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A BIG CHANGE STARTS SMALL:
PRONOMINAL CLITICS IN 12–15TH CENTURY OLD RUSSIAN CHRONICLES

Большое изменение начинается с малого:
Прономинальные клитики в тексте древнерусских летописей XII–XV. вв.

Аннотация

В противоположность западно- и южнославянским языкам, современные восточнославянские языки не имеют энклитических форм местоимений. Однако в древнерусском языке употреблялось широкий набор таких форм. Они вышли из употребления в конце древнерусского периода, в XV–XVI вв. В статье рассматривается употребление энклитических местоимений в тексте пяти летописей XII–XV. вв., взятых из НКРЯ. Анализ сосредоточивается на частотность употребления энклитических форм, на синтаксическую позицию энклитик, на устройство цепочек энклитик и на аномальные структуры. В статье предлагается взгляд, согласно которому исчезновение прономинальных энклитических местоимений является не самостоятельным, обособленным от других языковых изменений процессом, а «побочным явлением» значительного исторического преобразования, разрушения видо-временной системы и следовательного ослабления категории Т.

Ключевые слова: *энклитика, древнерусский язык, категория времени, диахронический синтаксис, прономиналы*

0. Introduction

The aim of the paper is the investigation of clitics in Old Russian (OR), more specifically, in the texts of OR chronicles. It is well known that these little elements were extensively used in Old Russian but only certain types have been preserved in contemporary East Slavic languages. At the same time they still „prosper" in contemporary South Slavic. In Old Russian texts they seem to be quite „annoying", as at first glance they do not seem to obey the rules of syntax when appearing in different positions in clauses. Moreover, they can be easily confused with other homonymous forms which further hinders their examination.

The investigation of clitics in Slavic centers around contemporary South Slavic languages, as they provide a vast material for research. As for diachrony, research on OR clitics focuses on the use of clitics in the „Old Russian vernacular", that is, in the Birchbark Letters [ZALIZNIAK 2008] or in legal documents [DOYKINA 2018]. The present study, however, aims at the study of clitics – more precisely pronominal clitics – in the texts of chronicles. Interestingly, although diachronic processes have been frequently studied relying on the language of chronicles, not much research has been done in the field of clitics on the basis of these texts.

The exploration of Old Russian data has been carried out relying on the corpus of Old and Middle Russian texts. The corpus contains the machine-readable versions of the texts of chronicles with annotations and search possibilities [MITRENINA 2014]. The corpus contains four subcorpora: Church-Slavonic, Middle-Russian, Old-Russian and the Birchbark corpora. The Old Russian corpus (http://www.ruscorpora.ru/new/search-old_rus.html) comprises 17 original documents: all of the OR chronicles and a number of translated texts. The corpus does not contain information about which edition of the text is used. For the present research I created a subcorpus of the texts of chronicles.

The loss of pronominal clitics – similarly to other types of diachronic changes – was not an independent process, but rather constitutes a sequence of a bigger chain reaction invoked by the disintegration of the tense - aspect system. I suggest that the exclusion of these elements went hand-in-hand with the alternation of the pro-drop parameter and the proliferation of subject pronouns.

The paper is structured as follows. In the first section I summarize the theoretical preliminaries necessary for the discussion of the topic: the definition of clitics and the characteristics of pronominal clitics. The second section focuses on the properties of clitics in contemporary Slavic languages. The third part discusses the OR system of clitics, more specifically on OR pronominal clitics. The fourth part is devoted to the analysis of the texts of chronicles relying on the Russian National Corpus looking at the distribution of clitic pronominals, their placement, clusterizing properties and specifics of their hosts. The last section is devoted to the placement of the investigated phenomenon in the complex of parametric variation envoked by the disintegration of the tense - aspect system.

1. Theoretical preliminaries

1.1. On clitics

A clitic by definition is a word that lacks word-level prosodic structure, hence it must attach to a prosodic word in order to be pronounced. These little elements have attracted much attention, as they participate in almost all levels of grammar: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and the lexicon.

Clitics are phonologically deficient elements, as – according to the above definition – they fail to meet the prosodic minimality conditions. They are unstressed and unstressable. Therefore, they require a host to attach to.

