Possessive clitics: Rethinking their syntactic status & parameterisation
Evidence from the diachrony of Greek

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1. Questions and aims

A phenomenon with unclear typological correlations:

1. Some languages license possessives as bound morphemes cliticising on the noun or another stressed element. (see Longobardi & Guar diano 2013)

Aims:
- To shed light on lesser-noticed dimensions of variation in this domain and their potential correlations, in search of appropriate parameters.
- To explore the interaction of variation in possessive clitics with other independently-observed parameters and its implications for the proper formulation of these parameters, in the light of evidence from Greek and its diachrony.

2. Dimensions of variation and correlations

At least superficially, the behaviour of possessive clitics can vary as follows (see also Pancheva 2004):
- Kinds of semantic/theta-roles expressed: kinship/inalienable possession only (cf. Silvestri 2013) vs. (any kind of) possessors, agents, themes.
- Possessive clitics can be seen as either inside a high or low domain.
- Some clitics are interpreted as overt or possessors, while others as non-obligatory.
- Possessive clitics can be subject to clitic doubling.
- Possessive clitics can be subject to case assignment.

3. The intervening S parameter

An intervening S parameter (implicit or overt) may (English, 7)/may not (Italian, 8) block possessives of the object (O), i.e. its movement to a Gen position. (Longobardi 2001, Longobardi & Silvestri 2013).

4. Possessive clitics and intervening S

SMG can independently be shown to possess just one Case licensing position for genitive DPs, GenO. SMG genitive DPs and post-N clitics pattern with Italian but post-A clitics pattern with English!
- Understood S controlling into absolute gerunds:
- The frequent use of drugs, while driving
- The frequent use of drugs, while driving
- The frequent their.CL use driving
- The frequent their use, while driving

5. A licensing position for high clitics: diachronic evidence

Alexiadou (2005) argues that the emphatic possessive clitic *dihi-*ka-tos (adapted from *dihi-*os CL) cannot be used in modern SMG. SMG genitive DPs and post-N clitics pattern with Italian but post-A clitics pattern with a higher position.

6. Conclusions

- In the light of the above, it turns out that possessive clitics interact with a number of parameters and their interaction may lead us to the need to refine some of them. Also, the possibility of micro-/nano-
- parameters specific to possessive clitics was not excluded.

- Possessive clitics may move to/through functional/licensing positions or may cliticise directly; in the latter case, there may be a distinction between n-cliticisation (post-N clitics in SMG) and n-cliticisation (N-complements only, i.e. inalienable possession only if we follow Alexiadou 2003 - Italian clitics)