Spanish are shown in (3). This syntactic context has been given as evidence for the absence of the definite article with unique nouns in Old Italian and Old Spanish. For example, in her analysis of the definite article in Old Italian, Pestelli-Gori (1944-1945: 32) observes that the definite article is more frequently attested with *inferno* 'hell' (13 vs. 8) than with *paradiso* 'paradise' (3 vs. 10). However, a closer look reveals that of the 18 instances without the definite article, 16 involve unmodified prepositional phrases (*in inferno* 'in hell', *in paradiso* 'in paradise') while 2 involve subject position.[3] Otherwise, these lexical items occur with the definite article (*l'inferno* 'hell', *il paradiso* 'paradise'). Similarly, in her analysis of the definite article in Old Spanish, Company Company (1991: 409) finds that 3% of the cases are comprised of unique nouns. However, she lists examples of unique nouns in prepositional phrases such as *de infierno* 'from hell' and *en parayso* 'in paradise', which otherwise occur with the definite article, as in *el infierno* 'hell' and *el parayso* 'paradise'. As pointed out by Menéndez Pidal (1944: 299-300), the definite article can be absent from prepositional phrases in Old Spanish, as in *en çielo* 'in heaven', *en montaña* 'on the hill', etc.

(3)   Absence of definite article with unique nouns in prepositional phrases

        Old French (12th century, *Roland*, v. 2341)
        Cuntre   ciel   amunt est   resort-i-e
        towards   sky   above AUX.3SG bounce-PTCP-F
        'To the sky she bounced.'

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[3]   More specifically, the 16 examples of article-drop in unmodified prepositional phrases are *in inferno* 'in hell' (Inf. 18, 1; 34, 81; Par. 31, 81), *d'inferno* 'from/of hell' (Inf. 5, 10; Purg. 5, 104; 7, 21; 16, 1; 21, 32), *in paradiso* 'in paradise' (Par. 10, 105), and *di paradiso* 'from/of hell' (Par. 7, 38; 7, 87; 14, 38; 21, 59; 30, 44; 31, 52; Purg. 1, 99). The two cases of subject position are *in cielo è paradiso* 'in heaven is Paradise' (Par. 3, 89) and *ne' miei occhi è paradiso* 'in my eyes is Paradise' (Par. 18, 21).

Old Spanish (13th century, *Mio Çid*, v. 1094)
el   ſeñor que   eſ   en   çielo
ART   lord REL   is   in   heaven
'The Lord who is in heaven.'

The examples presented so far involve inanimate unique nouns. In comparison, the morphosyntactic behaviour of human unique nouns has received less attention. For example, Löbel (2002: 592) observes that in English, unique (functional) nouns such as *president* can be used without the definite article in predicative position, but not non-unique (sortal) nouns such as *teacher*, as in the following example:

(4)   Absence of definite article with human unique nouns in predicative position
        He is president / *teacher

While previous research on unique nouns has focused on the occurrence of the definite article (among others: Löbner 2011; Ortmann 2014; Schwarz 2009, 2019), little is known about the behaviour of human unique nouns regarding additional morphosyntactic phenomena which involve semantic definite contexts where the definite article always occurs. In other words, can we still find morphosyntactic differences between unique and non-unique nouns notwithstanding the presence of the definite article? In this paper, I will address the following questions: Do human unique nouns morphosyntactically differ from non-unique nouns in semantic definite contexts? And if so, do they morphosyntactically pattern with personal names or do they deviate from both human non-unique nouns and personal names? In this respect, I will talk about properhood when unique nouns morphosyntactically resemble proper names.
        The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 introduces a classification of human unique nouns based on the notion of dimensions of knowledge. Section 3 gathers crosslinguistic evidence for the properhood of unique nouns. Section 4 provides an analysis of the diverging morphosyntactic patterns of human unique nouns in Balearic Catalan, Old French, Old Portuguese, Old Spanish, Romanian, Old Romanian, and Sicilian. Section 5 discusses the semantic factors which motivate the properhood of human unique nouns and classifies the morphosyntactic behaviour of unique nouns into different types. Section 6 summarizes the main results of the study. The linguistic examples originally come from a variety of published sources, including reference grammars and historical grammars. As for the treatment of the examples, the interlinear glosses conform to the *Leipzig Glossing Rules*. The codes for category labels are given on the list of glosses below.
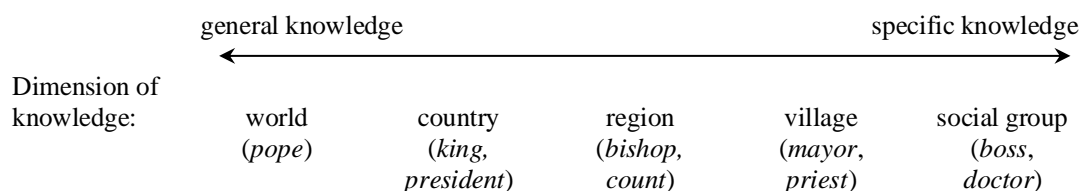

2. Classification of human unique nouns

Inherently unique nouns refer to unique entities (see Löbner 2016: 287 and Becker 2021: 91 for a definition). Löbner (1985) classifies (types of uses of) nouns into four different basic semantic types: (1) sortal nouns (*man*, *woman*), which are neither relational nor unique; (2) relational nouns (*brother*, *sister*), which are relational, but not unique; (3) individual nouns (*John*, *pope*, *sun*), which are non-relational but unique; and (4) functional nouns (*king*, *president*, *father*), which are relational and

unique. Inherently unique nouns comprise individual and functional nouns while non-inherently unique comprise sortal and relational nouns. Note that kinship terms can be either relational (*brother*, *sister*) or functional (*father*, *mother*).

Importantly, inherently unique nous can occur in semantic definite contexts. In this respect, some scholars talk about "absolute uniqueness" (Becker 2021: 90), "global uniques" (Schwarz 2019: 5), etc. However, we do not find a more fine-grained classification of unique nouns in the literature. For example, Löbner (2011: 284) subclassifies individual nouns into role terms (*US President*, *Pope*), terms for institutions (*Catholic Church*), terms for unique objects (*sun*, *moon*) or singular events (*World War I*), and abstract terms for certain aspects of the world (*date*, *temperature*). In her analysis of the definite article in Old High German, Flick (2020: 152) distinguishes between inherently unique nouns in nature (*sunna* 'sun', *mano* 'moon') and Christian culture (*got* 'God', *tiufal* 'Devil') (see Schrader 1887: 7-10 and Gräf 1905: 14-28 for further classifications).

