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THE MIDDLE VOICE IN THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE  
GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

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A Dissertation  
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the Faculty of  
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Doctor of Philosophy

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by  
Daniel Robert Maketansky

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**APPROVAL SHEET**

THE MIDDLE VOICE IN THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE  
GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

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To Rebecca,  
My beloved wife

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BDAG	Bauer, Walter. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Translated and edited by W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich. 3rd ed. Revised and edited by Frederick William Danker. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000
BDF	F. Blass and A. Debrunner. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Translated by Robert W. Funk. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961
CEWAL	<i>Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages</i> . Edited by Roger D. Woodward. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004
EAGLL	<i>Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics</i> . 3 vols. Edited by Georgios K. Giannakis. Leiden: Brill, 2014
IELCP	<i>Indo-European Linguistics and Classical Philology</i>
JHL	<i>Journal of Historical Linguistics</i>
LSJ	Liddell, H. G. and R. Scott. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon with a Revised Supplement</i> . 9th ed. Revised by Henry Stuart Jones. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996
NAC	The New American Commentary
NICNT	The New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIDNTT	<i>The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i> . 3 vols. Edited by Colin Brown. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975–1985
RhM	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i>
SL	<i>Studies in Language</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . 10 vols. Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976
TJ	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

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## PREFACE

This dissertation has been a long work of endurance. I began my doctoral studies single, living in Kentucky, and working at a local restaurant. I end them married, with four children, living in Massachusetts, and serving as the preaching pastor at my home church. There were many points along this journey when I wondered if I would be able to finish. But by God's grace the work is completed. For this I have many people to thank.

First of all, I thank my doctoral supervisor, Dr. Peter Gentry. More than anyone else, Dr. Gentry taught me how to study. He inspired in me a love for the biblical languages. Most importantly, he showed me what it looks like to study as a faithful servant of Jesus. I will not forget the biblical lessons and godly example learned from Dr. Gentry.

I thank other faculty at SBTS who have shaped my studies, and the institution as a whole for its commitment to training scholars who are committed to biblical truth. Specifically, I thank Dr. Tom Schreiner, who supervised the first half of my doctoral studies and cared for me so well during those years. I also thank Dr. Barry Joslin, who first taught me Greek. Dr. Joslin's classes were hard. But the hard work he made me do then set me on a trajectory to read and use and see glory in the Greek New Testament still today.

I thank so many dear colleagues and friends during my time at SBTS. I think of the time reading Greek with Matt Albanese, Andrew King, Patrick Schreiner, Brian Davidson, and Aubrey Sequeira. Toward the end of my studies, I think of Johnson Pang and Jonathan Kiel, who pushed me to the finish line.

I thank my mom and dad, Joanne and Marty Maketansky. I still remember

when I first told them I wanted to pursue doctoral studies. They have not stopped patiently supporting me all along the way. I thank my aunt and uncle, Janice and Dusty Kopp. They too have relentlessly encouraged and supported my work. I thank my church family, Holland Church. I would not have finished this work without their support. I must specifically mention Jeff Pearson, Adam Hussey, Bill Hardy, and my father-in-law, Don James, who filled the pulpit for me so that I could write. I must also mention my fellow elders, Mike Forand, Alan Hussey, Bill Hardy, Eric Willard, Jeff Pearson, Jayson Wilbur, Luke Bardsley, and Phil Satkowski, who served wherever necessary so that I could complete this work.

I thank my precious wife, Rebecca. She has patiently listened to my struggles and shared my joys in this work. She has sacrificed with and for me. She has not stopped encouraging me. We have walked this road together. I would want to walk it with no one else. I also thank my children, Adelyn, Isaac, Caleb, and Eli. They have sacrificed time with dad in the completion of this dissertation, and I am humbly grateful.

Finally, and ultimately, I thank my God. He has been gracious to call me out of darkness into his marvelous light. He has been merciful to allow me to serve him in the writing of this dissertation and to sustain me to the completion of it. He will be faithful to keep me to the end. To him alone be the glory.

Dan Maketansky

Louisville, Kentucky

May 2023

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The Hellenistic Greek verbal system was capable of communicating three voices: active, middle, and passive. Of these, by far the middle voice has proven the most difficult to understand. Almost a century ago, one Greek grammar stated regarding the middle: “Here we approach one of the most distinctive and peculiar phenomena of the Greek language.”<sup>1</sup> For many, this assessment holds true today.

Part of the difficulty in analyzing the Greek middle voice lies in the realm of morphology. In some tenses, we find a binary morphological division between active and middle-passive forms. In this case, the middle and passive forms are identical. In other tenses (the aorist and future), we find a trinary morphological division between voice forms. In these cases, grammars traditionally teach that the passive voice has taken its own distinct form, marked by  $-(\theta)\eta-$ . Problems with this analysis arise, however, in that many forms in  $-(\theta)\eta-$  do not function as passives. These morphological divisions, then, lead to questions regarding the relationship between the middle and passive voices, and regarding the exact function of  $-(\theta)\eta-$  aorist and future verbs.

Another part of the difficulty in analyzing the Greek middle voice lies in the realm of semantics. These three voice categories can be assigned simple, straightforward semantic values. In the active, the verbal subject is agent, the doer of the action. In the passive, the verbal subject becomes patient, the one acted upon. The middle falls somewhere in between. On a general level, the middle voice can be seen as carrying two

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<sup>1</sup> H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1927), 156.



semantic nuances. The middle meaning can be *direct*, amounting to the equivalent of a direct reflexive. Or, it can be *indirect*, with the subject acting “*for* (or sometimes *by*) himself or herself, or in his or her *own interest*.”<sup>2</sup>

These simple semantic explanations, however, quickly meet with problems. Most grammarians recognize that, according to these definitions, verbs marked for the middle voice often function like the active. Further, as noted above, verbs traditionally described as marked for the passive voice often function like either the active or middle. Therefore, one frequently finds in Greek voice studies the label “deponent.” Deponent verbs are defined as those that synchronically display one voice form, but another voice function. For many grammarians this concept is crucial to a full and coherent analysis of the Greek voice system. Without it, one will never make sense of this system semantically.

All of this suggests the need for a deeper understanding of the Greek middle voice. What exactly is the semantic force of the middle? Why does it seem to grammarians so often to function as a “deponent”? What is the relationship between the middle and passive voices, and what is the best way to explain the so-called passive  $-(\theta)\eta-$  forms? This dissertation will seek to answer questions such as these.

### **History of Research**

In recent years there has been an increased attempt on the part of Greek scholars to gain a more robust understanding of the middle voice. Many have balked at the concept of verbal deponency in favor of understanding the middle more deeply on its own terms. Others have raised their eyes cross-linguistically in hopes of gaining insight into the Greek middle from other middle marking languages. Still others have adopted theoretical linguistic frameworks in hopes of elaborating the core meaning of the middle,

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 419.

and from there being able to explain its various semantic extensions. Much of this research has been helpful. In the following pages, I will outline some of the prominent recent works devoted to the Greek middle voice. This survey will focus on monographs, essays, or articles devoted to this subject. Brief descriptions from Greek grammars will be consulted in the following chapter.

### **Herman Kølln (1949)**

Our review begins with a study by Herman Kølln entitled *Oppositions of Voice in Greek, Slavic, and Baltic*.<sup>3</sup> Kølln's study of Greek voice focused specifically on aorist tense formations and the curious fact that some Greek verbs form as both strong (i.e., second) and sigmatic (i.e., first) aorists. Working exclusively with Homeric data, he investigated the possibility that a semantic distinction exists between these two aorist forms. Ultimately, he found this distinction in the realm of voice:

We shall attempt to encircle the specific meaning the strong aorist may be assumed to have by examining the distribution between the strong aorist and the voice endings. Already the fact that the strong aorist which is intransitive, as opposed to a transitive sigmatic aorist from the same verb, is always incorporated into a middle paradigm . . . suggests that what we are concerned with here is not so much a matter of actual transitivity but more a matter of voice, possibly a special type of voice.<sup>4</sup>

Kølln found that the strong aorist was consistently incorporated into one of seven paradigms. In each case the form was surrounded by present and future forms communicating the middle voice. Because of this, he found it likely that the strong aorist form was communicating the same voice, albeit derivationally rather than inflectionally. In some cases, the presence of an opposing sigmatic form that was incorporated into an active paradigm served to bolster his theory.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Herman Kølln, *Oppositions of Voice in Greek, Slavic, and Baltic* (København: Munksgaard, 1949).

<sup>4</sup> Kølln, *Oppositions of Voice in Greek, Slavic, and Baltic*, 4.

<sup>5</sup> For a list of Kølln's seven paradigm types and an explanation of each, see Kølln, *Oppositions of Voice in Greek, Slavic, and Baltic*, 5-8.

After assessing this morphological evidence, Kølln turned to test his assumptions semantically. Concluding that the strong aorist “denotes that the action is of no consequence to an object lying outside the subject,”<sup>6</sup> he used the term *ineffective* to describe its semantics. In contrast, he labeled the sigmatic aorist *effective*. Herein lay the semantic opposition between these two forms: “the sigmatic aorist enters in opposition with the strong aorist, being employed where the strong aorist does not occur, i.e., where the action is effective.”<sup>7</sup>

Kølln concluded his study by testing aorists ending in -ην. He found that these forms were morphologically descended from and semantically related to the strong aorist. At the same time, these forms were more exclusively intransitive and capable of carrying a passive value, which was a shade of the ineffectivity connoted by the strong aorist.

Kølln’s work provides an intriguing explanation of Classical Greek strong aorist forms. While the validity of his explanation remains to be tested in full for the Hellenistic Period, it continues to hold true in part.<sup>8</sup> His semantic description of the strong aorist also gives clues into the semantics of the Greek middle voice. Further, his explanation of the Greek aorists in -ην, commonly called aorist “passives,” indicates that a more robust understanding of these aorist forms—along the lines of the middle voice—may be needed.

### **E. J. W. Barber (1975)**

In a paper presented at the “First Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society,” E. J. W. Barber addressed the Greek middle voice by assessing fundamental distinctions between the voice systems of Greek and English. Specifically, his paper

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<sup>6</sup> Kølln, *Oppositions of Voice in Greek, Slavic, and Baltic*, 10. This does *not* mean that the verb cannot take a direct object (i.e., be “transitive”), only that no *effect* upon that object is involved.

<sup>7</sup> Kølln, *Oppositions of Voice in Greek, Slavic, and Baltic*, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Note, for example, the opposition between the second aorist ἔστην (intransitive, or ineffective) and the first aorist ἔστησα (transitive, or effective).

aimed “to explicate how the active/middle distinction differs from the active/passive one; how languages like English handle whatever is included in the middle that is not included in the passive; and at what linguistic level the passive can be lumped with the middle.”<sup>9</sup>

Barber explained that, while the passive voice serves to move nominal elements in and out of the subject position, the middle voice serves a different purpose. Fundamentally, the middle voice works “as a strategy for marking identities between the surface subject and other NP’s in the sentence proposition.”<sup>10</sup> English typically expresses this “subject/NP” identity by the use of special pronouns (i.e., reciprocal or reflexive ones). Greek, however, as an *active-middle* language, can express the identity through the use of “middle” or “passive” verbal morphemes. Thus, the voice opposition *active-middle* seeks to solve a different linguistic dilemma than the opposition *active-passive*—namely, the expression of identity between the subject and other nominal elements of the clause.

Barber went on to explain how Greek is able to subsume the function of the passive voice within its middle inflection. *Active-passive* languages identify the passive voice as denoting the one subject-verb relationship in which the subject is not performing the verbal action. This passive relationship they pit against all other subject-verb relationships, calling them “active.” Greek, however, sees verbal voice through a different lens. Here, the active voice is seen as the one relationship in which the subject is not specified as being *affected* by the verbal action. The middle voice then subsumes all other cases perceived as “subject-affected.”

This latter insight is perhaps Barber’s most important. With this conceptual understanding of the active-middle dichotomy, it becomes quite clear how the passive can be viewed as intricately related to the middle. Indeed, the entire perspective with which a Greek speaker views verbal action comes more sharply into focus. And, at the

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<sup>9</sup> E. J. W. Barber, “Voice – Beyond the Passive,” in *Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Berkley Linguistics Society* (1975), 16.

