

## Syntax of (non)syllabic present tense forms of the verb *býti* in the 3rd-person singular in Old Czech

There were several present tense forms of the verb *býti* ‘to be’ in the 3rd-person singular in Old Czech (approximately 1150–1500): *jest – je – j* [1], [2]. These forms differ in the amount of the phonological material and may be divided by their syllabicity into two groups: (a) syllabic forms, *je(st)*, and (b) the nonsyllabic form, *j*. The syllabic forms were preserved till Modern Czech (approx. 1775–nowadays), however, the nonsyllabic *j* was lost during the 15th century as the absence of this form in Middle (approx. 1500–1775) and Modern Czech corpora suggests [3], [4]. Our knowledge regarding the nonsyllabic *j* is still insufficient: there is no evidence-based analysis of this form in Old Czech texts. In my contribution, I aim to do such an analysis and explore the syntactic status of the nonsyllabic *j* using the characteristics of enclitics and affixes.

The present tense forms of the verb *býti* are, in general, considered enclitics ([5] for Old/Middle Czech, [6] for Modern Czech). As enclitics, these forms require the presence of another word in the clause, i. e. their host, yet they combine with hosts of various classes. They mostly occupy the second position in the clause and, if the clause contains more than one enclitic, they usually form a cluster with a rigid order. In addition, the enclitic character relies on the function of the verb: the auxiliaries appear in the enclitic context only, the lexical verb, on the other hand, can be found in a non-enclitic context as well [5], [6], [7].

Moreover, the formal factor may also be in play. Recent research suggests the nonsyllabic auxiliary in Modern Czech manifests the syntactic behavior of an affix [8], [9], [10] (see also [11] for Polish auxiliaries). Affixes are, in contrast to enclitics, highly selective about the class of their host, their position in the clause follows the position of the host, they do not form the enclitic cluster, and they may be subjected to reduplication [7], [9], [10].

In my analysis, I will examine syntactic features of the nonsyllabic *j* in comparison with its syllabic counterparts, *je(st)*, following the criteria listed above. I predict there will be a difference among the (non)syllabic forms regarding their distribution in the clause. More particularly, I expect the nonsyllabic *j* to manifest features of both enclitics and affixes, while the syllabic forms behave as enclitics. These findings may serve as another evidence of how a phonological character of a form, i. e. its syllabicity, may affect its syntactic behavior (cf. [12]). My analysis will be based on empirical evidence. I will collect language data from the 14th and 15th centuries’ prose of various genres. I will annotate the collected data manually, adapting the existing annotation system developed by [13].

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