I will now introduce a classification of human unique nouns based on the dimensions and type of knowledge. With regard to semantic definite contexts, scholars agree that the universe of discourse or situation can vary (among others: Ebert 1971: 83; Hawkins 1978: 117-118; Leonetti 1999: 798; Szczepaniak 2009: 73). For example, in her study on the two definite articles in the Frisian dialect of Fering, Ebert (1971: 83) observes that the universe of discourse can range from a whole speech community (*a köning* 'the king') to a reduced speech community such as a village (*a sarkklooken* 'the church bells') or a family (*a hünj* 'the dog'). In the same vein, Hawkins (1978: 115) points out that larger situations can be of varying size (country, county, town, and village). In addition, he (1978: 118) differentiates general from specific knowledge. Building on Ebert (1971) and Hawkins (1978), I classify semantic definite contexts according to different dimensions and types of knowledge: The dimension of knowledge can refer to the world, a country, a region, a village (or city), and a family (or social group) while the type of knowledge can be general (encyclopedic) or specific (specific-shared). General knowledge correlates with higher dimensions of knowledge while specific knowledge correlates with lower dimensions of knowledge. If we apply this classification to human unique nouns, we can arrange them along the dimensions and type of knowledge. Thus, the unique nouns *pope*, *king*, *bishop*, *priest*, and *boss* correspond to the dimension of knowledge related to the world, country, region, village, and social group, respectively, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Semantic definite contexts according to dimension and type of knowledge

	general knowledge				specific knowledge
Dimension of knowledge:	world (*pope*)	country (*king, president*)	region (*bishop, count*)	village (*mayor, priest*)	social group (*boss, doctor*)

A classification based on the dimensions of knowledge proved to be particularly fruitful for accounting for morphosyntactic phenomena involving personal names (ordinary vs. famous names). The morphosyntactic phenomena include the use of the definite article and possessive constructions (see Caro Reina 2022: 56-59). In Section 4, we will see that the dimensions of knowledge can also have an impact on the

properhood of human unique nouns in Romance languages. This issue will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.

3. Crosslinguistic evidence for the properhood of unique nouns

This section provides preliminary cross-linguistic evidence for the properhood of human unique nouns. The evidence comes from the following morphosyntactic phenomena: (i) the definite article in Faroese and Basque; (ii) the proprial article, possessive constructions, and prepositions in Balantak and Vitu; (iii) inflection in Sinyar; (iv) differential object indexing in Sambaa; and (v) agreement in Eton.

In Faroese, the suffixed definite article *-in* is attached to common nouns (*maðurin* 'the man (nom.)'), but not to personal names (*DánjalØ* 'Daniel') (Lockwood 1977: 106).[4] However, a few human functional nouns such as *kongur* 'king (nom.)' and *prestur* 'priest (nom.)' behave like personal names since they do not take the definite article, as illustrated in (5) (Lockwood 1977: 107-108; Barnes & Weyhe 1994: 207).[5] In contrast, inanimate individual nouns such as *sól* 'sun', *mán* 'moon', etc. occur with the definite article (*sólin* 'the moon', *mánin* 'the moon') (Lockwood 1977: 143, 154).

(5)   Faroese
        Hav-a   tygum   ikki   sœð   DánjalØ / kongØ / mað-**in**?
        AUX-PL   2SG.POL NEG   see.PTCP Daniel / king / man-ART
        'Haven't you seen Daniel / the king / the man?'

Similarly, in Basque, the suffixed definite article *-a* is used with common nouns (*gizona* 'the man'), but not with personal names (*IgoneØ* 'Igone') (Trask 2003: 119, 161). In western and eastern Basque dialects, however, a few human functional nouns (*errege* 'king', *erregina* 'queen', *ugazaba* 'boss') resemble personal names in that they do not take the definite article, as shown in (6) (Azkue 1923: 278-279; Manterola 2015: 78). In turn, inanimate individual nouns such as *eguzki* 'sun' and *ilargi* 'moon' occur with the definite article (*eguzkia* 'the sun', *ilargia* 'the moon').

(6)   Basque dialects
        IgoneØ / erregeØ / gizon-**a**
        Igone / king / man-ART
        'Igone / the king / the man'

In Balantak and Vitu, we find different definite articles, prepositions, and possessives for proper names and common nouns. In Balantak, an Austronesian language spoken

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[4]   Note that masculine nouns have different endings according to case: *-ur* in the nominative singular and zero in the accusative singular.

[5]   Lockwood (1977: 108) observes that personal names can occur with the definite article in derogatory use. He further points out that the noun *drottning* 'queen' lacks the definite article in combination with *kongur* 'king (nom.)'. Compare *nú koma kongur og drottning* 'now the king and the queen are coming' (without definite article) to *nú kemur drottningin* 'now the queen is coming' (with definite article). The absence of the definite article can be explained in terms of bare nominal coordination (see Section 1).

on Sulawesi, personal names, kinship names, and place names require the definite article *i*, the prepositions *ni* 'to/at' and *tii* 'with', and the suffixed possessive *-ni* (Berg & Busenitz 2012: 41). In contrast, common nouns require the definite article *a*, the prepositions *na* 'to/at' and *tia* 'with', and the suffixed possessive *-na*. However, some human functional nouns such as *tomundo'* 'king' and *pandita* 'pastor' morphosyntactically behave like proper names while others such as *bupati* 'regent' and *camat* 'district chief' morphosyntactically behave like common nouns. Inanimate individual nouns such as *ilio* 'sun' morphosyntactically pattern with common nouns (*a ilio* 'the sun') (Berg & Busenitz 2012: 163).

(7)   Balantak
        a. **i** Nius /   **i** tomundo' / **a** moro'one
           PROP Nius / PROP king / ART man
           'Nius / the king / the man'
        b. **ni** Nius /   **ni** tomundo' / **na** moro'one
           'to/at Nius / to/at the king / to/at the man'
        c. laigan-**ni** Nius /   laigan-**ni** tomundo' / laigan-**na** moro'one
           'the house of Nius / the house of the king / the house of the man'

Similarly, in Vitu, an Austronesian language spoken in West New Britain, personal names, kinship names, and place names take the definite article *a*, the prepositions *ni* 'in/to', *kiri* 'to', *kamani* 'with', and *bukuni* 'from', and the possessives *ke* and *-(n)i* for alienable and inalienable possession, respectively (Berg & Bachet 2006: 27-30). In contrast, common nouns take the definite article *na*, the prepositions *na* 'in/to', *kara* 'to', *kamana* 'with', and *bukuna* 'from', and the possessives *kana* and *-(n)a* for alienable and inalienable possession, respectively. However, some human functional nouns such as *member* 'member of parliament', *pater* 'priest', and *taua* 'master', etc. morphosyntactically behave like proper names while others such as *tisa* 'teacher' morphosyntactically behave like common nouns. Inanimate individual nouns such as *voro* 'sun' morphosyntactically pattern with common nouns (*kara voro* 'to the sun') (Berg & Bachet 2006: 155).

(8)   Vitu
        a. **a** Naio / **a** pater / **na** tamahone
           'Naio / the priest / the man'
        b. **ni** Naio / **ni** pater / **na** tamahone
           'to Naio / to the priest / to the man'
        c. ruma **ke** Naio / ruma **ke** pater / ruma **kana** tamahone
           'the house of Naio / the house of the priest / the house of the man'

In Sinyar, a Central Sudanic language spoken in Chad and Sudan, proper names and common nouns are inflected differently (Boyeldieu 2019: 483). For example, in the nominative singular, the personal name ˈ*Bàkíít*ˈ has the ending *-lè* while the common noun *ɲîⁱ* 'girl' has the ending *-nì*. However, some human functional nouns such as ˈ*àbbó* 'chief (of tribe)', *àkîm*ˈ 'doctor', ˈ*ɓìryá* 'master', ˈ*mìrdà*ˈ 'president', and *ngáàr*ˈ 'headman of village' morphosyntactically pattern with personal names while others such as *ʃêk*ˈ 'chief, leader' morphosyntactically pattern with common nouns (Boyeldieu 2019: 490-492).