<sup>10</sup> Barber, “Voice – Beyond the Passive,” 17.

level of morphology, one is prepared to appreciate why a given verbal morpheme would meet difficulty in finding a neat division between “middle” and “passive” semantics.

### **Egbert J. Bakker (1994)**

Egbert J. Bakker has sought to further the discussion of ancient Greek voice in his essay entitled “Voice, Aspect, and Aktionsart: Middle and Passive in Ancient Greek.”<sup>11</sup> Here Bakker seeks to describe the relationship between middle voice marking and specific lexical types. Specifically, he argues that “middle voice in Ancient Greek is constrained by *Aktionsart*, both as to its meaning, and as to its relation with aspect.”<sup>12</sup>

Bakker describes Greek middle voice verbs as marked for the semantic value of affectedness.<sup>13</sup> The Greek middle can be seen as either “coding” or “expressing” this value. Sometimes middle morphology simply codes the affectedness that is inherently present in a verb, while other times it expresses subject-affectedness that is not inherent.<sup>14</sup> To explore this idea, Bakker considers voice marking on eleven different verbal types. These eleven types he situates along a continuum of transitivity, guided by the categories of volitionality, agency, and causation. After discussing these eleven types, he finds a direct correlation between the presence of middle morphology and the presence of aspectual or *Aktionsart* features involving subject-affectedness.

Further, Bakker describes use of the aorist morphemes -σα- and -(θ)η- in his eleven verbal types. He claims that aorists in -(θ)η- are not strictly used in passive constructions. Yet this morpheme is also not associated with affectedness or the middle

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<sup>11</sup> Egbert J. Bakker, “Voice, Aspect, and Aktionsart: Middle and Passive in Ancient Greek,” in *Voice: Form and Function*, ed. Barbara A. Fox and Paul J. Hopper (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994), 23-47.

<sup>12</sup> Bakker, “Voice, Aspect, and Aktionsart,” 44.

<sup>13</sup> Bakker, “Voice, Aspect, and Aktionsart,” 24.

<sup>14</sup> Bakker, “Voice, Aspect, and Aktionsart,” 24, 26.

voice but actually signals the *suppression* of middle semantics.<sup>15</sup> Ultimately, he finds middle aorists in -σα- occurring in events that are highest in transitivity, where the subject is volitional and/or agentive. Aorists in -(θ)η-, on the other hand, occur in events that are lowest in transitivity.<sup>16</sup>

Bakker's claim that the aorist -(θ)η- infix denotes the absence of affectedness/middle voice is questionable. Still, his essay provides several other helpful points. Specifically, the ideas that middle voice morphology coheres with certain verbal types, that such morphology can either code inherent middle semantics or express non-inherent ones, and that the division of the aorist morphemes -σα- (+ middle ending) and -(θ)η- is coherent with features of transitivity are all valuable for a deeper understanding of the Greek middle.

### **Neva F. Miller (2005)**

The concept of deponency has received objection through the writings of Neva F. Miller in her appendix to the *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* entitled "A Theory of Deponent Verbs."<sup>17</sup> Here, after defining deponency and situating it within the broader discussion of verbal voice, Miller challenged the concept as largely "a failure to understand what is being communicated."<sup>18</sup> In her estimation, deponency is built off of two faulty assumptions: "(1) in the earlier stages of the development of the language, every Greek verb had an active form; and (2) in later developments of the language some

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<sup>15</sup> Bakker, "Voice, Aspect, and Aktionsart," 27-28. It appears that Bakker's claims regarding the disassociation of aorists in -(θ)η- and the middle voice are due to the active endings that follow this morpheme and the punctual aspect these tense forms convey (see Bakker, "Voice, Aspect, and Aktionsart," 28, 31).

<sup>16</sup> Bakker, "Voice, Aspect, and Aktionsart," 27, 44.

<sup>17</sup> Neva F. Miller, "A Theory of Deponent Verbs," in *The Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, ed. Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 423-30.

<sup>18</sup> Miller, "A Theory of Deponent Verbs," 424.

verbs lost their active forms and thus became ‘defective.’”<sup>19</sup>

Instead of embracing these assumptions, Miller calls grammarians to appreciate middle-passive forms for what they are. Particularly, “each occurrence of the middle should be examined for its own sake and allowed to express for itself the precise idea that it communicates.”<sup>20</sup> If the middle voice indicates subject-affectedness in the verbal action, then the presence of a middle form should propel the reader to consider which nuance of affectedness is at work.

As an aid to this end, Miller presents suggestions for understanding the middle semantics of so-called deponent verbs. She provides seven broad categories of the semantics that may be involved in these words: reciprocity, reflexivity, self-involvement, self-interest, receptivity, passivity, and state or condition. If Greek readers perceive categories such as these in middle-only verbs, then they should understand them as true middles and avoid the label “deponent.”

### **Carl W. Conrad (2002)**

Carl W. Conrad has furthered the argument against deponency, especially in his essay entitled “New Observations on Voice in the Ancient Greek Verb.”<sup>21</sup> Conrad’s essay, however, is much more than a negative statement against the theory of Greek verbal deponency. It also presents a positive attempt to clarify what the “morphoparadigms” of the Greek verb are communicating as well as to chart a way forward in teaching Greek voice more accurately within the academy.

In the essay, Conrad states some of the difficulties he perceives in conventional terminology regarding Greek voice. First, traditional terminology regarding the middle

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<sup>19</sup> Miller, “A Theory of Deponent Verbs,” 424.

<sup>20</sup> Miller, “A Theory of Deponent Verbs,” 425.

<sup>21</sup> Carl W. Conrad, “New Observations on Voice in the Ancient Greek Verb,” Washington University in St. Louis, last modified November 19, 2002, <https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.wustl.edu/dist/8/2865/files/2020/10/newobsancgrkvc.pdf>.

voice is misleading when it assumes a regular relationship between a verb's voice-form and transitivity. It is simply not always the case in Greek that the active voice is transitive, the passive is intransitive, and the middle is somewhere in-between. Instead, Greek middle voice semantics must be understood properly. Whether transitive or intransitive, Greek verbs in the middle voice "indicate the deep involvement of the *subject* as the one experiencing, suffering, enduring, or undergoing an action or a change of state."<sup>22</sup>

Second, traditional terminology is misleading when it claims that the -(θ)η- forms of the aorist and future tenses are essentially *passive*, and that any mismatch in function with this "passive" form is to be labeled "deponent." Instead, Conrad argues that these forms developed historically in Greek to function as the *middle-passive* forms for the aorist and future. Therefore, just like the middle-passive forms in -μαι/σαι/ται or -μην/σο/το, these forms must be analyzed according to common use and context to determine whether they are communicating middle or passive sense.

Third, conventional grammars can be misleading when they present the developmental state of the Greek language as more stable than it really was. Whether one is describing Classical Attic or Hellenistic Koine, he must see that the language was one in flux. Most importantly, Conrad argues that we need to "grasp that the -(θ)η- forms originated as intransitive aorists coordinated with 'first' -σα aorists, that they increasingly assumed a function identical with that of the aorist middle-passives in -μην/σο/το κτλ. and gradually supplanted the older forms."<sup>23</sup>

Conrad contends that the distinction between middle and passive sense was not of ultimate importance for Greek speakers. In fact, the morphoparadigms for voice in Greek are built upon a bipolar basis: active vs. middle-passive. These "middle-passive"

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<sup>22</sup> Conrad, "New Observations on Voice in the Ancient Greek Verb," 3 (emphasis mine).

<sup>23</sup> Conrad, "New Observations on Voice in the Ancient Greek Verb," 5. For a more detailed presentation of this particular element of Conrad's argument, see p. 65 of this dissertation.



verbs are really to be seen as one category, which “might more aptly be described and termed ‘subject-focused.’”<sup>24</sup>

For Conrad, all of this highlights the massive paradigm shift that needs to occur in thinking and terminology regarding Greek voice. First, the  $-(\theta)\eta$ - forms must be understood as ambivalent between middle and passive meaning. Second, the term and concept of “deponency” must be eliminated. Third, we must understand that “active,” “middle,” and “passive” meanings are “not necessarily bound to any particular morphoparadigm of the Greek verb.”<sup>25</sup> In the future, he suggests a terminological shift in describing Greek voice forms as either *unmarked* simple (traditionally “active”) or *marked* subject-focused (traditionally “middle-passive” and “passive”).<sup>26</sup>

### **Rutger J. Allan (2003)**

The most substantial treatment of the middle voice in Greek has been furnished by Rutger J. Allan in his work, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek: A Study in Polysemy*.<sup>27</sup> Allan provides a detailed morphological and semantic description of middle voice phenomenon across Greek of the Classical Period. Grounding his thesis in a cognitive linguistic framework, he argues that the notion of prototypical transitivity is crucial to an assessment of Greek middle voice, for the middle is “characterized as a marked coding of a departure from the prototypical transitive event.”<sup>28</sup> Further, the middle voice is marked for the value of subject-affectedness, while the active voice is

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<sup>24</sup> Conrad, “New Observations on Voice in the Ancient Greek Verb,” 7.

<sup>25</sup> Conrad, “New Observations on Voice in the Ancient Greek Verb,” 11.

<sup>26</sup> Conrad, “New Observations on Voice in the Ancient Greek Verb,” 7. Conrad actually prefers the terms “basic” and “subject-focused.”

<sup>27</sup> Rutger J. Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek: A Study in Polysemy*, Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology 11 (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2003). See also Rutger J. Allan, “Voice,” in *EAGLL*, vol. 3, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 494-502.

<sup>28</sup> The prototypical transitive event is defined thus: “an agent-subject volitionally initiates physical activity resulting in a transfer of energy to a patient-object that absorbs the energy and thereby undergoes an internal change of state” (Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 19).

merely unmarked for it.

Allan describes Classical Greek middle voice usage as a “polysemous network of interrelated meanings.” These various but related uses are subcategories of the middle’s “abstract schema,” namely, the affectedness of the subject.<sup>29</sup> One can plot them along a semantic map and, once plotted, perceive two important morphological phenomena: (1) that “a form will always cover a connected region of variant middle uses in the semantic network” and (2) that “a form will only spread from one variant use to another if these uses are directly semantically related.”<sup>30</sup>

Allan’s study yields the following eleven different middle usage types: passive middle, spontaneous process middle, mental process middle, body motion middle, collective motion middle, reciprocal middle, direct reflexive middle, perception middle, mental activity middle, speech act middle, and indirect reflexive middle.<sup>31</sup> Working with these eleven middle types and studying their frequency of occurrence and number of relations to one another, Allan then considers which ones are most central to his semantic map. He concludes that the “mental process middle” “deserves the predicate *category prototype*,” while “the indirect reflexive middle, the body motion middle, the spontaneous process middle, and the passive middle can be thought of as secondary prototypes.”<sup>32</sup>

Allan’s work concludes by taking up three important studies pertaining to middle voice usage. First, he discusses aorist forms in  $-(\theta)\eta-$ , tracing the spread of these forms across his semantic map and explaining which middle uses this morpheme had grown to convey in the Classical Greek Period. Though the form certainly performed

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<sup>29</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 57.

<sup>30</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 41.

<sup>31</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 57-117. See pp. 78-79 of this work for a definition of each of these middle types.