Morphologically, they often overlap in function with affixes since they express nominal properties (case, possession, definiteness) or verbal categories (tense, aspect, mood).

As for their syntax, one of the cornerstones of research concerning clitics is their placement.

Traditionally, two clitic positions can be distinguished: 2P/Wackernagel (1), (2) and V2 (3).

(1) Comp/X – CL

(2) Comp/XP – CL

(3) (XP) V – CL

According to Wackernagel´s Law [1892] clitics belong to the first tactic unit of the clause. However, second position may be defined in various ways: after the first full stressed word (1) or after the first phase (2). V2 designates the verb-adjacent position (3), where no other element can intervene between the clitic and its verbal host. And, of course, there are languages where both alternatives are possible.

Clitics are often grouped together to form clitic clusters. A cluster by definition is a string of clitics that neither allows insertion of non-clitic elements nor permutation of clitics when they are contiguous [KOSTA – ZIMMERLING 2013: 181]. Clitics templates show variation across languages [KOSTA – ZIMMERLING 2013: 179].

Semantically, clitics can be of two kinds: local (that belong to a given word and specify the meaning of this item, they immediately follow their host) or phrasal (that relate to a whole phrase and have a more general meaning).

In some languages, clitics have a discourse function, like interrogative clitics in Finnish or the enclitic particle *mo* in Russian, which carries a contrastive interpretation, [LUÍS – SPENCER 2012: 19, 34].

All in all, we can conclude that clitics primarily supply grammatical information, therefore they represent closed lexical classes, that is, they appear as determiners, auxiliaries, prepositions, complemetizers, conjunctions or pronouns [FRANKS ET AL.: 2004].

There are several classifications of clitics. Probably the most widespread is the differentiation between simple clitics that are simply phonologically deficient elements and special clitics (clitic auxiliaries and clitic pronouns), which, beside their phonological deficiency, appear in special syntactic positions.

The focus of this paper is on pronominal clitics, so in the following section I am going to take a closer look at this subtype.

1.2. Pronominal Clitics

It has become apparent from the previous section, that clitics constitute a heterogenous class as regards their function and grammatical features. Languages employ cliticized auxiliaries, pronominals or discourse markers. Undoubtedly, the most widely studied class is that of pronominal clitics.

Pronominal clitics – just like pronouns – bear nominal features (number, person, gender, case, definiteness), and enter into agreement relation with the verb. A wide variety of languages use pronominal clitics as direct or indirect objects, Romance languages employ subject clitics as well. Syntactically, pronominal clitics are treated as arguments and as such they are generated within the VP. Chomsky [1995: 249] claims that clitics share properties of heads and phrases. As such, they are subject to movement: they can take higher positions in the structure and adjoin to other head categories.

There are two syntactic phenomena that are associated with pronominal clitics: clitic doubling and clitic climbing.

In some languages, pronominal clitics are freely permitted or even required as doubles to overt arguments, thus doubling an argument. For example, in Albanian the direct object when definite, is doubled.

(1) *Agimi po e vështron hënën*

Agim. Def. Prog it watch.3.sg.Pres. Moon. Acc. Def.

Agim is watching the moon. [LUÍS – SPENCER 2012: 155].

The phenomenon when the clitic appears in a higher clause (matrix clause) than the verb whose argument it realizes is called clitic climbing. In the following French example the direct and indirect object clitic arguments belong to the non-finite lexical verb (*montré*), however, they have been raised to a position next to the finite auxiliary (*ai*).

(2) *Je le lui ai déjà montré.*

I it to him have already shown.

I have already shown it to him. [LUÍS – SPENCER 2012: 163].

2. Clitics in Slavic

Slavic languages inherited clitics from their Proto-Indo-European and Common Slavic ancestors. Some remnants of this system have been preserved in the contemporary languages as well, but in the course of linguistic evolution the system of clitics has undergone substantial changes.

On the basis of the interaction of word order and clitic systems, Zimmerling [2006], Kosta and Zimmerling [2013] worked out a typology of Slavic languages, where they are classified into four types.