(9)   Sinyar
       ˈBàkíítˈ-**lè** ' / àkímˈ-**lè** / ɲɪ̂ˈ-**nì**
       Bakiit-NOM.SG / doctor-NOM.SG / girl-NOM.SG
       'Bakiit / doctor / girl'

Sambaa, a Bantu language spoken in the north-east of Tanzania, has eighteen noun classes. For each noun class, there are specific nominal prefixes, subject markers, object markers, associative forms, and demonstratives. With regard to object markers, differential object indexation (DOI) is compulsory with personal pronouns and personal names, but optional with human common nouns (Riedel 2009: 44-46). For example, the personal name *Stella*, which belongs to noun class 1a, requires the object marker *-mw-* 'OM1' (10). In turn, the human sortal noun *ng'wana* 'child', which belongs to noun class 1, can take the object marker *-mw-* 'OM1'. This is not the case with nouns referring to people of high status. More specifically, the human functional noun *askofu* 'bishop', which belongs to noun class 5, behaves like a personal name in two respects. First, DOI is obligatory. This only holds for the singular. In the plural, DOI is optional since the noun is no longer monoreferential. Second, the object marker is *-mw-* 'OM1', and not *-ji-* 'OM5'.

(10)   Sambaa
       N-   za-   **mw**-   ona   Stella /   askofu
       SM1SG-   PERF.DJ-   OM1-   see   1Stella / 5bishop
       'I saw Stella / the bishop.'

Eton, a Bantu language spoken in Cameroon, has ten gender agreement patterns. Proper names trigger agreement pattern I while common nouns can trigger different agreement patterns depending on their class (Van de Velde 2003). However, the human functional noun *ŋ̀kúŋkúmá* 'chief', which belongs to noun class 3, shows agreement pattern I and behaves like a personal name. When the noun occurs with a demonstrative or in the plural, it behaves like a common noun triggering agreement pattern III and IV, respectively (Van de Velde 2008: 290-291).

(11)   Eton
       ŋgwàgɔ̀ / ŋ̀-kúŋkúmá   **à**-té   dī
       Ngwago / 3-chief   I-PRS   eat
       'Ngwago / the chief is eating.'

In summary, we find evidence for the properhood of human unique nouns cross-linguistically. The evidence comes not only from the definite (or proprial) article, but also from additional morphosyntactic phenomena such as agreement, differential object indexing, inflection, possessive constructions, and prepositions. Animacy plays an important role since inanimate unique nouns such as *sun* morphosyntactically pattern with common nouns while human unique nouns such as *king* morphosyntactically pattern with personal names. For example, the individual noun *sun* behaves like a common noun in Balantak, Basque, Faroese, and Vitu.[6] Importantly,

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[6]   The consulted sources do not allow to determine the properhood of inanimate individual nouns such as *sun*, *moon*, etc. in Eton, Sambaa, and Sinyar.

human unique nouns do not constitute a homogeneous group. First, not all human unique nouns morphosyntactically pattern with personal names (see Table 1). For example, *chief* behaves like a personal name in Basque, Eton, and Sinyar, but like a common noun in Balantak. Second, human unique nouns belonging to one dimension of knowledge do not resemble with respect to properhood. For example, in Sinyar, the human functional noun *ˈàbbó* 'chief (of tribe)' is inflected like a personal name while *ʃẽkˈ* 'chief, leader' is inflected like a common noun. These issues will be discussed in Section 5.

Table 1. Properhood of human unique nouns in selected languages according to the dimension of knowledge

Language	country (*king, president*)					region (*bishop, count*)	village (*mayor, priest*)		social group (*boss, doctor*)			
	king	queen	regent	president	member of parliament	bishop	mayor	pastor, priest	chief	doctor	master	teacher
Balantak	✓		✗					✓	✗			
Basque	✓	✓							✓			
Eton									✓			
Faroese	✓	✓						✓				
Sambaa						✓						
Sinyar				✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	
Vitu					✓			✓			✓	✗

4. Survey of Romance languages

This section examines the diverging morphosyntactic patterns of human unique nouns in selected Romance languages in order to evaluate whether they morphosyntactically pattern with personal names. The selected morphosyntactic phenomena are differential object marking (4.1), possessive noun phrases (4.2), article-drop in unmodified prepositional phrases (4.3), definite article forms (4.4), and the proprial article (4.5).

4.1. Differential object marking
The term differential object marking (DOM) was coined by Bossong (1982, 1985) in order to describe the phenomenon whereby overt case marking of direct objects occurs with some objects, but not with others, depending on semantic-pragmatic features such as animacy, referentiality, and topicality as well as agentivity, affectedness, and telicity (see García García 2018 and Witzlack-Makarevich & Seržant 2018 for a comprehensive overview).

DOM constitutes a diagnostic tool for the properhood of human unique nouns when the cut-off point on the referentiality scale is between personal names and human definite NPs – that is, when DOM is obligatory with personal names, but optional or ungrammatical with human definite NPs. This cut-off point is found in Asturian, Corsican, Galician, Sardinian, and Sicilian as well as earlier stages of languages where DOM experienced either expansion (as in Spanish) or retraction (as in Portuguese)

along the referentiality scale (see García García & Caro Reina forthcoming). In the ensuing subsections, I will discuss DOM in Old Spanish (4.1.1), Old Portuguese (4.1.2), and modern Sicilian (4.1.3).

4.1.1 DOM in Old Spanish
In modern Spanish, DOM is obligatory with strong personal pronouns, personal names, human definite NPs, and human indefinite specific NPs (RAE/ASALE 2009: 2630-2649). By contrast, in Old Spanish, DOM is obligatory with strong personal pronouns and personal names, but optional with human definite NPs. The development of DOM in Spanish has been studied in a number of diachronic corpus-based studies (among others: Laca 2006; Company Company 2002; von Heusinger & Kaiser 2011). Laca (2006) carried out a diachronic corpus analysis based on selected texts from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries assessing the interaction of animacy and referentiality. In the fourteenth century, DOM has a relative frequency of 100% (8/8) with personal names and 55% (36/66) with human definite NPs. Examples are given in (12), where the personal name *don Pero Meléndez* is differentially marked while the human definite NPs is *a*-marked in the case of the functional noun *rey* 'king', but not in the case of the sortal noun *moço* 'boy'.

(12)   DOM in fourteenth-century Spanish (*Conde Lucanor*, taken from CORDE)
        a. fue veer **a** don Pero Meléndez
            'he went to see Mr Pero Meléndez.'
        b. ca él conoscía muy bien **a**l rey.
            'since he knew the king very well.'
        c. que tomasse **Ø** el moço a cuestas.
            'that he should carry the boy on his back.'

In order to study DOM with human definite NPs, I examined selected items from *El Conde Lucanor*, which constitutes the source for Laca's (2006) analysis of fourteenth-century Spanish. The items are comprised of frequent functional and sortal nouns. The combination of titles with personal names were excluded. With regard to human definite NPs, DOM has a frequency of 62% (35/56). In this respect, we could assume that DOM is optional. However, human definite NPs do not behave homogeneously (see Table 2). The functional nouns *rey* 'king', *reina* 'queen', *infante* 'prince', and *conde* 'count' are always differentially marked while the sortal nouns *moço* 'boy', *hombre* 'man', and *donzella* 'maidservant' are always unmarked. Functional nouns involving kinship terms such as *padre* 'father', *marido* 'husband', and *muger* 'wife' are slightly less frequently *a*-marked than personal names and other functional nouns (the lexical item *madre* 'mother' is not attested as a direct object).[7]

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[7]   Note that in fourteenth-century Spanish, the lexical item *muger* has the meanings 'woman' and 'wife' (see DECH IV, 185; DICCA-XV). As pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, it can function as both a relational and a functional noun, which can have an impact on the occurrence of DOM. In the examples analysed, the lexical item functions as a functional noun. However, additional research would be needed in order to study relational and functional kinship terms with respect to DOM.