<sup>32</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 123-24.

more than a strict passive function, Allan suggests that the abstract meaning of the aorist in  $-(\theta)\eta-$  is best “characterized in relation to the notion of prototypical patient” while the sigmatic middle aorist is best characterized in relation to the prototypical agent.<sup>33</sup>

Second, Allan discusses middle and passive voice oppositions in the future tense. In the late nineteenth century, Friedrich Blass argued that, for the future tense, the opposition between the middle and passive forms was an aspectual one: the future middle forms conveyed imperfective aspect while the future passive forms conveyed perfective aspect.<sup>34</sup> However, not long after, J. M. Stahl produced a work arguing that the opposition was one of voice: simply put, the future middle had middle meaning and the future passive had passive meaning.<sup>35</sup> Allan takes up the task of testing these theories and finds evidence in favor of both. In fact, after a detailed analysis, he concludes that both oppositions are possible explanations for the Greek future middle and passive forms, and the contrast is “to be explained differently for each individual verb.”<sup>36</sup>

Third, Allan describes the co-existence of synonymous active and middle verbs.<sup>37</sup> He finds little evidence for the theory that “neither verb of the pair involves subject-affectedness, i.e., the middle ending of the middle member is lexicalized and meaningless, possibly a relic of an older meaning of the verb.”<sup>38</sup> Rather, analyzing

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<sup>33</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 175-76. In concluding the chapter, Allan briefly suggests that the reason the active-middle-passive trichotomy is restricted to the aorist stem has to do with the telicity of the aorist’s perfective aspect: “the meaning of the passive forms in  $-(\theta)\eta-$  (resemblance of subject to prototypical patient), and the meaning of the aorist (completedness of event), are strongly associated . . . the completedness of the event increases the degree of subject-affectedness” (177). It is unclear why Allan leaves the future tense formation, which displays the same trichotomy, out of the discussion at this point.

<sup>34</sup> Friedrich Blass, “Demosthenische Studien,” *RhM* 47 (1892), 269-90.

<sup>35</sup> J. M. Stahl, *Kritisch-historische Syntax des griechischen Verbums der klassischen Zeit* (Heidelberg: n.p., 1907), 83-87.

<sup>36</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 201-2.

<sup>37</sup> An objection to pure synonymy is affirmed at the outset: we must indeed keep in mind that in language “absolute synonymy is a very rare phenomenon—if it exists at all” (Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 203).

<sup>38</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 204.

synonyms from identical or different lexical stems, and synonyms of an identical semantic class, Allan finds in every case that subject-affectedness is *lexically inherent*. In some cases, this subject-affectedness is emphasized by means of the middle inflection,<sup>39</sup> while in others there is no demonstrable semantic difference between the active and middle verb.<sup>40</sup>

### **Jonathan T. Pennington (2003, 2009)**

In two related articles, Jonathan T. Pennington has sounded another alarm against the category of “deponency” in Hellenistic Greek, calling instead for greater appreciation of the nuances of Greek middle voice itself.<sup>41</sup> According to Pennington, “the grammatical category of deponency, despite its widespread use in Greek grammars, is erroneous . . . . Indeed, most if not all verbs that are traditionally considered ‘deponent’ are truly middle in meaning.”<sup>42</sup>

Pennington begins his argument by recalling that Greek, for much of its history, functioned with the binary voice opposition active-middle. The passive voice was a later development that arose from and eventually overtook the middle in form and meaning. During the period of Hellenistic Greek, however, this linguistic change was very much in process. Thus, to fully appreciate the form and function of Hellenistic Greek verbs, one must appreciate the form and function of the middle voice.

Pennington agrees with many Greek grammarians before him that the Greek middle is particularly difficult for English speakers to grasp. How, then, should one

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<sup>39</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 205.

<sup>40</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 206.

<sup>41</sup> Jonathan T. Pennington, “Deponency in Koine Greek: The Grammatical Question and the Lexicographical Dilemma,” *TJ* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 55-76; Jonathan T. Pennington, “Setting Aside ‘Deponency’: Rediscovering the Greek Middle Voice in New Testament Studies,” in *The Linguist as Pedagogue: Trends in the Teaching and Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Matthew Brook O’Donnell (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 181-203.

<sup>42</sup> Pennington, “Setting Aside ‘Deponency,’” 182.

understand it? He gives the following definition: “far from being merely reflexive (the Direct Middle) or even only expressing self-interest (the Indirect Middle), the Greek middle voice also encompasses a large number of actions and categories involving the subject as the gravitational center of the action.”<sup>43</sup>

According to Pennington, descriptions of Greek middle verbs using the label “deponent” suffer from two major negative contributing factors. First, such descriptions suffer from the false application of Latin grammar, which operates with the binary opposition active-passive rather than the binary opposition active-middle. Second, these descriptions suffer from unfamiliarity with the middle voice itself—both as to its significance within the Greek verbal system and the opportunities it afforded Greek speakers in communicating “subject-focused verbal ideas.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, the case for the middle voice can also be stated positively: “The Greek verbal system has a rich and nuanced middle voice capable of communicating any number of actions, attitudes, and conditions involving a subject-focused lexical idea.”<sup>45</sup>

Pennington concludes by confronting two possible objections to his argument against deponency. First, many verbs in Greek occur with active present, but future middle, forms. In these cases, he claims: “the linguistic analysis of the middle voice does not claim that *all* verbs which could be conceived of as in the middle voice categories *must* occur in the middle. Instead, it explains *why* so many verbs which do occur in the middle-only do so.”<sup>46</sup> Further, one must also note that many middle marking languages display a close semantic connection between the middle voice and the future tense. In short, “because the future tense can only present an event as a mental disposition or

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<sup>43</sup> Pennington, “Setting Aside ‘Deponency,’” 185.

<sup>44</sup> Pennington, “Setting Aside ‘Deponency,’” 188.

<sup>45</sup> Pennington, “Setting Aside ‘Deponency,’” 190.

<sup>46</sup> Pennington, “Setting Aside ‘Deponency,’” 194.

intention, the middle voice serves well in many instances to communicate that sense.”<sup>47</sup>

Second, Pennington discusses so-called “passive deponent” verbs—those verbs deemed deponent that occur with  $-(\theta)\eta$ - morphology in the aorist. He argues that these verbs too should be classified as middles. The explanation for them is to be found in the diachronic development of the language—that is, over time the aorist  $-(\theta)\eta$ -form supplanted the aorist sigmatic middle form. Indeed, Pennington points out that the lexical semantics of all “passive deponent” verbs are subject-focused, or middle.

### **Bernard A. Taylor (2004)**

Another argument against the concept of Greek verbal deponency comes from Bernard A. Taylor in his essay entitled “Deponency and Greek Lexicography.”<sup>48</sup> In this essay, Taylor perceived the lexicographical ambiguity of working with the concept of deponency to determine the listing of a middle-passive form as the headword in a lexicon. Ultimately, however, Taylor saw a flawed foundation in attaching the term of “deponency” to the Greek verbal system itself. Although late Latin grammarians adopted the term to describe Latin verbs which were passive in form but active in meaning, early Greek grammarians did not. Instead, the earliest Greek grammarians spoke of the middle voice as a viable category for Greek verbs. Thus, for Taylor, “in the interface between Greek and Latin, at least one Latin notion was transferred to Greek that had not existed in that language before: the notion of deponency.”<sup>49</sup> Once transferred, this notion found its most natural home with the Greek middle.

Taylor argued that, when properly understood in diachrony and semantics,

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<sup>47</sup> Pennington, “Setting Aside ‘Deponency,’” 194.

<sup>48</sup> Bernard A. Taylor, “Deponency and Greek Lexicography,” in *Biblical Greek Language and Lexicography: Essays in Honor of Frederick W. Danker*, ed. Bernard A. Taylor et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 167-76.

<sup>49</sup> Taylor, “Deponency and Greek Lexicography,” 171. Taylor argues for this claim again in a later essay entitled “Greek Deponency: The Historical Perspective” in *Biblical Greek in Context: Essays in Honour of John A. L. Lee*, ed. James K Aitken and Trevor Evans (Peeters: Leuven, 2015), 177-90.

Greek middle voice verbs should be seen as having laid aside neither form nor function. Diachronically, Greek middle voice morphology is as old as active morphology. Semantically, while the middle voice has the subject performing the action just like the active, it does so in a subject-focused way. Therefore, the notion of deponency should be laid aside from Greek studies. Rather than adopting it, Greek grammarians should work to appreciate the true function of the three Greek voices, especially the middle.

### **Straton L. Ladewig (2010)**

Despite the strong tendency to argue against the concept of Greek verbal deponency and to grapple with the middle voice on its own terms, there has been at least one recent argument in the opposite direction. Straton L. Ladewig, in his dissertation entitled “Defining Deponency: An investigation into Greek Deponency of the Middle and Passive Voices in the Koine Period,”<sup>50</sup> has sought to prove the thesis that “the Greek middle and passive voices in the Koine Period include deponency as a legitimate expression of voice.”<sup>51</sup>

Ladewig begins his argument with a sketch of historical thought regarding the concept of deponency. Working from the ancient witnesses Dionysius Thrax and Apollonius Dyscolus up to Greek grammarians of the modern day, he finds a range of witnesses wrestling with an apparent “mismatch” between form and function in Greek verbal voice. Still, he sees a need for refinement in deponency’s definition. Therefore, applying key elements in the anatomy of Latin deponency to the Koine Greek verb,<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Straton L. Ladewig, “Defining Deponency: An Investigation into Greek Deponency of the Middle and Passive Voices in the Koine Period” (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2010).

<sup>51</sup> Ladewig, “Defining Deponency,” 95.

<sup>52</sup> Ladewig finds it acceptable to apply features of Latin deponency to the Greek verb for two reasons. First, Latin and Greek display similar grammatical structure. Second, for these two languages, historically “grammatical study began with Greek . . . Then, the study of Latin took its grammatical framework from Greek. Finally, the study of Greek reemerged based upon a Latin foundation” (Ladewig, “Defining Deponency,” 43, 46). In other words, there is not an inherent flaw in basing Greek study upon a Latin mold, because that very Latin mold was itself based upon a Greek mold.

Ladewig proposes the following definition of Greek deponency:

Deponency is a syntactical designation for the phenomenon in Koine Greek in which a lexically-specified set of verbs demonstrates incongruity between voice form and function by using middle and/or passive morphology to represent active voice function while simultaneously lacking active morphology for a relative principle part in Koine literature and lacking a beneficiary/recipient subject.<sup>53</sup>

This is a complex definition that Ladewig spends much time explaining. Its most fundamental and testable elements, however, are threefold. First, a deponent verb must display a mismatch between form (middle or passive) and function (active). Second, it must lack an opposing active form in its respective principal part. Third, it must lack a subject occupying the semantic role of beneficiary or recipient.<sup>54</sup> If all three of these elements are present in a particular verb, it should be classified as deponent.

Crucial for Ladewig is his belief that treatments of the Greek middle such as Rutger J. Allan's (above) present this voice category as too semantically broad. The middle semantic types that Allan and others perceive are too numerous and mostly fit better under the label "active voice."<sup>55</sup> Ladewig prefers to describe just two middle types: the direct and indirect middle. These two types conform to their standard definition in grammars, where the direct middle denotes the direct reflexive and the indirect middle encompasses the many situations in which "the action is done by the subject to, for, or by himself."<sup>56</sup>

Working with his refined definition, Ladewig surveys verb usage across the Greek New Testament and other Koine literature. He finds deponency alive and well as he sees a plethora of middle and passive verbs that confirm all three testable elements

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<sup>53</sup> Ladewig, "Defining Deponency," 136.

<sup>54</sup> Ladewig calls the presence of a beneficiary/recipient subject "lexical intrusion" (see Ladewig, "Defining Deponency," 136).

<sup>55</sup> Ladewig, "Defining Deponency," 119-20, 170.

<sup>56</sup> Ladewig, "Defining Deponency," 98.



mentioned above.<sup>57</sup> Finally, having confirmed his thesis, Ladewig selects five texts to show the relevance of acknowledging and defining deponency for New Testament exegesis.

### **Linda Joyce Manney (2000)**

Over the decades scholars have adopted various linguistic frameworks out of which to conduct their studies of Greek voice. One of the more popular frameworks adopted in recent studies is that of cognitive linguistics. This was used by Rutger J. Allan (above) and is the one preferred by Linda Joyce Manney in her work, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek: Meaning and Function of an Inflectional Category*.<sup>58</sup>

Manney's work is extensive, surveying over 600 verbs—some *media tantum* (“middle only”), some *activa tantum* (“active only”), and some oppositional between active and middle. These verbs she gleaned from authentic Greek texts, both spoken and written, after which she sought examples of usage from native Greek speakers.<sup>59</sup> Her primary goal is “to exemplify a wide range of uses of the inflectional middle voice system in Modern Greek” while presenting these uses together as a coherent network, all united around certain semantic prototypes.<sup>60</sup>

Manney argues that the “inflectional middle voice comprises a basic verbal category which is opposed, both morphosyntactically and semantically, to the active inflectional system, and that the middle voice typically functions to encode reduced or absence of agency.”<sup>61</sup> In her opinion, though the semantic line between middle and active

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<sup>57</sup> Ladewig provides several examples of deponent-functioning verbs in the body of his dissertation, but the extensive data he gathered in favor of deponency is presented in three appendices found in Ladewig, “Defining Deponency,” 197-228, 231-301.

