The expression of adnominal arguments undergoes a deep restructuring in the process of diachronic differentiation leading from Late Latin to the modern Romance languages: genitives, which are inflectionally encoded in Latin and occur in a variety of configurations with respect to the head noun, allowing also for syntactic discontinuity, come to be realized, in the Western Romance varieties, uniquely by means of postnominal prepositional phrases headed by the originally ablatival preposition dē. Such restructuring is commonly considered to be a consequence of the general process of deflexion observed in the transition from Latin to Romance. However, neither the substantial similarity of outcomes in the Western Romance languages, nor the existence of intermediate stages with coexisting inflectional and prepositional realizations, are exhaustively addressed by simply attributing this change to morphological impoverishment. In this paper I will present a comparative exam of the syntax of genitives in Late Latin and Old French, in order to investigate the nature and functioning of the mechanism at play in the transition from the inflectional to the prepositional realization of adnominal arguments. I will argue that a careful exam of nominal syntax in post-Classical and Late varieties of Latin can uncover the cause of the observed similarity in the Romance outcomes. I will also propose a syntactic analysis of Old French genitives realized with the cas-régime absolu which is able to capture the diachronic link to the Latin genitive constructions and to elucidate the succession of steps leading to the generalization of the prepositional realization in the modern descendant.