Table 2. DOM in *El Conde Lucanor* (fourteenth century)

		DOM	Lack of DOM
Personal name			
	don Pero Meléndez	3/3	0/3
Human definite NP			
Unique noun	*el rey*	9/9	0/9
(functional)	*la reina*	1/1	0/1
	el infante	3/3	0/3
	el conde	4/4	0/4
	su padre	9/11	2/11
	la/su madre	n/a	n/a
	el/su marido	1/2	1/2
	la/su muger	5/7	2/7
Non-unique noun	*el moço*	0/5	5/5
(sortal)	*el hombre*	0/2	2/2
	la donzella	0/1	1/1

This implies that in fourteenth-century Spanish, DOM was obligatory not only with personal names but also with human definite NPs involving unique nouns. In other words, a distinction between unique and non-unique nouns leads us to revise the explanation that DOM is optional with human definite NPs. On the one hand, human unique nouns resemble personal names with respect to DOM. On the other, they resemble common nouns with respect to use of the definite article. Monedero (1983: 279-288) pointed to the special status of dignity titles as direct objects, which in Old Spanish are regularly *a*-marked. This use has been traditionally described as "acusativo de dignidad" (Monedero 1983: 293-294) in Spanish historical linguistics. However, the special status of such dignity titles can be explained in a more satisfactory way in terms of inherently uniqueness. The properhood of human unique nouns in Old Spanish is blurred in modern Spanish since DOM is now obligatory with human definite NPs as a result of expansion.

To summarize, in fourteenth-century Spanish, DOM is obligatory with strong personal pronouns, personal names, and human definite NPs involving functional nouns, but ungrammatical with definite human NPs involving sortal nous. However, additional research is required to fully examine the impact of uniqueness on DOM in ealier stages of Spanish.

4.1.2. DOM in Old Portuguese

In European Portuguese, DOM is obligatory with strong personal pronouns and the deity name *Deus* 'God' (Perini 2002: 444; Cunha & Cintra 2017: 156-157, 573). By contrast, in Old Portuguese, DOM was more extended along the referentiality scale than nowadays. Diachronic research carried out by Delille (1970) and Brito Gibrail (2003) reveals that Portuguese experienced DOM expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and DOM retraction from the eighteenth century onwards (see Döhla 2014: 277-280 for a comprehensive overview). In what follows, I will summarize Delille's (1970) findings. The focus will lie on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – that is, on Classical Portuguese.

Delille (1970) examined DOM focusing on pronouns, deity names and deity nouns (*Deus* 'God', *Senhor* 'Lord'), proper names (personal names, place names), dignity titles, and other nouns. In the sixteenth century, DOM has a relative frequency

of 67% (67/100) with strong personal pronouns, 35% (174/504) with personal names, and 35% (54/155) with human definite NPs involving unique nouns. Importantly, DOM is not attested with definite NPs containing human non-unique nouns. The human functional and individual nouns include *el-rey* 'the king', *rey* 'king', *rainha* 'queen', *principe* 'prince', *infante* 'infante', *emperador* 'emperor', and *papa* 'pope' (Delille 1970: 60).[8] In the seventeenth century, DOM has a relative frequency of 100% (55/55) with strong personal pronouns, 93% (386/416) with personal names, and 90% (120/134) with human definite NPs involving unique nouns. DOM is found in 308 cases with human non-unique nouns in definite NPs (see Delille 1970: 103-106 for examples). Unfortunately, the author does not mention the total number of direct objects involving human non-unique nouns. The human unique nouns include *rey* 'king', *infante* 'infante', *principe* 'prince', and, albeit less frequently, *bispo* 'bischof' and *conte* 'count' (Delille 1970: 99). Examples are given in (13), where the personal name *S. João Baptista* is differentially marked while the human definite NP is *a*-marked in the case of the functional noun *El-Rei* 'the king', but not in the case of the relational noun *cunhado* 'brother-in-law'. Note that the role of affectedness in telic events can be excluded since (13b)-(13c) contain the verb *matar* 'to kill', which selects highly affected objects.

(13)   DOM in seventeenth-century Portuguese (Delille 1970: 86, 87, 108)
      a. se encontrasse em uma rua **a** S. João Baptista.
         'if he met St. John the Baptist on a street.'
      b. que quisesse por traição matar **a** El-Rei.
         'that he would want to kill the king by treachery.'
      c. Pigmalion matou **Ø** o seu cunhado Siqueu.
         'Pygmalion killed his brother-in-law Sychaeus.'

Table 3 shows the occurrence of DOM with personal names, human unique nouns, and human definite NPs according to uniqueness in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We can observe that in both centuries, human unique nouns morphosyntactically pattern with personal names. On the one hand, human unique nouns resemble personal names with respect to DOM. On the other, they resemble common nouns with respect to the use of the definite article. Note that in Portuguese, the definite article began to be employed with personal names in the eighteenth century (Callou & Silva 1997: 14-15). The properhood of human unique nouns in Old Portuguese is now blurred in modern Portuguese since DOM no longer occurs with personal names and definite NPs as a result of retraction.

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8   Note that in Old Portuguese, the lexical item *rey* 'king' can occur with the masculine definite article *el* (*el-rey*) or *o* (*o rey*) (see Pottier 1968: 214-216; Mattos e Silva 1989: 151-153). Moreover, the definite article *el* is restricted to *rey* 'king'. Interestingly, in sixteenth-century Portuguese, *el-rey* 'the king' is more frequently attested with DOM (31/63) than other human unique nouns (23/92).

Table 3. DOM in Old Portuguese (based on Delille 1970: 86, 99)

		DOM	Lack of DOM
16th century	Personal name	35% (174/504)	65% (330/504)
	Human definite NP		
	Unique noun (functional)	35% (54/155)	65% (101/155)
	Non-unique noun (sortal)	0% (0/0)	0% (0/0)
17th century	Personal name	93% (386/416)	7% (30/416)
	Human definite NP		
	Unique noun (functional)	90% (120/134)	10% (14/134)
	Non-unique noun (sortal)	n/a	n/a

To summarize, in sixteenth-century Portuguese, DOM is optional with personal names and human definite NPs involving unique nouns, and ungrammatical with definite human NPs involving non-unique nous. In seventeenth-century Portuguese, DOM is obligatory with personal names and human definite NPs involving unique nouns, and optional with definite human NPs involving non-unique nous. The occurrence of DOM with dignity titles has been traditionally labelled "acusativo preposicional de dignidade" (Meier 1948: 162) in Portuguese historical linguistics. However, it can be accounted for in a more satisfactory way if these dignity titles are viewed as human unique nouns.

4.1.3. DOM in Sicilian

In Sicilian, DOM is obligatory with strong personal pronouns and proper names (both personal names and place names), but optional with human definite NPs (Rohlfs 1971; Guardiano 2000; Iemmolo 2010: 343-345). Interestingly, Guardiano (2000: 28) observes that human unique nouns ("sostantivi con referente unico") such as *assessuri comunali* 'city councillor', *dutturi* 'doctor', *Primu Ministru* 'Prime Minister', *prisirenti* 'president', and *pustieri* 'postman' are always *a*-marked. An example of a direct object involving a personal name, a human unique noun, and a human non-unique noun is given in (14).[9]

(14)   DOM in Sicilian (Guardiano 2000: 21, 28, 30)
        Vitt-i   **a**   Giovanni / **o**   prisirenti / **Ø**i   picciridd-i
        see.PST-1SG   DOM John   / DOM.ART president / ART.PL child-PL
        'I saw John / the president / the children.'