<sup>58</sup> Linda Joyce Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek: Meaning and Function of an Inflectional Category* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2000).

<sup>59</sup> Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*, 9.

<sup>60</sup> Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*, 4.

<sup>61</sup> Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*, 25.

forms in Greek can be fine, there is still distinction: “while both the middle and active variants of a single stem can often encode the same objectively viewed event, such active and middle structures differ in meaning in ways that are consistent with the differences in meaning between their respective set of event prototypes.”<sup>62</sup>

Manney finds two event prototypes for the middle voice: noninitiative emotional response and spontaneous change of state.<sup>63</sup> The first, noninitiative emotional response, “involves an experiencer of emotion which undergoes the effects of an external force” and results in a mental experience on the part of the subject.<sup>64</sup> The second, spontaneous change, “involves one single participant, that of a patient which undergoes a change of state.”<sup>65</sup> These two middle voice prototypes are related, containing the following three semantic components: *high affect* and *low volition* on the part of the verbal subject and *low individuation* on the part of any entity designated as source.<sup>66</sup>

These two prototypes and their semantic components extend outward to a host of other middle event types and provide the rationale for their middle inflection. In this way, Manney explains various classes of mental experience verbs, including verbs of emotional response, thinking, and mental attitude.<sup>67</sup> Further, she is able to offer a semantic explanation for the following cases: opposing middle-active forms from the same stem which have an agentive subject,<sup>68</sup> various middle verbs which denote states, changes of states, and passive constructions,<sup>69</sup> and the “middle reflexive” as compared to

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<sup>62</sup> Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*, 64.

<sup>63</sup> Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*, 64-67.

<sup>64</sup> Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*, 65.

<sup>65</sup> Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*, 66.

<sup>66</sup> Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*, 11, 65-66.

<sup>67</sup> Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*, 11, 71-118.

<sup>68</sup> Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*, 11, 121-62.

<sup>69</sup> Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*, 11-12, 165-200.

other “lexically encoded reflexives.”<sup>70</sup>

### **Rachel E. Aubrey (2016, 2020)**

Rachel E. Aubrey has provided two significant contributions to the realm of the Greek middle. In her essay, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,”<sup>71</sup> Aubrey adopts the same cognitive linguistic framework as Manney above. Her study, however, focuses on Hellenistic Greek and limits itself to a view of the aorists in  $-(\theta)\eta-$ .

Aubrey argues that  $-(\theta)\eta-$  aorists should be classified as part of the aorist middle voice: “instead of an exclusively passive form with random deviants,  $-(\theta)\eta-$  is better understood as a diachronically and synchronically motivated form with multiple functions, all of which fit within the semantic scope of the middle domain.”<sup>72</sup> She turns to typological and diachronic evidence to support this claim. Typologically, languages with an opposing active-middle voice system use the middle voice to encode the same semantic situations that  $-(\theta)\eta-$  does in Greek.<sup>73</sup> Diachronically, the  $-\eta-$  (and later  $-(\theta)\eta-$ ) marker grew out of an originally stative suffix and first denoted change-of-state events. This naturally allowed the morpheme to function for the passive as well,<sup>74</sup> so that “ $-(\theta)\eta-$  was originally restricted to five middle event types within the wider potential semantic range of the middle”: spontaneous processes, motion, collective motion, mental processes, and passives.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Manney, *Middle Voice in Modern Greek*, 12, 203-33.

<sup>71</sup> Rachel Aubrey, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,” in *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*, ed. Stephen E. Runge and Christopher J. Fresch (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 563-625.

<sup>72</sup> Aubrey, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,” 565.

<sup>73</sup> Aubrey, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,” 582-85.

<sup>74</sup> Aubrey, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,” 578-81.

<sup>75</sup> Aubrey, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,” 594.

Aubrey argues that voice categories happen along a continuum of higher or lower transitive events and that  $-(\theta)\eta-$  in particular, and the middle voice in general, display a deviation from the prototypical transitive active event.<sup>76</sup> Specifically, the middle voice conflates the “energy source” and “energy endpoint” into one participant and narrows the scope of attention onto the clause’s most affected member. In this way, the affected member of the sentence becomes the most salient and is marked syntactically as the subject.<sup>77</sup>

With these theoretical pieces in place, Aubrey analyzes use of the aorist middle in the following semantic situations: spontaneous process, motion, collective motion, mental process, direct reflexive, reciprocal events, mental activity, speech act, and perception. She finds a “division of labor” between  $-(\theta)\eta-$  and  $-\sigma\alpha-$  middles in covering the same range of middle types that the present and perfect middle-passive forms do. The  $-(\theta)\eta-$  forms cover the more patient-like events (spontaneous process, motion, collective motion, mental process, and passive) while the  $-\sigma\alpha-$  forms cover the more agent-like events (direct-reflexive, reciprocal, mental activity, speech act, and perception). However, during the Homeric and Hellenistic Periods, the  $-(\theta)\eta-$  forms were beginning to spread, denoting the more agent-like uses as well.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, Aubrey concludes that “ $-(\theta)\eta-$  is rightly treated as marking the less transitive middle events—including passives—within a larger transitivity continuum in an active-middle system.”<sup>79</sup>

Aubrey’s subsequent work, “Hellenistic Greek Middle Voice: Semantic Event Structure and Voice Typology,”<sup>80</sup> explains the Greek middle voice with a framework and

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<sup>76</sup> Aubrey, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,” 614, 620.

<sup>77</sup> Aubrey, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,” 615, 617.

<sup>78</sup> Aubrey, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,” 572-73, 575, 602.

<sup>79</sup> Aubrey, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,” 620.

<sup>80</sup> Rachel E. Aubrey, “Hellenistic Greek Middle Voice: Semantic Event Structure and Voice Typology,” MA thesis, Trinity Western University, 2020.

definitions similar to those set forth in her essay above. This latter work, however, focuses on the Hellenistic Greek middle more broadly. Drawing from typological and diachronic research, Aubrey again argues for a semantic approach to the Greek middle wherein the middle is understood in relation to semantic transitivity.<sup>81</sup> She explains voice as motivated by the construal of two primary factors: *energy flow* (“how events unfold and how participants are related within that process”) and *focus of attention* (“how participant involvement affects the salience of different facets of event construal”).<sup>82</sup> Considering several middle event types, Aubrey shows that, in some way, the middle voice focuses attention on an affected entity or conflates the energy source and energy endpoint in the clause.<sup>83</sup>

### **Susan E. Kmetko (2018)**

In her dissertation entitled “The Function and Significance of Middle Voice Verbs in the Greek New Testament,”<sup>84</sup> Susan E. Kmetko has provided a helpful, practical study contending that “middle morphology does indeed signify an ascertainable middle function for both *media tantum* and oppositional middle verbs in the Greek New Testament.”<sup>85</sup> Based on a survey of ancient and modern literature pertaining to the middle voice, Kmetko identifies three complimentary ways of understanding the function of the Greek middle. She describes these three options as follows:<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Aubrey, “Hellenistic Greek Middle Voice,” 2, 142.

<sup>82</sup> Aubrey, “Hellenistic Greek Middle Voice,” 20.

<sup>83</sup> See Aubrey, “Hellenistic Greek Middle Voice,” 89-139, 141.

<sup>84</sup> Susan E. Kmetko, “The Function and Significance of Middle Voice Verbs in the Greek New Testament,” PhD diss., Australian Catholic University, 2018.

<sup>85</sup> Kmetko, “The Function and Significance of Middle Voice Verbs,” 2.

<sup>86</sup> Kmetko, “The Function and Significance of Middle Voice Verbs,” 55.

1. The grammatical notion of the subject acting on, for, or with reference to itself.
2. The linguistic notion of subject-affectedness as outlined by Rutger J. Allan.<sup>87</sup>
3. The medial notion of a subject acting within the encompassing verbal process.<sup>88</sup>

Again, for Kmetko these three perspectives are not mutually exclusive. They “emphasise [*sic*] different aspects of middle function,” and together can enable that function to be recognized.<sup>89</sup>

Kmetko’s work applies these three notions of middle voice function to select middle-marked verbs in 1 Thessalonians, 2 Corinthians, and Galatians.<sup>90</sup> She conducts an in-depth study for several verbs, paying close attention to the verb’s lexical sense and literary context.<sup>91</sup> For the studies in 1 Thessalonians and 2 Corinthians, she tests these verbs to see if they truly functioned with a middle meaning. For the study in Galatians, she seeks what exegetical significance one might find if each middle-marked verb is approached as if it truly had some middle meaning.

Kmetko’s study yields several positive conclusions regarding the function of middle-marked verbs in the Greek New Testament. First, and most generally, in each case the middle-marked verb is shown to have a middle function. This argues again against the notion of deponency for Greek. Second, her study argues against the “passive deponent” category by showing that Greek  $-(\theta)\eta-$  aorists are middle voice verbs.<sup>92</sup> Third,

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<sup>87</sup> For Rutger J. Allan’s discussion of subject-affectedness as the core meaning of the Greek middle voice, see pp. 10-13 above.

<sup>88</sup> Kmetko finds this notion of middle voice meaning in the works of Emile Benveniste (Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek, Miami Linguistic Series 8 [Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971], 145-51) and Philippe Eberhard (Philippe Eberhard, *The Middle Voice in Gadamer’s Hermeneutics: A Basic Interpretation with Some Theological Implications*, Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie 45 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004).

<sup>89</sup> Kmetko, “The Function and Significance of Middle Voice Verbs,” 226.

<sup>90</sup> Kmetko chooses these books in part because they are written by the same author (Paul), which removes the variant of stylistic variations from different authors (see Kmetko, “The Function and Significance of Middle Voice Verbs,” 2).

<sup>91</sup> See the explanation of methodology, for example, in Kmetko, “The Function and Significance of Middle Voice Verbs,” 54.

<sup>92</sup> Kmetko, “The Function and Significance of Middle Voice Verbs,” 227-28.

her study shows that there is potential exegetical and theological value for New Testament studies in better appreciating the Greek middle voice.<sup>93</sup>

### **Suzanne Kemmer (1993)**

Though her work focuses beyond Greek, our survey would be amiss without reference to Suzanne Kemmer's *The Middle Voice*.<sup>94</sup> Kemmer's work is cross-linguistic in scope, covering numerous middle marking languages across the world. Nonetheless, in many facets its conclusions apply directly to the Greek middle and overlap with the conclusions of scholars mentioned above.<sup>95</sup>

Kemmer seeks to provide a semantic analysis of the middle voice.<sup>96</sup> She analyzes numerous middle "situation types" and their relationship to prototypical one- and two-participant events, as well as to the reflexive event type. As with many of the recent treatments of the Greek middle, she seeks to prove that the category middle voice, though complex and denoting several different event types, is still a universally coherent system. This category, "although without fixed and precise boundaries, nevertheless has a clearly discernable semantic core."<sup>97</sup>

At the semantic core of the middle voice, Kemmer locates a category that subsumes even the notion of subject-affectedness. She terms this category the "relative elaboration of events" and defines it as "the degree to which the participants and component subevents in a particular verbal event are distinguished."<sup>98</sup> The middle voice

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<sup>93</sup> For examples, see Kmetko, "The Function and Significance of Middle Voice Verbs," 183-225, and especially the concluding comments on 224.

<sup>94</sup> Suzanne Kemmer, *The Middle Voice* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1993). For another cross-linguistic treatment of "voice" phenomena around the world, see M. H. Klaiman, *Grammatical Voice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>95</sup> In fact, Kemmer's middle voice semantic categories served as the basis from which Rutger J. Allan formed his Ancient Greek middle voice types (above).