Languages belong to the „W-system" (where W stands for Wackernagel) if they have grammaticalized constraints on the placement of clusterizing clitics to clausal 2P. Languages of this type are Slovak, Czech and Old North Russian.

In „W+ systems" (i. e. modified W-systems) clusterizing clitics are put into a fixed position and verbal forms are placed adjacent to them. Languages with verb adjacent clitics belong to this type, such as Bulgarian and Macedonian.

„W*-systems" (degraded W-systems) do not impose absolute restrictions on the placement of clitic clusters in 2P, but employ alternative linearization strategies as well. As a result, different types of clitics are placed according to different principles. For instance, clitic particles take 2P, clitic auxiliaries adjoin to V or VP, while clitic pronouns may both pattern with particles and with auxiliaries. Typical Slavic W*-systems are OCS and Old South Russian.

Languages that lack grammaticalized constraints on the placement of clitics are referred to as „C-systems" (where C stands for communicative). East Slavic languages belong to this group.

Besides the syntactic position of clitics, Slavic languages differ in the type of clitics (discourse, pronominal, auxiliary) they retained from the Common Slavic system and in the inventory of operations clitics are involved in. In the table below I present data concerning these aspects.

		Clitics as discourse markers	Auxiliary clitics	Pronominal clitics	
				Clitic doubling	Clitic climbing
East Slavic	Russian	✓	-	-	-
	Ukrainian	✓	Only in SW Ukr[1]	-	-
	Belorussian	✓	-	-	-
West Slavic	Czech/Slo-vak	✓	✓	-	✓
	Polish	✓	✓	-	✓
South Slavic	Serbian/ Croatian	✓	✓	-	✓
	Slovene	✓	✓	In a W dialect, Gorica Slovenian[2]	✓
	Macedonian	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Bulgarian	✓	✓	✓	✓

Most clitics have been preserved in South Slavic languages and consequently these clitics participate in most syntactic processes.

3. Clitics in Old Russian

Old Russian employed only clause level enclitics, which originally conformed to Wackernagel's Law, that is, they took second position after the first phonetic word.

(3) азъ же та ѿринȣ и не имамъ та помиловати пакы [PC]

The repertory of Early Old Russian clitics was reconstructed by Zalizniak [2008].
1) *же*
2) *ли;*
3) *бо*;
4) *ти*;
5) *бы*;
6) dative clitic pronouns – *ми, ти, си, ны, вы, на, ва*;
7) accusative clitic pronouns – *мь, ть, сь, ны, вы, на, ва, и, ю, е, ъ, я*;
8) auxiliaries, especially 1st and 2nd person *есмь (есми), еси, есмъ (есме, есмо, есмы), есте, есвѣ, еста*; *есть, суть, еста*

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[1]   See DANYLENKO 2012.
[2]   See MARUŠIČ – ŽAUCER 2009.

Zalizniak set up a ranking of clitics on the basis of the position they take in clitic clusters. The first five members of the clitic template are represented by discourse particles: *же* has an intensifying or adversative function, *ли* expresses an alternative, *бо* conveys casual, *ти* affirmative, and *бы* an optative meaning. The 6th and 7th ranks contain short form pronouns in the dative and accusative cases. Clitic auxiliaries occupy the lowest rank on this scale.

Through the evolution of language, the placement of OR clitics was submitted to barrier rules. A barrier is a syntactic category that takes effect on the position of clitics. The presence of such barriers signifies that the first word or phrase is emphasized. The Barrier Theory introduced by Zalizniak [1993: 287] and refined by Zimmerling [2002: 88, 2009] explains the late placement of clusters and the phenomenon of split clusters by one and the same underlying mechanism. The main hypothesis is that the sentence-initial group/lexical head hosting the clitics may have properties of a barrier and move all or some clusterizing clitics to the right of clausal 2P [FRANKS ET AL. 2004, KOSTA – ZIMMERLING 2013 ZALIZNJAK 2008, ZIMMERLING 2009].

(4) с ними ѡканьнъıи и беzаконъıи бѣ бо zабѣглъ иz Ряzаня. Литва же иzъгнаша

ıаzдовъ. на канȢнъ и Иваня [VC]

Focalized elements are placed on the left edge of the clause, consequently, the clitic takes a lower position.