Iemmolo (2010) does not mention the diverging morphosyntactic patterns of human unique nouns. A possible explanation is that Guardiano (2000) and Iemmolo (2010) surveyed different localities: Ragusa (Guardiano 2000: 18) and Canicattì, Naro, and Palermo (Iemmolo 2010: 341), respectively. Romagno (2007: 302) points out that in the varieties spoken in Erice and Valderice, DOM with definite NPs depends on affectedness in telic events. Note, however, that this does not apply for Guardiano's (2000: 302) data since the examples of human unique nouns contain the verbs *ncuntrari* 'to meet' and *viriri* 'to see', which involve non-affected objects.

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9   Note that the *a*-marker is contracted with the masculine definite article *u* giving rise to the portmanteau morph *o*.

4.2. Possessive noun phrases in Old French

With regard to locus of marking in possessive noun phrases, Nichols & Bickel (2013) distinguish between head marking, dependent marking, double marking, and zero marking (or juxtaposition). For example, French is a dependent marking language since the possessor noun exhibits the marker (*de* 'of'). This applies for personal names (*la maison de Jean* 'the house of John'), functional nouns (*la maison du maire* 'the house of the mayor'), and sortal nouns (*la maison de l'homme* 'the house of the man'). By contrast, in Old French, personal names occur with juxtaposition while human common nouns occur with either juxtaposition or the prepositions *à/de*, as illustrated in (15) (Herslund 1980: 82-171; Buridant 2000: 99-100; GGHF 2020: 998-999).[10]

(15)   Possessive noun phrases in Old French (Palm 1977: 16, 121)
    a. li filz **Ø** Lancelot
        'the son of Lancelot'
    b. li filz **Ø** le roi
        'the son of the king'
    c. le fil **au** chevalier
        'the son of the knight'

Palm (1977) conducted a diachronic corpus analysis of possessive constructions for the period between 1150-1225, which enables us to examine the behaviour of personal names and human common nouns (see Table 4). The personal names *Artu* and *Marie* are mostly attested with juxtaposition with a relative frequency of 90% (745/832) and 89% (49/55), respectively. Common nouns do not behave homogeneously. The functional nouns *rei* 'king' and *reine* 'queen' mainly occur with juxtaposition (78% and 79%, respectively). Similarly, functional nouns involving kinship terms such as *père* 'father' and *mère* 'mother' are more frequently found with juxtaposition (78% and 58%, respectively). In contrast, the sortal nouns *chevalier* 'knight' and *dame* 'lady' mainly occur with preposition (95% and 81%, respectively). As for the preposition, they take more frequently *à* than *de*.

Table 4. Possessive constructions in Old French (based on Palm 1977: 115)

		Ø	à	de
Personal name				
	Artu	90% (745/832)	1% (8/832)	9% (79/832)
	Marie	89% (49/55)	0% (0/55)	11% (6/55)
Human definite NP				
Unique noun	*le rei*	78% (395/505)	18% (89/505)	4% (21/505)
(functional)	*la reine*	79% (19/24)	0% (0/24)	21% (5/24)
	mon père	78% (53/68)	1% (1/68)	21% (14/68)
	ma mère	58% (28/48)	0% (0/48)	42% (20/48)
Non-unique noun	*le chevalier*	5% (9/183)	57% (105/183)	38% (69/183)
(sortal)	*la dame*	19% (11/59)	52% (28/59)	34% (20/59)

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[10]   Juxtaposition still persists in Picard (Haigneré 1901: 253-255; Brasseur 2020: 31). However, it is restricted to personal names (*la maison Ø Jean* 'the house of John' vs. *le ferme du maire* 'the farm of the mayor').

This implies that in Old French, juxtaposition was obligatory with personal names and, albeit to a lesser extent, human functional nouns. Note that human unique nouns resemble personal names with respect to juxtaposition. However, they differ from personal names with respect to use of the definite article. The use of juxtaposition had different explanations in the literature. For example, Foulet (1919: 21) talks about an aristocratic or emotional value in possessive noun phrases containing titles and kinship terms as possessors. Herslund (1977) relates juxtaposition to inalienable possession. However, this view can be challenged drawing on examples of kinship terms as possessees which can also occur with preposition such as *le fil au chevalier* 'the son of the knight'. Buridant (2000: 99) gives a vague description according to which juxtaposition is employed with proper names and NPs such as *mon pere* 'my father' and *le roi* 'the king'. The same applies for the GGHF (2020: 998), where juxtaposition is related to human definite possessors involving proper names and human common nouns. The use of juxtaposition can be accounted for in a more satisfactory way in terms of inherently uniqueness. The properhood of human unique nouns in Old French is blurred in Modern French due to the generalization of the preposition *de* in possessive constructions.

To summarize, in Old French possessive noun phrases we find juxtaposition with personal names and human functional nouns, but dependent marking by means of the prepositions *à/de* with human sortal nouns.

4.3. Article-drop in unmodified PPs in Romanian

Article-drop in unmodified prepositional phrases is a diagnostic tool for the properhood of unique nouns when the process applies to non-unique nouns, but not to unique nouns and proper names, or *vice versa*, when it applies to unique nouns and proper names, but not to non-unique nouns. The former will be exemplified by modern Romanian.

Romanian exhibits article-drop in unmodified prepositional phrases (Mardale et al. 2013). This applies for lexical and functional prepositions selecting the accusative (*în* 'to/in', *la* 'to/in', *pe* 'DOM', etc.), which block the occurrence of the suffixed definite articles *-ul/-le/-a* (masc.) and *-a* (fem.) (Mardale et al. 2013: 536-540). In what follows, I will illustrate this phenomenon with human definite direct objects, which are differentially marked by means of the prepositional marker *pe* 'DOM' and accompanied by clitic doubling (see Section 3.1 for a definition of DOM).

An example of article-drop in an unmodified PP is given in (16a)-(16b), where the sortal nouns *băiat* 'boy' and *fată* 'girl' lack the definite article. In contrast, functional and individual nouns such as *boier* 'boyar', *doctor* 'doctor', *împărat* 'emperor', *papă* 'pope', *popă* 'priest', *rege* 'king', *regină* 'queen', *şef* 'chief', etc. optionally take the definite article, as shown in (16a)-(16b).[11] The explanations provided by the reference grammars are not straightforward. For example, the AR (2008: 77) mentions that individualized human nouns and names of positions or

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[11]   Note that in (16b) and (17b) the feminine singular accusative clitic pronoun is placed after the participle since the auxiliary verb begins with a vowel (see Sarlin 2014: 144-145). Nouns ending in *-ă* such as *papă* 'pope', *popă* 'priest', and *regină* 'queen' lose the word-final vowel when the definite article *-a* is attached. Compare *pe papa*, *pe popa*, and *pe regina*, which exhibit the definite article, to the articleless forms *pe papă*, *pe popă*, and *pe regină*.

dignities are exceptions ("fac excepţie doar numele personale individualizate [...], nume de funcţii sau demnităţi").

(16)   Article-drop in unmodified PPs in Romanian
    a. L-am   văz-ut   pe   băiat**Ø** / doctor-**ul** / rege-**le** / pop-**a**
       CL.M-AUX.1SG   see-PTCP   DOM   boy / doctor-ART / king-ART / priest-ART
       'I have seen the boy / the doctor / the king / the priest.'
    b. Am   văz-ut-o   pe   fată**Ø** / regin-**a**
       AUX.1SG   see-PTCP- CL.F DOM girl / queen-ART
       'I have seen the girl / the queen.'