<sup>96</sup> Kemmer, *The Middle Voice*, 10.

<sup>97</sup> Kemmer, *The Middle Voice*, 3.

<sup>98</sup> Kemmer, *The Middle Voice*, 3, 121.

is marked for a *low* elaboration of events. In other words, because the middle is “a semantic area comprising events in which the Initiator is also the Endpoint, or affected entity,” it displays a low distinguishability between the participants in the verbal action.<sup>99</sup> The one doing the verbal action is co-referential with the one receiving, or affected by, the verbal action in some way. Viewing the middle voice in this way allows Kemmer to differentiate middle situation types from reflexive ones, which have a higher degree of distinguishability between verbal participants.<sup>100</sup>

Thus, Kemmer defines the middle voice in relation to transitivity. In fact, one major point of her work is that “categories of voice cannot be considered in isolation from the overall phenomenon of transitivity in grammar.”<sup>101</sup> By describing the middle in terms of the relative elaboration of events, she is able to show how “intransitivity is naturally associated with middle marking because of the semantic proximity of middle situations to one-participant events.”<sup>102</sup> In terms of a scale of semantic transitivity, middle and reflexive event types are situated between prototypical one- and two-participant events, with the middle lower in transitivity than the reflexive.<sup>103</sup>

### **Guglielmo Inglese (2022)**

Finally, subsequent to the research conducted for this dissertation, another important cross-linguistic middle voice study was published by Guglielmo Inglese, entitled “Towards a Typology of Middle Voice Systems.”<sup>104</sup> Inglese’s study is much

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<sup>99</sup> Kemmer, *The Middle Voice*, 243.

<sup>100</sup> Kemmer, *The Middle Voice*, 41-94, 243-44.

<sup>101</sup> Kemmer, *The Middle Voice*, 247.

<sup>102</sup> Kemmer, *The Middle Voice*, 24.

<sup>103</sup> Kemmer, *The Middle Voice*, 243-44, 247.

<sup>104</sup> Guglielmo Inglese, “Towards a Typology of Middle Voice Systems,” *Linguistic Typology* 26:23 (2022), 489-531. Inglese has also written extensively on the middle voice in Hittite in Guglielmo Inglese, *The Hittite Middle Voice: Synchrony, Diachrony, Typology*, Brill’s Studies in Indo-European Languages & Linguistics 20 (Leiden, Brill: 2020).



broader than Kemmer's (above), surveying 149 middle voice constructions in 129 middle marking languages. As a result of his study, he calls into question Kemmer's conclusion that the primary motivation for middle marking is to mark a "lower degree of elaboration of events."<sup>105</sup>

Inglese seeks to provide a better cross-linguistic definition of middle markers than has previously been given. He avoids a definition purely along semantic lines,<sup>106</sup> and divides middle-marked verbs into "oppositional" and "non-oppositional" types.<sup>107</sup> Oppositional middle-marked verbs often (though not always) express "various valency related functions."<sup>108</sup> Ultimately, Inglese claims that:

[Middle markers] can instead be best seen as a hybrid comparative concept. On the one hand, the identification of oppositional middles relies on a functional component, that is, their association with valency change, which can be operationalized by referring to already existing comparative concepts. On the other hand, the identification of non-oppositional middles is based on a straightforward distributional criterion, i.e., lack of an unmarked counterpart.<sup>109</sup>

For Inglese, defining middle markers along these lines better describes the evidence from extensive cross-linguistic studies of the middle voice like his own.

Inglese's work provides a helpful reminder of the cross-linguistic difficulty of a purely semantic definition of the middle voice. A semantic analysis of the middle voice that works for one language may not work for another. Inglese also rightly calls attention to the valency altering function of the middle. Still, his work does not negate the value of a semantic analysis of the middle voice specifically for Greek. Indeed, Inglese himself acknowledges that "subject involvement may be a good proxy for the middle prototype in

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<sup>105</sup> Inglese, "Towards a Typology of Middle Voice Systems," 524.

<sup>106</sup> Inglese, "Towards a Typology of Middle Voice Systems," 496.

<sup>107</sup> Inglese, "Towards a Typology of Middle Voice Systems," 494, 523.

<sup>108</sup> Inglese, "Towards a Typology of Middle Voice Systems," 523.

<sup>109</sup> Inglese, "Towards a Typology of Middle Voice Systems," 496.

Ancient Greek.”<sup>110</sup> Further, one can benefit from a focus both on syntactic and semantic features of the Greek middle voice. Therefore, while Inglese’s work helpfully speaks to a broad cross-linguistic study of the middle voice, the semantic description of the Greek middle given in this dissertation nonetheless holds true.

### **Significance and Thesis**

The survey above reveals many of the helpful advances that have been made in Greek middle voice studies. Scholars have questioned the concept of deponency and made attempts to appreciate the middle voice on its own terms. They have clarified the very nature of the Greek voice system as an opposition between active and middle, not active and passive. They have identified several common middle voice semantic “types,” with cross-linguistic studies showing that languages of the world recurrently code these same verbal types with middle morphology. The field of cognitive linguistics has provided fruitful studies into the “core” meaning of the middle and how it relates to the many middle uses.

Still, further refinement in middle voice studies can be achieved. In this dissertation, I will seek this refinement in at least three ways. First, while differing fields of linguistics have provided useful insights into the middle voice, still not much has been done for the Greek middle voice in the field of historical (diachronic) linguistics. I will investigate the historical origins of the Greek middle to see what clues they might give as to its meaning and use. Second, there has still been relatively limited treatment of the middle in the Hellenistic Greek Period, and specifically in the literature of the Septuagint (LXX) and Greek New Testament (GNT). I will focus on the form and function of the middle voice in this latter period and body of literature. Third, many scholarly explanations of the middle voice often remain so complex or abstract that they leave

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<sup>110</sup> Inglese, “Towards a Typology of Middle Voice Systems,” 521.

application in reading and exegesis still very difficult. I will seek to articulate the overarching meaning of the middle with greater clarity and simplicity so as to aid Greek teachers and students. I will seek to do this largely through providing an abundance of practical examples of the middle voice in action in the LXX and GNT.

Specifically, in this dissertation I will seek to show that the middle voice in the Septuagint and Greek New Testament expresses a broad variety of semantically related ideas, all of which revolve around the notion of *subject focus*. To this end, I will show that an understanding of the historical origins of the Greek voice system bolsters certainty about this “subject-focused” semantic core and its application to a rich variety of middle voice uses in the Hellenistic Period. Further, and more specifically, I will show that this diachronic understanding of the middle voice aids in explaining the voice form and function of Hellenistic Greek aorist and future  $-(\theta)\eta-$  verbs. Lastly, I will show that each of the eleven middle voice usage types that Rutger J. Allan identified for the Classical Greek Period are still fully operational in the literature of the LXX and GNT.

### **Methodology**

To achieve these goals, I have surveyed multiple grammars and other works on the middle voice for ancient Indo-European languages that are ancestors of or closely related to Hellenistic Greek. I will seek to provide a summary of middle voice morphology, syntax, and semantics in each of these languages. Further, in many ways this dissertation will stand on the shoulders of Rutger J. Allan’s *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*. I have applied his framework for understanding the middle voice in Classical Greek—especially his eleven middle voice usage types—to middle voice verbs in the Septuagint and Greek New Testament. To test his framework, I have analyzed verbs from the sample lists in Allan’s work,<sup>111</sup> verbs classified as “deponent” in BDAG,

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<sup>111</sup> See, for example, Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 43-44, and other lists in his discussion of middle voice types.

and many other middle-marked verbs across the LXX and GNT. I have sought to pay attention to the morphology, syntax, and semantics of each verb. As I provide examples of the many verbs analyzed, I hope to give a clearer picture of middle voice forms and functions in Hellenistic Greek.

### **Argument**

The remainder of this dissertation will proceed as follows: the following chapter will present an historical overview of ancient Indo-European middle voice morphology, syntax, and semantics. This chapter will aim to reveal some of the ancestors of the Hellenistic Greek middle voice. The diachronic sketch will begin with reconstructed Proto-Indo-European; move through Hittite, Sanskrit, and Classical Greek; and end finally with a description of the middle voice in Hellenistic Greek. The insights from this aerial view of Indo-European middle voice development will aid our understanding of middle voice usage in the LXX and GNT.

Chapters 3-6 will then apply Rutger J. Allan's eleven middle voice usage types to the literature of the Septuagint and Greek New Testament. These chapters will be heavily applicational, seeking to present and explain examples of middle-marked verbs across this literature. Specifically, chapter 3 will describe verbs that align with Allan's passive, spontaneous process, and mental state middle voice categories. Chapter 4 will describe verbs that align with the body motion, collective motion, and reciprocal middle categories. Chapter 5 will describe verbs in the direct reflexive, perception, and mental activity categories. Finally, chapter 6 will describe verbs in the speech act and indirect reflexive categories. In light of this data, I will draw conclusions for understanding the form and function of the middle voice in the LXX and GNT.

CHAPTER 2

ANCESTRAL TRADITIONS:  
MIDDLE VOICE MORPHOLOGY, SYNTAX, AND  
SEMANTICS FROM PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN  
TO HELLENISTIC GREEK

In seeking to understand Hellenistic Greek voice, we should attempt to situate this one language and period in its proper linguistic and diachronic context. Such an attempt is important for a robust understanding of any linguistic phenomenon because language is always in a state of flux. For example, as Winfred P. Lehmann has shown, “items and patterns that do not agree with the productive patterns in a language may be residues of an earlier stage.”<sup>1</sup> In turn, they may also be precursors to a later one. Therefore, gaining an aerial view of a language’s ancestors and descendants often pays rich dividends for understanding particular characteristics and phenomena of the language under scrutiny.

Greek itself developed greatly over the centuries as it passed from the Epic and Classical Periods into Hellenistic Greek to Medieval Greek and finally into Modern Greek. However, Greek is only one member of a larger linguistic family—the Indo-European language family.<sup>2</sup> While acquaintance with the different developmental periods within Greek itself sheds light on Hellenistic Greek voice, so will cross-linguistic evidence from related ancestral languages. Particularly, we should consider those languages with which we can connect the most direct line to ancient Greek.

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<sup>1</sup> Winfred P. Lehmann, *Pre-Indo-European* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Man, 2002), 21.

<sup>2</sup> For a thorough discussion of the Indo-European language family and its various constituents, see Anna Giacalone Ramat and Paolo Ramat, eds., *The Indo-European Languages* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

Such is the aim of this chapter. In what follows I will seek to describe middle voice morphology, syntax, and semantics in reconstructed Proto-Indo-European, Hittite, Sanskrit, Classical Greek, and Hellenistic Greek. Situating Hellenistic Greek in this diachronic context provides important data for understanding the middle voice forms and functions encountered in the Septuagint and Greek New Testament.

### **Proto-Indo-European**

We begin with Proto-Indo-European. The term “Indo-European” (IE) comprises a vast array of languages, all genetically related at their core yet having diverged and developed their own unique morphological, semantic, and syntactic traits. The related features of IE languages have led scholars to assume that together they represent a continuation of a “single, prehistoric common language.”<sup>3</sup> The label frequently given to this prehistoric language is Proto-Indo-European (PIE). Scholars have long sought to reconstruct the features of this ancient PIE, thereby providing us with “an initial stage starting from which we can describe the history of the individually attested daughter languages.”<sup>4</sup>

PIE reconstruction is a difficult task. The task relies on available textual data from daughter languages, but conclusions of an unattested and hypothetical language are of necessity speculative. The task is especially difficult for a study on middle voice, for “the reconstruction of the verbal system is the most complex feature of the Proto-Indo-

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<sup>3</sup> Calvert Watkins, “Proto-Indo-European: Comparison and Reconstruction” in *The Indo-European Languages*, ed. Anna Giacalone Ramat and Paolo Ramat (New York: Routledge, 1998), 26. Watkins describes IE geographically as “the name given for geographic reasons to the large and well-defined genetic family including most of the languages of Europe, past and present, and extending across Iran and Afghanistan to the northern half of the Indian subcontinent” (Watkins, “Proto-Indo-European,” 25).