3.1. Old Russian pronominal clitics

In Old Russian, the Accusative reflexive pronoun and the Dative and Accusative personal pronouns had two variants: full forms or stressed pronouns and short forms, i.e. clitic pronouns.

The reflexive pronoun had a long form *себя* and a short form *ся* in the Accusative. As both the function and the course of development of this pronoun differs from that of the personal pronouns, the investigation of these forms goes beyond the scope of the present paper.

The following tables present the paradigm of the Dative and Accusative full and short forms [Zalizniak 2008: 129].

Dative case			
	singular	plural	dual
1st person – clitic	ми	ны	на
Full form	мьнѣ, мнѣ	намъ	нама
2nd person – clitic	ти	вы	ва
Full form	тобѣ/тебѣ	вамъ	вама

Accusative case			
	singular	plural	dual
1st. person – clitic	мѧ	ны	на
Full form	мене/менъ/меня	насъ	наю
2nd person – clitic	тѧ	вы	ва
Full form	тебе/ тебь	васъ	ваю
3rd person – clitic	и, ю, е	ѣ, ѩ	и, ѩ
Full form	его, еѣ, его	ихъ	ею

As Zalizniak points out [Zalizniak 2008: 130–131], in unmarked contexts enclitic forms were used, stressed pronouns were applied only with restrictions, regulated by syntactic, semantic or pragmatic factors.

Stressed forms were obligatorily used in the following cases [Zalizniak 2008: 131, Doykina 2018][3]:

1) In the beginning of clauses or immediately after vocatives:
(5) Тебе же подобает, великомꙋ кнꙗзю (Tale)

2) the pronoun is after a preposition:
(6) цѣловала ко мнѣ крс҃ъ. Давъѣдовичи. и Ст҃ославъ Всеволодичь. (SC)

3) the pronoun is co-ordinated with another word:
(7) и се нъѣнѣ не любиши мене и съ младенцеꙵ симь. (SC)

4) the pronoun has an attribute or adjunct:
(8) егда ꙋчиваем, к тебе единомꙋ прибегаемъ, нашемꙋ спасителю и благодателю (Tale)

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[3]   Examples are taken from the Suzdal Chronicle (SC) and The Tale of Mamai's Battle (Tale).

5) the use of the enclitic resulted in the appearence of clitics of the same rank (our corpus did not contain such examples)

6) the pronoun bears emphasis, e.g. in juxtapositions:

(9) мнѣ ѿтучина Къѣıдавъ а не тобѣ (SC)

In other words, clitics were excluded from contexts involving contrast, emphasis and coordination [KOSTA – ZIMMERLING 2014].

From the 15th century on, clitic forms started to disappear and were gradually replaced by stressed forms.

The intensity of this change varied depending on the following factors [ZALIZ-NIAK 2008: 167–168]:

1. The literary nature of the document. Texts under the influence of the vernacular take in new forms earlier.

2. Difference in number, as universally the singular tends to be more conservative and stable than the plural or dual.

3. Difference in case, as the loss of clitic pronouns starts earliest in the Dative plural. As regards person, the change affected third person forms the earliest.

The loss of enclitic forms and the paralell spread of full pronouns was thoroughly investigated by Zalizniak [2008], who studies this process in 11–16th century documents with literary, religious character and in documents reflecting the vernacular (the Birchbark Letters). Doykina [2018] examined the same process in 14th–15th century legal documents, testaments and treaties of princes.

4. What we can find in the text of chronicles

The language of chronicles is referred to as a „mixed language", which is characterized by that the intermingling of Old Church Slavonic and Old Russian elements. The reason for the diversity is the chronicles contain a wide variety of genres and styles, and therefore a mixture of several norms (that of sermons, hagiography, legal documents or folk epic) [WORTH 1977: 261, 264].

The peculiarity of the language of chronicles in a linguistic sense is that owing to their „bookish nature" they preserve otherwise dissappearing forms and structures longer than texts reflecting the vernacular (i. e. the Birchbark Letters).