The question arises of whether human unique nouns morphosyntactically pattern with personal names. With regard to personal names, we have to distinguish between personal name classes because they behave differently. First names are characterized by the absence of the definite article (*Ion* 'John', *Carmen* 'Carmen'). That is, they are not well suited for a comparison with human unique nouns regarding article-drop. In turn, kinship terms such as *tată* 'father', *mamă* 'mother', *bunic* 'grandfather', and *bunică* 'grandmother' retain the definite article in unmodified prepositional phrases (Sarlin 2014: 155), as in the following examples:[12]

(17)   Article-drop in unmodified PPs in Romanian
    a. L-am   văz-ut   pe   Ion**Ø** / tat-**a** / bunic-**ul**
       CL.M-AUX.1SG   see-PTCP   DOM John / father-ART / grandfather-ART
       'I have seen John / dad / grandpa.'
    b. Am   văz-ut-o   pe   Carmen**Ø** / mam-**a** / bunic-**a**
       AUX.1SG   see-PTCP- CL.F DOM Carmen / mother- ART / grandmother-ART
       'I have seen Carmen / mom / grandma.'

This implies that human unique nouns resemble kinship terms in that article-drop does not apply in unmodified prepositional phrases. Note, however, that the process is optionally blocked in the case of human unique nouns while it is obligatorily blocked in the case of kinship terms. Further evidence of the properhood of kinship terms comes from the use of the proprial article *lui* in the genitive-dative (*lui tata* 'of/to dad', *lui mama* 'of/to mom'), which is shared by first names (*lui Ion* 'of/to John', *lui Carmen* 'of/to Carmen') (Dobrovie-Sorin et al. 2013: 13-14; Miron-Fulea et al. 2003: 725; Pană Dindelegan 2013: 264) (see Section 4.5 for the proprial article).

4.4. Definite article in Balearic Catalan
Balearic Catalan exhibits distinct definite articles for personal names (*en Joan* 'John', *na Maria* 'Mary'), unique nouns (*el rei* 'the king', *la terra* 'the earth'), and non-unique

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[12]   With regard to other kinship terms, Starlin (2014: 155) observes that *unchi* 'uncle', *mătusă* 'aunt', *socru* 'father-in-law', and *soacră* 'mother-in-law' can also exhibit the definite article in unmodified prepositional phrases. Further kinship terms such as *frate* 'brother', *soră* 'sister', etc. typically occur with the possessive adjective and hence require the definite article (*Îl văd pe fratele meu* 'I see my friend'). In this respect, they do not differ from sortal nouns (*Îl văd pe prietenul meu* 'I see my friend'). However, examples where kinship terms such as *frate* 'brother' lack the possessive article are found in the literature, as in *l-am chemat pe fratele* 'I have called my brother' (Pop 1948: 149).

nouns (*es noi* 'the boy', *sa noia* 'the girl'), which are traditionally called "article personal", "article literari", and "article salat", respectively (Forteza 1915: 1523-156; Marí 1973; Grimalt 2009; Aguiló 2015: 50-64). The article forms are given in Table 5 (parentheses indicate the form before vowels). Note that the "article personal" has a defective distribution since it is restricted to the singular (see Lloret 2016). In addition to Balearic Catalan, the "article literari" and "article salat" coexist in some varieties of Central Catalan (Begur, Cadaqués) and Valencian (Vall de Gallinera, Tàrbena) (see Monjo 1993 for Tàrbena).

Table 5. Article forms in Balearic Catalan

| | Masculine | | Feminine | |
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
"article personal" (for personal names)	*en (n')*	–	*na (n')*	–
"article literari" (for unique nouns)	*el (l')*	*els*	*la (l')*	*les*
"article salat" (for non-unique nouns)	*es (s')*	*es (ets)*	*sa (s')*	*ses*

The "article literari" is employed with unique nouns, both human (*el rei* 'the king', *el bisbe* 'the bishop') and inanimate (*el mon* 'the world', *la terra* 'the earth'). There are "minimal pairs" such as *la terra* 'the earth' vs. *sa terra* 'the soil', *l'església* 'the Church' vs. *s'església* 'the church', etc. (see Grimalt 2009: 62-63 for additional examples). In addition, the "article literari" occurs with foreign place names (*l'Havana* 'Havana', *el Mississipi* 'Mississipi'), titles followed by personal names (*el senyor Vidal* 'Mr. Vidal'), and adverbials (*a l'esquerra* 'to the left', *l'any passat* 'last year') (see Aguiló 2015: 51-64 for a detailed description). Note that the plural or modification requires the "article salat", as in *es reis* 'the kings' and *es nostro rei* 'our king' (but *el rei nostro* 'our king'). Interestingly, the "article literari" can occur with unique plural referents. This is the case with *els Reis*, which refers to either 'the (Three) Kings' or 'the king and queen' (see Grimalt 2009: 71). In this way, we find a semantic opposition between *es reis* and *els Reis*.

Let us take a closer look at the behaviour of the "article literary" with human and inanimate unique nouns in two varieties of Balearic Catalan: Majorcan Catalan and Pityusic Catalan. With regard to human unique nouns, the "article literary" is employed for social and ecclesiastical hierarchy in both varieties. However, the lexical items *papa* 'pope', *rei* 'king', and *reina* 'queen' take the "article literari" in Majorcan Catalan and Pityusic Catalan while *bisbe* 'bishop' and *abat* 'abbot' only take it in Majorcan Catalan (see Table 6). For example, Aguiló (2015: 52) observes that the lexical items *rector* 'priest', *ecònom* 'oeconomus', and *vicari* 'vicar' take the "article salat" (*es rector*, *s'ecònom*, *es vicari*). In contrast to Balearic Catalan, some varieties of Central Catalan also employ the "article literari" for the functional nouns *alcalde* 'mayor', *capellà* 'chaplain', and *metge* 'doctor' (Sala 1983: 34; Veny 2002: 63; Busquet 2010: 31). The same applies for Tàrbena Catalan, where the "article literari" is also used with *alcalde* 'mayor', *retor* 'priest', *metge* 'doctor', but not with *capellà* 'chaplain', *jutge* 'judge', and *segristá* 'sacristan' (Monjo 1993: 477-478). This issue will be discussed in more detail in Section 5.

Table 6. "Article literari" with human unique nouns in Balearic Catalan

	papa 'pope'	*rei* 'king'	*reina* 'queen'	*bisbe* 'bishop'	*abat* 'abbot'	Reference
Majorca	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Aguiló (2015)
Pityuses	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	Marí (1973)

With regard to inanimate unique nouns, the lexical items *cel* 'heaven, sky', *mar* 'sea', and *terra* 'earth' take the "article literari" in both varieties, but not *sol* 'sun' and *lluna* 'moon' do not (see Table 7). In this respect, Balearic Catalan differs from some varieties of Central Catalan where the "article literari" is also employed for *sol* 'sun' and *lluna* 'moon' as well as the seasons (*primavera* 'spring', *estiu* 'summer', *tardor* 'autumn', *hivern* 'winter') (Sala 1983: 34-35; Veny 2002: 63; Busquet 2010: 148).[13]

Table 7. "Article literari" with inanimate unique nouns in Balearic Catalan

	cel 'heaven, sky'	*mar* 'sea'	*terra* 'earth'	*sol* 'sun'	*lluna* 'moon'	Reference
Majorca	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	Aguiló (2015)
Pityuses	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	Marí (1973)

Ledgeway (2012: 103) characterizes the "article literari" and "article salat" in terms of the featural specifications [+definite, –particularized, +given] vs. [+definite, +particularized, ±given]. Instead, I will characterize their use in terms of inherently uniqueness in the case of the "article literari" and non-inherently uniqueness in the case of the "article salat". Interestingly, unique nouns morphosyntactically deviate from both personal names and non-unique nouns. These diverging morphosyntactic patterns are not motivated by animacy and do not constitute an instance of properhood. In addition to Balearic Catalan, the use of different article forms for unique and non-unique nouns has been reported for Picard (see Bernstein et al. 2021 for details).