<sup>4</sup> Watkins, “Proto-Indo-European,” 26.

European language,”<sup>5</sup> with the middle endings more difficult to reconstruct than the active.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, a description of voice in PIE is a fitting place to begin a historical sketch of the Greek middle voice. First, such a description provides an analysis of the most antiquated voice system out of which Greek grew. Second, inasmuch as PIE evidence provides something of a “common denominator” between the various IE daughter languages, it allows us to point our gaze broadly to fundamental voice phenomena common to all of Greek’s Indo-European sisters. The following pages will present the reconstructed PIE voice system as proposed by PIE scholars.

### **PIE Voice Oppositions**

One of the characteristics of PIE voice noted most commonly is its binary opposition between active and middle: “the Indo-European language that is reconstructed for the period before the disintegration of the unified Indo-European speech community clearly shows two voice categories—an active and a middle.”<sup>7</sup> PIE lacked a pure

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<sup>5</sup> J. P. Mallory and D. Q. Adams, *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 62. This difficulty arises both from the internal complexity of the verbal system itself and because there seems to have been more dialectal differences within the PIE verbal system than within other PIE grammatical categories (Mallory and Adams, *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World*, 62).

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin W. Fortson IV, *Indo-European Language and Culture* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 93.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth C. Shields, *A History of Indo-European Verb Morphology* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1992), 106. See also Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture* 89; Robert S. P. Beekes, *Comparative Indo-European Linguistics: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1995), 225; Mallory and Adams, *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World*, 63; Winfred Lehmann, *Proto-Indo-European Syntax* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), 184; Bernard Comrie: “The Indo-European Linguistic Family: Genetic and Typological Perspectives,” in *The Indo-European Languages*, ed. Anna Giacalone Ramat and Paolo Ramat (New York: Routledge, 1998), 88. Shields, however, is not certain of a morphological opposition between active and middle in earlier forms of PIE. He claims that “the original exponents of the middle voice were reanalyzed dative-case enclitic pronominal forms with a deictic origin” (Shields, *A History of Indo-European Verb Morphology*, 106). Schmalstieg also suggests that “the oldest form of the verb was originally a nominal form, not marked for diathesis” (William R. Schmalstieg, *Indo-European Linguistics: A New Synthesis* [University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1980], 89). See also the discussion below of an active-stative opposition preceding the active-middle one.

morphological passive.<sup>8</sup> This does not mean, however, that the language was incapable of expressing the passive voice. Rather, the intricate relationship between middle and passive in PIE can be seen in that the middle itself could be used to express the passive voice.<sup>9</sup> Morphologically, however, the passive was a later innovation in the IE daughter languages, which developed their formal passive expressions in whole or in part from the PIE middle endings.<sup>10</sup>

The active-middle voice opposition was likely not the most archaic “voice” opposition in PIE. Several scholars claim that the most archaic voice opposition was between active and *stative* verbs. Lehmann, for example, classifies PIE as an “active” language, and one characteristic of such a language is that verbs “fall into two large classes, active and stative, and in addition a smaller class referred to as involuntary.”<sup>11</sup> A

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<sup>8</sup> Leonid Kulikov and Nikolaos Lavidas: “Reconstructing Passive and Voice in Proto-Indo-European,” in *Proto-Indo-European Syntax and its Development*, ed. Leonid Kulikov and Nikolaos Lavidas (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015), 106-7, 116; Beekes, *Comparative Indo-European Linguistics*, 225; Mallory and Adams, *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World*, 63; Lehmann, *Proto-Indo-European Syntax*, 183-84.

<sup>9</sup> “Although passive morphology in the strict sense of the term cannot be reconstructed for the proto-language, passive syntactic patterns associated with non-specialized verbal morphemes can well be reconstructed for the Indo-European proto language. Accordingly, the existence of the passive pattern can be posited for PIE verbal syntax in spite of the lack of the passive voice *sensu stricto*” (Kulikov and Lavidas, “Reconstructing Passive and Voice in Proto-Indo-European,” 116). On the middle expressing the passive, see Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture*, 90; Mallory and Adams, *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World*, 63.

<sup>10</sup> Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture*, 90; Beekes, *Comparative Indo-European Linguistics*, 225; Lehmann, *Proto-Indo-European Syntax*, 183-84; Comrie, “The Indo-European Linguistic Family,” 88. Adrados also notes the later development of the passive in the various IE languages, which sometimes created a voice system with a ternary division (active-middle-passive). In fact, Adrados sees the development of binary to multiple oppositions as a diachronic feature of other grammatical units in the IE languages as well (Francisco R. Adrados, “Binary and Multiple Oppositions in the History of Indo-European,” in *Festschrift for Henry Hoeningwald on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. George Cardona and Norman H. Zide [Gunter Narr Verlag: Tübingen, 1987], 1-10).

<sup>11</sup> Lehmann, *Pre-Indo-European*, 3-6, 77. See also Paola Cotticelli Kurras and Alfredo Rizza, “Reconstructing Proto-Indo-European Categories: The Reflexive and the Middle in Hittite and in the Proto-Language,” in *JHL 3:1* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013), 22; Kulikov and Lavidas, “Reconstructing Passive and Voice in Proto-Indo-European,” 116-18; Oswald J. L. Szemerényi, *Introduction to Indo-European Linguistics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 338; Erich Neu, “Zur Rekonstruktion des indogermanischen Verbalsystems,” in *Studies in Greek, Italic, and Indo-European Linguistics*, ed. Anna Mopurgo Davies and Wolfgang Meid (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität, 1976), 239-54; Erich Neu, “Das frühindogermanische Diathesensystem: Funktion und Geschichte,” in *Grammatische Kategorien: Funktion und Geschichte, Actenm der VII. Factagung der Indogermanischen Gesellschaft, 20-25 Februar 1983*, ed. Bernfried Schlerath and Veronica Rittner (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1985), 275-96. Interestingly, Lehmann also claims that, as an “active” language, PIE could contain synonymous verbs—one of which emphasized the verbal action, the other of which



given PIE verb's lexical semantics determined its classification into one of these groups.<sup>12</sup>

Morphologically, classification into the group “active” or “stative” called for alignment with a certain set of verbal endings, which Paola Cotticelli Kurras and Alfredo Rizza term the “\*-*m* endings set” and the “\*-*h*<sub>2</sub> endings set.” Kurras and Rizza describe the semantic values of these two archaic PIE conjugations as follows:

The “active,” i.e., the “-*m* conjugation,” while having “actions” and “causatives” as semantic prototypes, is by no means restricted to these two realizations. Rather it represents the unmarked set of endings that does not explicitly mark the grammatical subject as the place or the direction of the effects of the described event. The “stative,” i.e., the “-*h*<sub>2</sub> conjugation,” on the contrary, explicitly marks the subject as being at different levels involved in the effects of the event. This set, in turn, is by no means restricted to pure “states,” but also encode[s] “decausatives” and “spontaneous events,” and even “causatives,” whenever the subject is in some way affected by the event.<sup>13</sup>

It is likely, then, that even prior to the opposition active-middle, PIE opposed two verbal types: active and stative. This observation is important because scholars claim that the PIE stative conjugation eventually developed into the perfect and middle.<sup>14</sup> Such a claim suggests two important verbal relationships. First, it suggests a relationship between the categories “stative” and “middle voice.” Second, it suggests a relationship between the IE middle and perfect. These relationships are confirmed by morphological, semantic, and syntactic evidence.

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emphasized the verbal state. As an example pertinent to Greek, he states that the verbal action of “lying down” could be viewed as active (as in Greek *léggō*, “lay, lull to sleep”) or as stative (as in Greek *keĩtai*, “is lying”). These distinctions may have been lost by the time of the dialects (Lehmann, *Pre-Indo-European*, 4-5). This observation may provide a helpful lens through which to consider other synonymous active and middle Greek verbs, as well as a rationale behind the middle voice marking on *κείμαι*.

<sup>12</sup> Lehmann, *Pre-Indo-European*, 77.

<sup>13</sup> Kurras and Rizza, “Reconstructing Proto-Indo-European Categories: The Reflexive and the Middle in Hittite and in the Proto-Language,” 22.

<sup>14</sup> Lehmann, *Pre-Indo-European*, 78; Kurras and Rizza, “Reconstructing Proto-Indo-European Categories: The Reflexive and the Middle in Hittite and in the Proto-Language,” 22-24.

## The Relationship between PIE Stative, Perfect, and Middle

Kurras and Rizza describe a morphological relationship between the PIE stative and the later IE middle: “from a morphological point of view, the endings of the Anatolian middle [display] the reflexes of the reconstructed endings of the ‘stative,’ also attested in the Greco-Aryan perfect conjugation.”<sup>15</sup> These “reflexes” are seen in the continuation of the laryngeal  $*H_2$  from the PIE stative to the Hittite middle conjugation.<sup>16</sup>

Morphological similarities between the PIE perfect and middle conjugations are also frequently acknowledged. Jay H. Jasanoff states that this etymological relationship again receives crucial evidence from Hittite, “where the simplest forms of the middle endings in the singular, 1  $-(h)ha$ , 2  $-(t)ta$ , 3  $-a$ , differ only in the vocalism of the 3 sg. from the classically reconstructed perfect endings sg. 1  $*-a$  ( $<*h_2e$ ), 2  $*-tha$  ( $<*th_2e$ ), 3  $*-e$ .”<sup>17</sup> Benjamin W. Fortson IV also acknowledges that the PIE “perfect had a special set of personal endings that closely resemble that of the middle” and that this resemblance has led some to speculate whether “the perfect and the middle endings were once a single set.”<sup>18</sup> He gives a chart for comparison of the PIE perfect and middle conjugations, which is presented in Table 1 below.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Kurras and Rizza, “Reconstructing Proto-Indo-European Categories: The Reflexive and the Middle in Hittite and in the Proto-Language,” 24.

<sup>16</sup> Kurras and Rizza, “Reconstructing Proto-Indo-European Categories,” 22-24. Kurras and Rizza describe the Hittite middle conjugation morphologically as  $h_2-o$ . Indeed, the  $*h_2$  laryngeal carries throughout the Hittite  $-hi$  conjugation (described morphologically as  $*-h_2-e+i$ ). It may be best simply to describe this entire conjugation as denoting the original Hittite middle (see pp. 43-45 below).

<sup>17</sup> Jay H. Jasanoff, *Stative and Middle in Indo-European* (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität, 1978), 15. Jasanoff also claims that “outside Hittite, the perfect and middle agree further in their common predilection for  $r$ -endings in the 3 pl., cf. Ved. 3 pl. pf.  $-ur$ , Lat.  $-\bar{e}re$ ; Ved 3 pl. mid.  $-re$ ,  $-ra[n]$ , Av.  $-\bar{a}ire$ , Toch. B  $-re$ ” (Jasanoff, *Stative and Middle in Indo-European*, 15).

<sup>18</sup> Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture*, 103. This “single set” of endings would likely find its identity in the PIE stative conjugation. On the relationship between the PIE perfect and middle conjugations, see also Beekes, *Comparative Indo-European Linguistics*, 252-53; Lehmann, *Proto-Indo-European Syntax*, 142; Lehmann, *Pre-Indo-European*, 77; Szemerényi, *Introduction to Indo-European Linguistics*, 332-34; Watkins, “Proto-Indo-European: Comparison and Reconstruction,” 56; Comrie, “The Indo-European Linguistic Family: Genetic and Typological Perspectives,” 86.

<sup>19</sup> Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture*, 103.

Table 1. Comparison of PIE perfect and middle endings

	Perfect	Primary middle	Secondary middle
sg. 1	*-h <sub>2</sub> e	*-h <sub>2</sub> er	*-h <sub>2</sub> e
2	*-th <sub>2</sub> e	*-th <sub>2</sub> er	*-th <sub>2</sub> e
3	*-e	*-or	*-o
pl. 1	*-me-	*-medhh <sub>2</sub> ?	*-medhh <sub>2</sub> ?
2	*-e	*dh(u)ue- ?	*dh(u)ue- ?
3	*-ēr, *-r̥s	*-ro(r?)	*-ro

Therefore, morphological evidence suggests a relationship between the PIE stative, middle and perfect conjugations. Indeed, the morphological overlap between the PIE perfect and middle lends evidence to the idea that these two conjugations developed from one more archaic conjugation, the PIE stative.