The investigation of clitics in OR chronicles is carried out by using the Russian National Corpus. Research in the corpus facilitates the quantitative and the distributional analysys of clitic pronouns, which facilitates the monitoring of diachronic changes.

The Old Russian corpus contains six chronicles from the 12th to the 15th centuries: the Primary Chronicle (PC) (12th c.), the Kievan Chronicle (KC) and the Galician Chronicle (GC) (early 13th c.), the Volhynian Chronicle (VC) (late 13th c.), the Suzdal Chronicle (SC) (14th c.) and the Novgorod 1st Chronicle, or Synod Scroll (NC) (15th c.).

In the course of the investigation I will look at: the quantitative analysis of the distribution of pronominal clitics in 12th–15th century texts, the position of clitics within the clause, the peculiarities of clitic clusters and hosts.

4.1. The quantitative analysis of pronominal clitics

The disintegration of the OR clitic system started in the 11th–12th centuries, and pronominal clitics were out of use by the 16th century [ZALIZNIAK 2008]. The change affected pronominal clitic forms differently, depending on their person and number features.

	Accusative			Dative			Reflexive *-ся*
	sg.	du.	pl.	sg.	du.	pl.	
PC	363	14	172	102	-	65	62
KC	500	9	19	158	24	35	192
GC	124	6	106	40	(1)	3	134
VC	109	-	27	79	-	4	29
SC	329	7	93	39	-	15	51
N I. C	164	5	78	15	-	12	315

The data presented in this table conforms to the tendencies suggested by Zalizniak [2008: 167–168]. The loss of clitic pronouns starts in the Dative. Singular forms are more conservative than dual or plural forms and by the 15th century 3rd person clitics were rarely present. In the text of the Novgorod I. Chronicle only one 3rd person form can be found.

(10)· а грькомъ повелє пусти їна корабле на не їтѣмь же и не погорѣша фрадиїи тако бысꞇ въдатиє [N I. C]

4.2. Clitic placement

In the light of typological variation even within the Slavic languages with respect to clitic placement, I start with this problem.

As it has been already referred to in 3, the canonical position for clitics in Common Slavic was 2P, however, it has two variants, depending on whether the clitic is attached to the first phonetic word or to the first phase.

Our data shows that in the majority of examples clitics take second position after the first phonetic word of the clause regardless of the time of creation of the manuscript:

(11) ꙗко приходили суть болгарє. уꙗщє таприняти вѣру свою [PC]

(12) и створи вѣцѣ на ꙗрославли дворѣ и реꞂ новгородьцємъ суть ми ороудиꙗ въ руси а вы вольни въ кнꙗдѣхъ [N I. C]

(13) посолъ же Володимѣровъ. приѣхавъ Кондратови поча емѹ молвити при всѣхъ его боıарѣхⸯ. тако ти молвить братъ твои Володимѣръ. радъ ти бъıхъ помоглъ. за твою соромотѹ [VC]

In numerous cases pronominal clitics take the 3rd position in clauses introduced by conjunctions.

(14) поклонивсѧ ıамѹ рѹⷺ͞ ѿць мѧ переѡбидилъ. и волости ми не далъ. [KC]

(15) и Игорь нача молитисѧ ко Всеволодѹ и молбою игнѣваıасѧ река не хочеши ми-добра про что ми ѡвреклъ ıеси Къııевъ а преıателевъ ми не вдаси прⷤимати и по-слѹша ıего Всеволодъ [SC]

This phenomenon is probably due to the alternation of the narrative strategy. In earlier chronicles, clauses in the narrative chain discourse particles marked the boundary of clauses. They took 2P and attached to the first, topicalized element of the clause. In the passage below, the clause boundaries can be defined relying on the placement of the clitic же:

(16) Изѧславъ слъıшавъ корола пошелъ оуже ис Къııава на Володимерка͞ приспѣвшю же полкъı свои ѡстави назади с братомъ свои͡ Стополко͡мⷨ тогдъı же придоста к рѣцѣ к Санокѹ Володимерко же роставлѧлъ баше дрѹжинѹ свою на бродѣхъ индѣ пѣши а индѣ конникъı король же нача ставлѧти противѹ ıемѹ свои полкъı на бродѣх [SC]

By the 15th–16th centuries, discourse particles were gradually displaced by conjunctions resulting in the lower placement of pronominal clitics.