4.5. Proprial article in Old Romanian

Romanian exhibits the proprial article *lui*, which is employed for the genitive-dative of personal names (*lui Ion* 'of/to John', *lui Carmen* 'of/to Carmen'), kinship names with and without the suffixal possessive (*lui mama* 'of/to mom', *lui frate-miu* 'of/to my brother'), animal names (*lui Rex* 'of/to Rex'), months (*lui martie* 'of/to March', letters (*lui a* 'of/to a'), and numbers (*lui trei* 'of/to three') (Dobrovie-Sorin et al. 2013: 14; Miron-Fulea et al. 2003: 725). In this respect, personal names differ from sortal nouns such as *băiat* 'boy' and *fată* 'girl', which take the suffixed definite article *-ului* in the masculine singular (*băiatului* 'of/to the boy') and *-i* in the feminine singular (*fetei* 'of/to the girl'). Note that in contrast to Balearic Catalan, Balantak, and Vitu (see Section 3 and 4.4), the proprial article is restricted to the genitive-dative. In the nominative-accusative, personal names block the occurrence of the definite article (*Ion* 'John', *Carmen* 'Carmen') while common nouns take it (*băiatul* 'the boy', *fata* 'the girl').

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[13]   In this respect, Busquet (2010: 101) provides an explanation given by one informant from Cadaqués Catalan: "No pots dir *sa lluna,* perquè n'hi ha una i has de dir *la lluna*. Quan és únic, només n'hi ha un, no pots posar l'article salat, has de posar el normal" [You cannot say *sa lluna* 'the moon' because there is only one and you have to say *la lluna* 'the moon'. When it is unique, i.e. there is only one, you cannot use the "article salat", you have to use the normal one].

In Old Romanian, personal names were inflected like common nouns, both in the nominative-accusative (*Radul* 'Radu') and genitive-dative (*Radului* 'of/to Radu') (Pană Dindelegan 2016: 292). As a result of deflection, which began in the sixteenth century, *Radul* and *Radului* gradually became *Radu* and *lui Radu*, respectively. Note that the ending *-u* of masculine personal names such as *Radu* constitutes a remnant of the definite article *-ul*. The masculine and feminine genitive-dative endings *-lu(i)* and *-ei* (*-ii*) could also occur in proclitic position with personal names. Originally, there were two proprial articles: *lu(i)* for the masculine (*lu Ștefan* 'of/to Ștefan') and *ei* (*ii*, *i*, *îi*) for the feminine (*ii Marie* 'of/to Mary'). Similarly, human unique nouns such as *împărat* 'emperor' and *voievod* 'voivode' could take the proprial article. In this respect, Pană Dindelegan (2016: 294) points out that these nouns can bear the definite article (as in *lu împăratu* 'to the emperor') or not (as in *lu voievod* 'of the voivode'). In other words, they behave partly like personal names with respect to the proprial article and partly like common nouns with respect to the definite article. Examples are given in (18), where the personal name *Ștefan* and the human functional noun *voievod* 'voievode' occur with the proprial article while the relational noun *fiu* 'son' occurs with the suffixed definite article. Inanimate individual nouns such as *cer* 'heaven' and *pământ* 'earth' also take the suffixed definite article giving rise to *ceriului* and *pământului*, respectively.

(18)   Proprial article in Old Romanian (Pană Dindelegan 2016: 294, 303)
         lu   Ștefan / **lu**   voievod / fiiu-**lui**
         ART.GEN.DAT Ștefan / ART.GEN.DAT   voievode / son-ART.GEN.DAT
         'to Ștefan / of the voivode / to the son'

5. Discussion

In this section, I will address the following questions: Why can unique nouns morphosyntactically pattern with proper names? And does a classification of human unique nouns based on the notion of dimensions of knowledge contribute to a better understanding of their properhood?

        The similarities and differences between unique nouns and proper names have been described in the literature laying down semantic and morphosyntactic criteria (Lyons 1999: 21-22; Van Langendonck 2007: 103-104; Nübling et al. 2015: 35). For example, Lyons (1999: 21-22) illustrates this issue with the inherently unique noun *sun* and the proper name *John* as follows: First, unique nouns resemble proper names in that they denote unique entities. That is, they are monosemantica. However, they semantically differ from proper names with respect to lexical meaning. Unique nouns have a lexical meaning while proper names do not (see Van Langendonck 2007: 84-86). Second, unique nouns morphosyntactically differ from proper names with respect to the definite article. Unique nouns take the definite article (*the sun*) while proper names do not (*John*). Note that this holds for modern English. In Old English, however, the lexical item *sunne* 'sun' is attested without the definite article (see Mitchell 1985: 134; Sommerer 2018: 216-217, 253-254).[14] Moreover, there are

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14   An example is *Her sunne adeostrode* 'Here the sun grew dark' (from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*). Note, however, that the absence of the definite article with unique nouns can be

languages where personal names are accompanied by the definite article (as in Greek). This implies that there are not always morphosyntactic differences between proper names and unique nouns.

   The properhood of unique nouns has been a disputed issue in the literature. Some scholars view them as common nouns (Gardiner 1940; Van Osta 1993; Van Langendonck 2007). By contrast, others assert that they can behave sometimes like proper names and sometimes like common nouns (Coates 2000: 1167; 2006: 372; Hansack 2000: 241; 2004: 62-63). I argue that the semantic similarities in terms of monoreferentiality shared by unique nouns and proper names can trigger the diverging morphosyntactic behaviour of unique nouns. The evidence provided in Section 3 and 4 shows that properhood of unique nouns can be motivated by animacy. In this way, human unique nouns morphosyntactically pattern with personal names while inanimate unique nouns morphosyntactically pattern with human and inanimate sortal nouns. The morphosyntactic behaviour of human unique nouns found in the Romance languages surveyed constitutes a prime example of the intermediate position that human unique nouns can take between personal names and human sortal nouns. More specifically, human unique nouns resemble personal names with respect to the following morphosyntactic phenomena: (i) DOM in Old Spanish, Old Portuguese, and Sicilian; (ii) juxtaposition in possessive noun phrases in Old French; (iii) lack of article-drop in unmodified prepositional phrases in Romanian; and (iv) proprial article in Old Romanian. In contrast, they resemble non-unique nouns with respect to the occurrence of definite article in Old French, Old Portuguese, Old Romanian, Old Spanish, and Sicilian on the one hand and article-drop in unmodified prepositional phrases in Romanian on the other.

   These findings enable us to classify the morphosyntactic behaviour of unique nouns into four types: (i) unique nouns which do not differ from non-unique nouns, as in modern Spanish and French (as well as English and German); (ii) human unique nouns which pattern partly with personal names and partly with human sortal nouns, as in Old French, Old Portuguese, Old Spanish, Old Romanian, Romanian, and Sicilian. In this respect, we can talk about partial properhood. Here we could observe that human unique nouns had different degrees of properhood. For example, in Old Spanish and Old Portuguese, the percentage of DOM with personal names and human unique nouns was nearly identical. By contrast, in Old Fench, the percentage of juxtaposition with personal names and human functional nouns was slightly different; (iii) human unique nouns which fully pattern with personal names, as in Balantak, Basque, Eton, Faroese, Sambaa, Sinyar, and Vitu. In this respect, we can talk about total properhood; and (iv) unique nouns which differ from both proper names and non-unique nouns, as in Balearic Catalan. Importantly, the latter is not an instance of properhood. These four different types are depicted in Figure 2.