There is also a semantic connection between the PIE stative, middle, and perfect conjugations. Indeed, this is not surprising in light of the evidence that the PIE perfect and middle developed from the stative. A common “thread” of stativity would have naturally run from the stative into its perfect and middle conjugations. Jasanoff notes this regarding the perfect when he claims that “the IE perfect . . . originally denoted the state resulting from the accomplishment of an action or process.”<sup>20</sup> Kurras and Rizza describe the PIE middle as a semantic “specialization” of the PIE stative.<sup>21</sup> For Robert S. P. Beekes, “the [PIE] middle-perfect system is thus referred to as ‘stative’ because these forms indicate a state.”<sup>22</sup>

The PIE middle indicates that “the result of the action expressed by the verb

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<sup>20</sup> Jasanoff, *Stative and Middle in Indo-European*, 14. See also Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture*, 104-5.

<sup>21</sup> Kurras and Rizza, “Reconstructing Proto-Indo-European Categories: The Reflexive and the Middle in Hittite and in the Proto-Language,” 25.

<sup>22</sup> Beekes, *Comparative Indo-European Linguistics*, 153.

has an impact for the subject.”<sup>23</sup> In other words, the PIE middle is a subject-focused verbal category. Here again one is confronted with the semantic connection between the PIE middle and perfect/stative categories, for both denote verbal ideas in which the result of the action focuses on the subject. This semantic connection is also clear in Bernard Comrie’s definition of the PIE perfect, whose “original value was to express a state, this state being attributed naturally to that entity most affected.”<sup>24</sup>

The connection between the PIE stative, perfect, and middle may have had other reflexes in IE daughter languages. Scholars often recognize paradigmatic voice “discrepancies” related to the perfect that indicate a semantic overlap between the perfect tense and middle voice. We find, for example, perfect active verbs aligned with corresponding present or root aorist middles. This can be seen when the Greek present *media tantum* verbs γίγνομαι and μαίνομαι form the active perfects γέγονα and μέμνηα, when Sanskrit present *media tantum* verbs such as *mṛ́ṣyate*, *vártate*, and *rócate* correspond to the perfect active forms *mamársa* (“ignored”), *vavárta* (“turned”), and *ruróca* (“shone”), or when the Sanskrit middle root aorist *ájusran* (“they took a liking to”) corresponds to the perfect active *jujóṣa(ti)* (“enjoys”).<sup>25</sup> Further, some perfect active verbs display a “middle” meaning, aligning with other middle members of their paradigms. The Greek perfect active ὄλωλα (“I am lost”) corresponds not to the present active ὄλλυμι (“I lose, destroy”) but to the middle form ὄλλομαι.<sup>26</sup> This evidence indicates a semantic overlap between the IE perfect and middle categories.

Another reflex from the connection between the PIE stative, perfect, and

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<sup>23</sup> Lehmann, *Proto-Indo-European Syntax*, 143.

<sup>24</sup> Comrie, “The Indo-European Linguistic Family: Genetic and Typological Perspectives,” 86.

<sup>25</sup> Jasanoff, *Stative and Middle in Indo-European*, 14-15. See also Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture*, 103. Jasanoff states that in the opposition of middle root aorist to active perfect, the aorist denotes entry into a state while the perfect denotes the state itself (Jasanoff, *Stative and Middle in Indo-European*, 15).

<sup>26</sup> Jasanoff, *Stative and Middle in Indo-European*, 15; Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture*, 103. For evidence of this from the LXX and GNT, see pp. 97-100 of this dissertation.

middle might be seen in certain IE perfect middle forms. The perfect middle was a later innovation in languages such as Greek and Sanskrit. As the perfect came to be used as a simple preterit in these languages, they may have formed the perfect middle to preserve the original stative meaning of the IE perfect. In Greek this may be observed as early as the Homeric Period, where the perfect often acquired middle forms to be used in intransitive constructions. As examples, one finds τέτυκται alongside τετυχώς, εἶμαρται alongside ἔμορρε, ὀρώρηται alongside ὀρώρε, and πέπεισμαι alongside πέποιθα.<sup>27</sup> These observations suggest that the perfect overlapped with the middle voice semantically and thus middle morphology was originally unnecessary on these forms. Jasanoff points to this very idea when he states, “from a historical point of view the middle endings are redundant in the inflection of the perfect . . . the morphological and semantic ties of the perfect ‘active’ are not properly with the active at all, but with the middle.”<sup>28</sup>

A final connection between the PIE perfect and middle can be seen on the level of syntax. Since both conjugations denoted verbal actions whose focus was on the subject, they commonly lacked an accusative direct object. Thus, both the PIE perfect and middle were often associated with syntactic intransitivity.<sup>29</sup>

Therefore, PIE provides morphological, semantic, and syntactic evidence for the close relationship between the IE categories of stative, perfect, and middle. An original “voice” category, stative, gave birth diachronically to the perfect tense and the middle voice and left with them its “stative” or “subject-focused” genes. PIE stative and perfect verbs had inherent ties with the later PIE middle voice. These ties would hold as PIE developed into some of its various IE daughter languages.

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<sup>27</sup> Jasanoff, *Stative and Middle in Indo-European*, 15-16.

<sup>28</sup> Jasanoff, *Stative and Middle in Indo-European*, 16.

<sup>29</sup> Lehmann, *Proto-Indo-European Syntax*, 182.

## PIE Middle Voice Semantics

We began to consider the semantics of the PIE middle above. These semantics can be located generally in the realm of “subject focus.” That is, the PIE middle indicated actions whose goal, affect, or emphasis pointed toward the verbal subject. In the words of Lehmann, “basically it is the function of the middle to indicate that the verbal meaning, whether action or state, is to be interpreted with reference to the subject.”<sup>30</sup> This is not surprising given Kurras and Rizza’s definition of the semantics of the more archaic PIE stative, which “explicitly marks the subject as being at different levels involved in the effects of the event.”<sup>31</sup>

Scholars describe several other expressions of PIE middle semantics, each of which is a specialization of the general idea of subject focus. First, given the close relationship between the PIE stative and middle, it is not surprising that one of the PIE middle’s subject-focused expressions is stativity. A PIE verb may be marked as middle simply because its underlying root is stative.<sup>32</sup>

Second, the middle form could be used to denote the passive. As noted above, PIE lacked a pure morphological passive. The formal passive was not developed until the divergence of the IE daughters, and was developed at least in part from the PIE middle.<sup>33</sup> For this reason, Fortson claims that “it seems best to regard the middle as having been, in fact, a *medio-passive* or *middle-passive*—capable of expressing either voice depending

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<sup>30</sup> Lehmann, *Proto-Indo-European Syntax*, 127. Note also Shields, *A History of Indo-European Verb Morphology*, 106. Therefore, for Shields there is relationship between the semantics of the middle voice and the dative case. This leads to his thesis that “the original exponents of the middle voice were reanalyzed dative-case enclitic pronominal forms with deictic origin” (Shields, *A History of Indo-European Verb Morphology*, 106, 110-13).

<sup>31</sup> Kurras and Rizza, “Reconstructing Proto-Indo-European Categories: The Reflexive and the Middle in Hittite and in the Proto-Language,” 22.

<sup>32</sup> Kurras and Rizza, “Reconstructing Proto-Indo-European Categories,” 22.

<sup>33</sup> Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture*, 90; Lehmann, *Proto-Indo-European Syntax*, 183-84. As will be seen below, the middle itself continued to be used for the passive in many of these daughter languages.

on the context.”<sup>34</sup>

Third, several scholars identify reflexive and reciprocal functions for the PIE middle.<sup>35</sup> Lehmann finds these functions when the middle-marked verb was used in contrast to an active one.<sup>36</sup>

Fourth, the middle could convey the intransitive meaning of a transitive active verb. As an example of such a case, Fortson turns to Hittite, where the transitive active *irhāizzi* means “sets an end to” while the intransitive middle *irhāitta* means “comes to an end.”<sup>37</sup>

In sum, while the exact nuance conveyed by the middle in PIE was not always clear,<sup>38</sup> the general force of the PIE middle was “subject focus.” At times this is the extent to which one can specify the semantics conveyed by a PIE middle verb. At other times the specific nuance is clearer, and in these cases, one might find verbs with stative, reflexive, reciprocal, passive, and “intransitive” meaning.

## Conclusion

Study of the middle voice in PIE reveals important data related to the study of voice in Greek. It reveals an original binary voice opposition between active and middle, with the middle voice and perfect tense forms likely deriving from a common source—

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<sup>34</sup> Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture*, 90. See also Mallory and Adams, *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European World*, 63; Kulikov and Lavidas, “Reconstructing Passive and Voice in Proto-Indo-European,” 105; Lehmann, *Proto-Indo-European Syntax*, 183.

<sup>35</sup> Lehmann, *Proto-Indo-European Syntax*, 182; Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture*, 89; Kulikov and Lavidas, “Reconstructing Passive and Voice in Proto-Indo-European,” 105; Kurras and Rizza, “Reconstructing Proto-Indo-European Categories,” 11.

<sup>36</sup> Lehmann, *Proto-Indo-European Syntax*, 183.

<sup>37</sup> Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture*, 89. In this case, the “transitive active” is causative, while the “intransitive middle” denotes a spontaneous process (change of state).

<sup>38</sup> One can find examples of *media tantum* and *activa tantum* verbs with seemingly synonymous meaning. The interpretation of this scenario is debatable, but for Fortson it indicates that in many cases “the distinction between active and middle inflection was purely a formal one” (Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture*, 89).

the PIE stative. Further, it shows the formal passive as a later innovation from the middle in the IE daughters. The ancient PIE stative conjugation not only provided the middle with some of its morphology but also with some of its semantics. These semantics can be described generally in terms of focus on the verbal subject. From this semantic starting point, we can describe other specific meanings of the middle including the stative, reflexive, and reciprocal. Finally, there was an association between PIE middle morphology and syntactic intransitivity. While it is not likely that the PIE middle always occurred without a direct object, in many cases it tended to do so.

### Hittite

Until recently, the oldest written Indo-European texts available to scholars were written in Sanskrit and dated as far back as 1000 BC. Early in the twentieth century, however, the ancient Indo-European linguistic picture changed drastically when excavations revealed the ancient city of Ḫattuša, capital of the Hittite Empire. These excavations also revealed thousands of clay tablets attesting the Hittite language.<sup>39</sup> The tablets contained texts of various genres and spanned a period of roughly 550 years, from 1750–1200 BC.<sup>40</sup> With these excavations, Indo-European linguistic research was forever advanced, being able to cast its hand back to texts dating hundreds of years earlier than anything it had previously known. Hittite is now considered the best-attested member of the Anatolian branch of IE languages<sup>41</sup> and is “the oldest [IE] language of which we have

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<sup>39</sup> Sarah R. Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations: Evidence for an Early Indo-European Voice Opposition* (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachen und Literaturen der Universität Innsbruck, 2006), xxvii; Harry A. Hoffner Jr. and H. Craig Melchert, *A Grammar of the Hittite Language*, pt. 1 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 1.

<sup>40</sup> Rose, xxvii, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, xxix. See also Silvia Luraghi, “The Anatolian Languages,” in *The Indo-European Languages*, ed. Anna Giacalone Ramat and Paolo Ramat (New York: Routledge, 1998), 172. Hoffner and Melchert are more conservative in dating the texts, suggesting dates from the 16th–13th centuries BC (Hoffner and Melchert, *A Grammar of the Hittite Language*, 2).

