The historical development of the possessive pronouns in Italian

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OF THE
POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS
IN ITALIAN

DISSERTATION
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BY

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BALTIMORE
THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
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TO
MY FATHER,
PROFESSOR EMIL MENG.,
CLINTON, MISSISSIPPI,

TO WHOSE SYMPATHY AND AID I AM LARGELY INDEBTED FOR WHAT I MAY HAVE ACCOMPLISHED IN MY STUDIES,

THIS MONOGRAPH IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.
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THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE
POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS IN ITALIAN.

FROM THE MIDDLE OF THE THIRTEENTH TO THE END
OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

INTRODUCTION.

The Possessive Pronouns existing in literary Italian are:

\[
\begin{align*}
  \textit{mie} & \quad \textit{meum}, & \textit{mia} & \quad \textit{meam}, \\
  \textit{miei} & \quad \textit{mei}, & \textit{mie} & \quad \textit{meae}, \\
  \textit{tuo} & \quad \textit{tuum}, & \textit{tua} & \quad \textit{tuam}, \\
  \textit{tuoi} & \quad \textit{tui}, & \textit{tue} & \quad \textit{tuae}, \\
  \textit{suoi} & \quad \textit{suum}, & \textit{sua} & \quad \textit{suam}, \\
  \textit{nostro} & \quad \textit{norum}, & \textit{nostre} & \quad \textit{noraem}, \\
  \textit{nostri} & \quad \textit{nori}, & \textit{vostra} & \quad \textit{vostrae}, \\
  \textit{vostro} & \quad \textit{vostrum}, & \textit{vostra} & \quad \textit{vostrae}, \\
  \textit{vostri} & \quad \textit{vostris}, & \textit{vostre} & \quad \textit{vostrae}.
\end{align*}
\]

These literary forms, as given, are found in the earliest texts. But a mere casual reading of the texts will reveal also many variants; this makes evident the fact that a succession of stages or steps was gone through before the above forms were adopted
as the regular ones. The simplest method to be followed in discovering what these successive stages of development were must be to begin with the earliest texts in which the variants were sometimes the rule, and follow the occurrence of these variants in chronological order down into those texts in which they are exceptions; thus finally arriving at literary monuments in which no variants occur, but where they have been merged completely into the prevailing literary forms.

Such a study involves the investigation of one of the most interesting and difficult questions of Italian Philology; namely, the development of the Latin hiatus vowels ę and u.

In the course of a research carried on as just suggested are discovered irregular forms which appear and disappear without any apparent preceding stage, and leaving no successors on their disappearance. At a certain time in the history of the Italian language there is a frequent use of the anomalous mia, tua, sua; they are found with the plurals of masculine and feminine nouns alike. This is the sole marked irregularity in the use of plural Possessive Pronouns in Italian, and for a full understanding of the general subject of the pronoun in this language, the appearance of these abnormal forms must be accounted for.

The study thus divides itself into two parts: first, it must be determined what the irregular forms are; they must be explained and eliminated; then the development of the regular forms can be discovered. A division of the material within these limits is carried out in the following monograph. In Chapter I the irregular mia, tua, sua, and all irregular uses of the Possessive Pronouns connected with these forms, are considered. In Chapter II the regular developments are taken up which can be understood only when definite hiatus laws for ę and u have been established,—so that in this chapter (II), in addition to the Possessive Pronouns, all words in which these hiatus vowels occur are studied. When, from a consideration of all the phenomena, the laws of growth are discovered, these laws are applied to the development of the Possessive
Pronouns which are thus seen to evolve regularly and according to fixed principles from the Latin.

The following texts have been examined; they comprise the works of Tuscan authors for a period of three hundred years, from Guittone d’Arezzo (1250) to Torquato Tasso (1595). As it may be of interest to students of Italian to know where certain rare editions which are included in this Bibliography were found, I will state that all such works mentioned were consulted in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. There also are to be found the works of the early Italian grammarians who will be quoted in the course of this monograph. The authors will be referred to hereafter as A, B, C, etc., according to the letter of the alphabet placed in front of their names.


C.—Cino da Pistoja: Le Rime di Messer Cino da Pistoja, ridotte a miglior lezione da Bindi e Fanfani. Pistoja, 1878. Also in A.


I.—Fiore di filosofi e di molti savi, attribuito a Brunetto Latini. Testo in parte inedito, citato dalla Crusca, e ridotto a
M.—Le ciento Novelle Antike. Bologna (Gualteruzzi), 1525.