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syntactically conditioned, as we saw in Section 1. For instance, the examples of articleless unique nouns provided by Schrader (1887: 7-8) involve bare nominal coordination (*sunnan and monan* 'the sun and the moon') and prepositional phrases (*on eorðan* 'on earth'). Similarly, Sommerer (2018: 215) gives examples of articleless unique nouns in prepositional phrases (*on heofenum* 'in heaven').

Figure 2. Morphosyntactic patterning of unique nouns
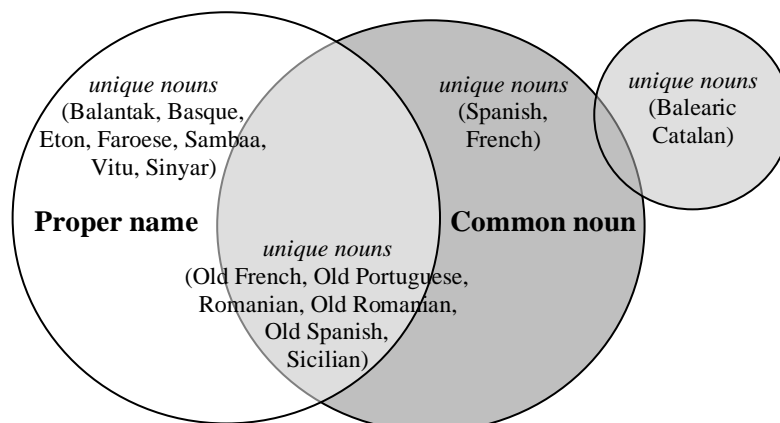
Let us move on to the question of whether the notion of dimensions of knowledge presented in Section 2 can help to explain why some human unique nouns morphosyntactically behave like personal names while other do not (functional nouns involving kinship terms will not be treated). The survey of Romance languages carried out in Section 4 has revealed that in Old French and sixteenth-century Portuguese, properhood of unique nouns is restricted to the dimension of knowledge related to the world and the country (see Table 8). In seventeenth-century Portuguese, Old Romanian, and Old Spanish, it also applies to the dimension of knowledge related to the region, but not to the village or social group. Interestingly, we can observe an expansion in Old Portuguese since functional nouns such as *bispo* 'bischof' and *conte* 'count', which belong to the dimension of knowledge of the region, begin to be differentially marked in the seventeenth century. In modern Romanian and Sicilian, unique nouns are characterized by properhood regardless of the dimension of knowledge. These synchronic and diachronic findings suggest an implicational scale. Properhood of rightmost categories (*boss*, *doctor*) implies properhood of leftmost categories (*king*, *president*), but not *vice versa*. Further evidence for this implicational scale comes from some of the languages analysed in Section 2 (see Table 1 above). More specifically, in Balantak properhood of human unique nouns is found with human unique nouns involving the dimension of knowledge linked to the country and village, but not to the social group. This is not the case in Basque, Eton, Faroese, Sambaa, Sinyar, and Vitu, where properhood is not sensitive to higher or lower dimensions of knowledge.

Table 8. Properhood of human unique nouns in Romance languages according to the dimension of knowledge

Language	country (*king, president*)	region (*bishop, count*)	village (*mayor, priest*)	social group (*boss, doctor*)
French, Spanish	–	–	–	–
Old French, Old Portuguese (16th c.)	+	–	–	–
Old Portuguese (17th c.), Old Romanian, Old Spanish (14th c.)	+	+	–	–
Romanian, Sicilian	+	+	+	+

In addition to properhood, the scale explains the use of the "article literari" with human unique nouns in varieties of Pityusic Catalan, Majorcan Catalan, Central Catalan (Begur, Cadaqués), and Valencian (Tàrbena) (see Table 9). In Pityusic Catalan, the "article literari" is restricted to unique nouns involving the dimension of knowledge related to the world and the country (*papa* 'pope', *rei* 'king'). In Majorcan Catalan, it also employed with unique nouns involving the dimension of knowledge related to the region (*bisbe* 'bishop'). In some varieties of Central Catalan and Valencian (Begur, Cadaqués, Tàrbena), we find the "article literari" with human unique nouns regardless of the dimensions of knowledge (*rei* 'king', *obispo* 'bishop', *alcalde* 'mayor', and *metge* 'doctor').

Table 9. "Article literari" with human unique nouns in selected Catalan varieties according to the dimension of knowledge

Language	country (*king, president*)	region (*bishop, count*)	village (*mayor, priest*)	social group (*boss, doctor*)
Pityusic Catalan	+	–	–	–
Majorcan Catalan	+	+	–	–
Central Catalan (Begur, Cadaqués), Valencian (Tàrbena)	+	+	+	+

The dimensions of knowledge form an implicational scale which helps to account for properhood of human unique nouns in Romance languages and the use of the "article literari" in Catalan varieties. However, this implicational scale does not apply to other morphosyntactic phenomena such as the occurrence of the definite article with personal names in Romance languages (see Caro Reina 2022: 81-83 for discussion). Importantly, not all unique nouns belonging to one dimension of knowledge behave in the same way. For example, in Tàrbena Catalan, some items involving the dimension of knowledge of the village take the "article literari" (*alcalde* 'mayor') while others do not (*jutge* 'judge').

6. Conclusions

This paper has analysed the diverging morphosyntactic patterns of human unique nouns in selected Romance languages in order to assess whether they morphosyntactically pattern with personal names. The selected morphosyntactic phenomena are differential object marking in Old Spanish, Old Portuguese, and Sicilian, possessive noun phrases in Old French, article-drop in unmodified prepositional phrases in Romanian, definite article forms in Balearic Catalan, and the proprial article in Old Romanian. The findings can be summarized as follows: First, human unique nouns morphosyntactically pattern with personal names in Old French, Old Portuguese, Romanian, Old Romanian, Old Spanish, and Sicilian. Second, in these languages, human unique nouns occupy an intermediate position between personal names and non-unique nouns since they still resemble non-unique nouns with respect to the presence of the definite article (Old French, Old Portuguese, Old Romanian, Old Spanish, and Sicilian) or its absence (Romanian). Third, the degree of properhood of human unique nouns was identical to personal names in Old Spanish and Old Portuguese, but different in terms of frequency (Old French) and optionality (Romanian, Old Romanian). Fourth, in Balearic Catalan, unique nouns (regardless of animacy) morphosyntactically deviate from both proper names and common nouns in that they take distinct definite article forms. Fifth, properhood of unique nouns is motivated by animacy. Finally, the notion of dimensions of knowledge enables us not only to classify human unique nouns according to general and specific knowledge, but also to establish an implicational scale which accounts for the properhood of human unique nouns as well as the use of the "article literari" in Catalan varieties.

Acknowledgments

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Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ART	article
AUX	auxiliary
CL	clitic
DAT	dative
DJ	disjoint
GEN	genitive
DOI	differential object indexation
DOM	differential object marking
DOM	differential object marker
NOM	nominative
NEG	negation
OFr.	Old French
OHG	Old High German
OM	object marker
OSp.	Old Spanish
POL	polite
PRON	pronoun
PRS	present
SG	singular
SM	subject marker

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