Already in the 12th century text of the PVL, deviations in clitic placement can be detected, as numerous examples containing clitics moved rightward in the structure can be found. These deviations are due to the emergence of barriers (see 3.). Sentence initial words had properties of a communicative or grammaticalized barrier. Communicative barriers are phrases that acquire special communicative status in the clause. For example, initial NPs and PPs could be topics. Grammaticalized barriers are particular lexical heads or formal parameters of phrases. For example, in ONR initial multi-word groups consisting of two or more stressed word forms were obligatory grammaticalized barriers [KOSTA – ZIMMERLING 2014: 465–466]. Barriers prevented clitics or clitic clusters from taking their canonical 2P position:

(17) #{TopicP [XP]} – CL….V ⇒ #[BARRIER {TopicP [XP]} [V– CL]…[4]

Barriers, at the same time, affected word order as they attracted verbs to 2P, resulting in clitics adjoining verbs. Before the appearance of barrier rules verbs did not have a fixed position in the clause [KOSTA – ZIMMERLING 2013, 2014]. In (18) below the

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[4]   The scheme is taken from KOSTA – ZIMMERLING 2013.

NP, in (19) the adverb has properties of barriers, in (20) the negative particle features as a garammaticalized barrier.

(18) нынѣ же гсне оуже к томоу не можемь тебе зрѣти. оуже бо слнуе наше заиде ны. и во wбидѣ всѣхъ wстахомъ. и тако плакавшеса над нимь. все множество. [VC]

(19) и последь приведе ia къ собе гюрги и жены ieia из новагорода и оу себе ia дьржаше [N I. C]

(20) река ци самъ iесмь ѣхалъ кииавѣ. посадили ма кииане а не створи ми пакости. а се твои кииавъ. [KC]

4.3. Clitic clusters

In the language of chronicles, clitics often cluster. However, we can find less clusters in the language of chronicles than in ONR (in the Birchbark Letters) and the clusters are shorter as they contain maximum 3 elements. The cluster in (21) contains a clitic particle, a dative plural clitic, and a reflexive clitic. However, examples with linearised clitics are very rare. Split clusters as in (22) are more typical.

(21) а кто ны поможетъ но створимъ миръ съ црсмъ. Се бо ны са по даныiалъ. и то бѫди доволно намъ [PC]

(22) сестра твоia оумираюуи. велѣла мь та поiати за са. тако рекла. [VC]

As data shows, the ordering of clitics within the clusters is: clitic particle (же, бо, ли), followed by dative, and then accusative clitics. The reflexive clitic is located always at the end of the cluster.

Most clusters contain two elements, either a clitic particle and a pronominal clitic (23), (24) or two pronominal clitics (25) (26).

(23) Всеволодъ же с своєю братїєю оустрѣте и и цѣловавшеса разидошаса разно їи да Володимеръ Всеволодѹ тысаую гривенъ серебра їи двѣ стѣ тѣмь бо и вашеть оумолилъ їноуверни ieмѹ Всеволодъ [SC]

(24) иже миловахъ юъ аки свою дщерь родимоую. Бѣ бо не дал ми своихъ родити за мои грѣхы. [VC]

(25) река емоу ауе ти ма оубити сноу на семъ мѣстѣ. а оубии [KC]

(26) но iазъ iесмь. во твоеи воли. а даи ми та Бѣ. Имѣти аки wца собѣ. и слоужiти тобѣ со всею правдою. до моеiъ живота. [VC]

4.4. Clitic hosts

The previous examples (25), (26) lead us to another question, that of clitic hosts. Universally, clitics are claimed to be indifferent to their hosts. In the case of clitic pronominals this statement does not really hold.

(27) и пакъі ѡлговичи . Начаша просити . оу гаропоӆка̄ что нъі ѿць держаӆъ при вашемъ ѡци [KC]

(28) Шварно же са запрѣ емоу / тако река . / не воеваӆъ . газъ тебе . / но Литва та воеваӆа / посоӆъ же рӯе Шварнови / тако ти моӆвить кназь Боӆесӆавъ . [VL]

In the vast majority of cases, pronominal clitics are attached to verbal hosts, and they also adjoin nouns, adverbs and sporadically adjectives. The dominance of verbal hosts is probably due to the fact that pronouns are arguments, therefore they are located within the VP.

(29) вса бoары новгородьскъіга къіиевоу / и заводи га къ устьномоу х̄оу / и поусти га домовь / а инъіга оу себе остави [N I. C]

Dative clitics in numerous cases are attached to nominal hosts and are placed on a lower position in the clause. In these cases, they function as possessive markers. This phenomenon is attested in Bulgarian, Macedonian, OCS and OR [ZALIZNIAK 2008: 35].

(30) Тога же зимъі пошеӆ бѣ оуже Гюрги в Рѣсь / сӆъішавъ смрть Изасӆавӆю / и бъіс̄ противу Смоӆинску гему вѣсть / брат̄ ти оумерӆъ Вачесӆавъ / а Ростисӆавъ побѣженъ [SC]

In certain cases, for example in names, the dative possessive clitic splits the phrase (31).

(31) ѡнѣм же повѣдаюꙃимъ̄ пошеӆъ . / а братъ ми Ӆевъ . и Мьстисӆавъ . и сн̄овець ми . / воздоровьи ӆи . / ѡнем же повѣдаюꙃимъ гс̄не . [VC]

Zimmerling [2013: 55], analysing the above phenomenon, notes that OR had both clause level and NP level dative clitics attached to nominal heads. Clause level dative clitics are normally merged at 2P, while NP-level possessive clitics did not have a fixed position.

5. Conclusions

The analysis of the texts of OR chronicles pointed out that although the language of chronicles preserves forms longer, nevertheless, we can detect a decrease in their number. The language of chronicles contains less and shorter clusters of clitics than the text of the Birchbark Letters. In the majority of cases, clitics took 2P and adjoined a verbal host. Numerous examples reflect the effect of barrier rules (especially with adverbs and NPs), dative possessive pronominal clitics are also represented. The above anomalies from the language of chronicles led to the transformation of the clausal structure and to the loss of pronominal clitics in OR. The reduction of the clitic system, however, was only the side effect of a more substantial syntactic change.

6. Loss of the clitic system

The loss of pronominal clitics, on the basis of OR chronicles was not an isolated process but indirectly accompanied a more substantial change, the disintegration of the tense-aspect system.

Jung and Migdalski [2014], studying the degrammaticalization of clitics into weak pronouns, point to the fact that a couple of dynamic changes containing clitic typology correlate with the typology of tense distinction: Slavic languages with independent morphological exponents of tense (Bulgarian or Macedonian) have V2 clitics.

OR was also claimed to be a pro-drop language [JUNG 2018, JUNG – MIGDALSKI 2014, MADARIAGA 2011] but by the 13th century it started to lose its pro-drop character owing to the disintegration of the tense - aspect system, that is by the weaking of TP. In pro-drop languages the D-feature of T is checked by a V-to-T movement, in non-pro-drop languages the overt subject raises to SpecTP.

With OR having this pro-drop nature, verbs took the 1st position in clauses, so pronominal clitics adjoining them were located in 2P and were at the same time V2 clitics, as well. With the weakening of T, the number of overt subjects checking the D-feature on T rose. Consequently, pronominal clitics together with their verbal hosts moved rightwards, became gradually split from their verbal hosts and were gradually replaced by full pronouns.

Parallel with the spread of overt subjects went the proliferation of full subject pronouns. In OR 1st and 2nd person pronominal subjects were employed only in specific contexts where the logical stress fell on them [IVANOV 1964: 374]. 3rd person pronominal subjects appeared in the 13–14th centuries: the pronoun онъ evolved from the demonstrative pronoun and originally referred to the subject of a remote clause [BORKOVSKIY – KUZNECOV 1963: 321]. 3rd person pronominal subjects in their present function – referring to the subject of the preceding clause – appeared in the 15–16th centuries [GYÖRFI 2016].

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