<sup>41</sup> Luraghi, “The Anatolian Languages,” 170.



extensive records.”<sup>42</sup>

## Hittite Voice Oppositions

What evidence does Hittite provide for ancient IE voice in general and the IE middle voice in particular? The first and most basic point to be made regarding the Hittite voice system is that it also attests an original binary opposition between active and middle.<sup>43</sup> The passive voice was later developed from the “middle” conjugation, being a natural semantic extension of it.<sup>44</sup> For this reason Hittite grammarians typically speak in hindsight of the Hittite voice opposition as active vs. medio-passive.<sup>45</sup> However, we must remember that the use of the “medio-passive” conjugation to denote passive function was not original but increased over time.<sup>46</sup> The most basic, original voice opposition in Hittite was between active and middle.

## Hittite Middle Voice Morphology

Hittite middle and passive forms are identical morphologically. Some Hittite verbs are *media tantum*, others are *activa tantum*, and still others display opposition between active and middle forms. The following is a list of some Hittite *media tantum*

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<sup>42</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, xxvii.

<sup>43</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 12-15, 32-33.

<sup>44</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 12, 17; Silvia Luraghi, “Transitivity, Intransitivity and Diathesis in Hittite,” in *Indo-European Linguistics and Classical Philology* 16:2 (2010), 148.

<sup>45</sup> “The Hittite verb has two diatheses, known as active and medio-passive” (Silvia Luraghi, *Hittite*, [Newcastle: LINCOM Europa, 1997], 32). See also Hoffner and Melchert, *A Grammar of the Hittite Language*, 230, 302; Warren H. Held Jr., William R. Schmalstieg, and Janet E. Gertz, *Beginning Hittite* (Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1988), 44; Edgar H. Sturtevant and Adelaide Hahn, *A Comparative Grammar of the Hittite Language*, vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1951), 118. Hoffner and Melchert note that “the medio-passive form of the verb is not the preferred choice for expressing the passive of verbs that exist in the active.” Instead, “usually a construction employing the (passive) participle in *-ant-* of a transitive verb plus a finite form of the verb ‘to be’ is employed” (Hoffner and Melchert, *A Grammar of the Hittite Language*, 304).

<sup>46</sup> Luraghi, “The Anatolian Languages,” 184; Luraghi, *Hittite*, 32; H. Craig Melchert, “Mediopassives in *\*ske/o* to Active Intransitives,” in *Miscellanea Indogermanica: Festschrift für José Luis García Ramón*, ed. Ivo Hajnal, Daniel Kölligan, and Katharina Zisper (Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachen und Literaturen der Universität, 2017), 478.

verbs:<sup>47</sup>

<i>a-</i> , “to be warm”	<i>kis-</i> , “to be cooking”
<i>ar-</i> , “to stand”	<i>kist-</i> , “to be burning”
<i>es-</i> , “to sit down,” “to be sitting”	<i>pugga-</i> , “to be hated”
<i>iya-</i> , “to walk”	<i>tarra-</i> , “to be capable of”
<i>isduwa-</i> , “to be(come) apparent”	<i>tugga-</i> , “to be visible”
<i>ki-</i> , “to lie”	<i>war-</i> , “to burn”

Oppositional Hittite medio-passive verbs vary in the semantic distinction they display between active and medio-passive forms. Harry A. Hoffner Jr. and H. Craig Melchert claim that transitive medio-passive verbs are often attested with active forms conveying the same meaning. As examples they list: *pahš-*, “to guard,” *šarr-* (with *kan*), “to transgress,” and *parš*, *paršiya-*, “to break (bread).”<sup>48</sup> Alternatively, intransitive medio-passive verbs that have active counterparts typically show a distinction in meaning.<sup>49</sup> Silvia Luraghi shows that this distinction is frequently tied to valency, where the middle member is intransitive and the active member is transitive. As examples of such cases, she lists the following verbs:<sup>50</sup>

<i>harp-</i> , “split”	<i>mariya-</i> , “melt down/melt”
<i>irha-</i> , “finish”	<i>nai-</i> , “turn”
<i>lazziya-</i> , “prosper, flourish/set straight”	<i>suwai-</i> , “fill”
<i>luluwai-</i> , “survive/sustain”	<i>zinna-</i> , “finish”

With these observations in hand, we may be able to go deeper into the morphological origins of the Hittite middle. In a recent monograph, Sarah R. Rose contends that the Hittite forms commonly described as the “medio-passive” conjugation do not reflect the *original* voice opposition in Hittite. Rather, the original Hittite voice

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<sup>47</sup> This list obtained from Luraghi, *Hittite*, 32-33. See also Silvia Luraghi, “Basic Valency Orientation and the Middle Voice in Hittite,” in *Studies in Language* 36:1 (2012), 14. Both of Luraghi’s lists come from Erich Neu, *Das hethitische Mediopassiv und seine indogermanischen Grundlagen*, Studien zu den Bogazköy-Texten, Heft 6 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1968), 52.

<sup>48</sup> Hoffner and Melchert, *A Grammar of the Hittite Language*, 303. Hoffner and Melchert also note that in these cases the active forms spread at the expense of the middle from Old Hittite to New Hittite (Hoffner and Melchert, *A Grammar of the Hittite Language*, 303).

<sup>49</sup> Hoffner and Melchert, *A Grammar of the Hittite Language*, 303.

<sup>50</sup> Luraghi, “Basic Valency Orientation and the Middle Voice in Hittite,” 17.

opposition is reflected in its *-mi* and *-hi* conjugations, where the *-hi* conjugation constitutes the basis for the IE middle voice.<sup>51</sup>

This is an important observation for considering the IE middle. Scholars have frequently recognized the similarities between the *-hi* conjugation, the IE perfect, and the IE middle.<sup>52</sup> Scholars have also recognized the connection between Hittite middle and PIE stative verbs.<sup>53</sup> It may be no coincidence, then, that Rose provides substantial evidence that both IE perfects and Hittite *-hi* verbs are morphologically related to PIE stative verbs. This can be seen through their inheritance of the PIE stative morpheme *\*H<sub>2</sub>* and the *o*-grade of their root.<sup>54</sup> In turn, Rose argues that the forms commonly referred to as “medio-passive” developed from these *-hi* verbs and that the Hittite *-hi* verbs are morphologically linked to the Sanskrit and Greek middle.<sup>55</sup> Her account of the morphological development for the Hittite middle runs as follows:

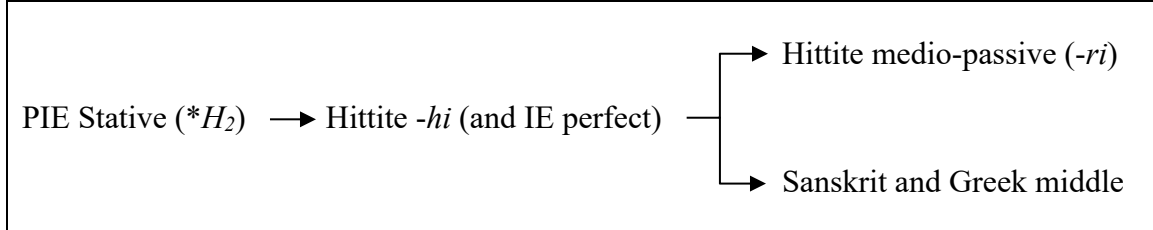


Figure 1. Diachronic development of Hittite middle forms

<sup>51</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 7-8. Luraghi indicates a similar point in Luraghi, “Transitivity, Intransitivity and Diathesis in Hittite,” 17 fn. 2.

<sup>52</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 70. So Luraghi: “on the one hand, there are similarities between the *-hi* conjugation and the IE perfect; on the other hand, the *-hi* conjugation can also be compared with the IE middle” (Luraghi, “The Anatolian Languages,” 183).

<sup>53</sup> Luraghi, “The Anatolian Languages,” 184. So Adrados: “The middle voice and the perfect are derived from a common Indoeuropean ancestor” (Francisco R. Adrados, “Perfect, Middle Voice, and Indoeuropean Verbal Endings,” *Emerita* 49:1 [1981], 28).

<sup>54</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 70-98. Kortlandt also describes *\*H<sub>2</sub>* at work in the 1st singular middle endings in Anatolian (Hittite) (see Frederik Kortlandt “1st Sg. Middle *\*H<sub>2</sub>*,” *Indogermanische Forschungen* 86 [1981], 134-35).

<sup>55</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 94, 97.

These observations on the Hittite *-hi* conjugation have important implications for understanding the semantics of the Hittite middle voice.

### Hittite Middle Voice Semantics

There are at least two semantic implications if the Hittite *-hi* conjugation represents the *original* Hittite “middle” voice forms. First, the link to PIE *\*H<sub>2</sub>* reveals a semantic connection between the middle voice and stativity. Indeed, Hittite grammarians frequently note the connection between stative verbs and middle morphology, and many Hittite *media tantum* are stative.<sup>56</sup>

Second, inasmuch as stative verbs are inherently “subject-focused,” we see the origins of the semantic core of the Hittite middle. The Hittite middle can be described as showing “a higher involvement of the subject.”<sup>57</sup> Again, the Hittite *-hi* conjugation (and so, the Hittite “middle”) marks “such activities which are geared to the special interests of the subject or which engage the sentient subject’s cognitive powers.”<sup>58</sup> Thus, the original binary Hittite voice opposition active-middle can be semantically described as a split based on “the level of subject involvement or interest in the verbal action.”<sup>59</sup> The distinction between active and middle was essentially a distinction between centrifugal (outward, object-oriented) and centripetal (inward, subject oriented) action.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Note the list of Hittite *media tantum* verbs presented above.

<sup>57</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 78.

<sup>58</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 78.

<sup>59</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 33.

<sup>60</sup> These are the terms used by Lehmann (Lehmann, *Pre-Indo-European*, 84-85) and adopted by Rose (Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 14). There are many ways of describing the “centripetal” semantics of the Hittite middle. For example, we could also say that the middle denotes actions in which the subject is both agent and patient (Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 54). Or we could describe the situation in terms of control: “the basic function of the middle seems to be to indicate uncontrolled events, often, but not only, states” (Luraghi, “Basic Valency Orientation and the Middle Voice in Hittite,” 22; Luraghi, “Transitivity, Intransitivity and Diathesis in Hittite,” 16:2 [2010], 146). Though the terminology employed here can vary from grammarian to grammarian, the essential factor is that the middle is described as denoting actions that are in some way focusing on, emphasizing, or affecting, their subject.

According to Luraghi, these subject-focused semantics were especially geared toward three types of verbs: those denoting stativity, intransitive (atelic) changes of state, and spontaneous actions. These three verbal types represent the “core” of Hittite middle voice usage.<sup>61</sup> However, other applications of Hittite middle verbs are attested as well. Particularly, grammarians also speak of passive, reciprocal, and reflexive uses.<sup>62</sup>

We have already seen that the passive use of the middle is a late development in Hittite. Now, however, we are better equipped to see how this use was a natural semantic extension of the middle.<sup>63</sup> If the Hittite middle voice denoted actions in which the subject was affected or heavily involved, then the passive is simply the most heightened expression of middle semantics. Reflexive and reciprocal notions are also highly appropriate applications of a verbal category in which the subject is affected by the verbal action.

Therefore, the following picture of Hittite middle voice semantics emerges: The most basic meaning of the Hittite middle is one in which the subject is affected or highly involved. This meaning manifests itself in three “core” verbal types—stative, intransitive (atelic) change-of-state, and spontaneous action. At least three further

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<sup>61</sup> See especially Luraghi, “Basic Valency Orientation and the Middle Voice in Hittite,” 21. To be clear, Luraghi speaks more of the notion of “lack of control” than “subject-focused” in describing the semantics of the Hittite middle. These two notions are not at odds with one another, but often go hand-in-hand. However, as will be shown below in the description of the Hittite middle and transitivity, while “lack of control” is not a universal trait in middle-marked verbs, “subject focus” is. Therefore, I believe it is better to speak of the fundamental semantics of the Hittite middle as “subject-focused.”

<sup>62</sup> See Hoffner and Melchert, *A Grammar of the Hittite Language*, 302-4; Luraghi, “Basic Valency Orientation and the Middle Voice in Hittite,” 20.

<sup>63</sup> See Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 17, 57.

extensions of these middle semantics are attested—the passive, reciprocal, and reflexive uses.<sup>64</sup> Luraghi captures this scenario in the following diagram:<sup>65</sup>

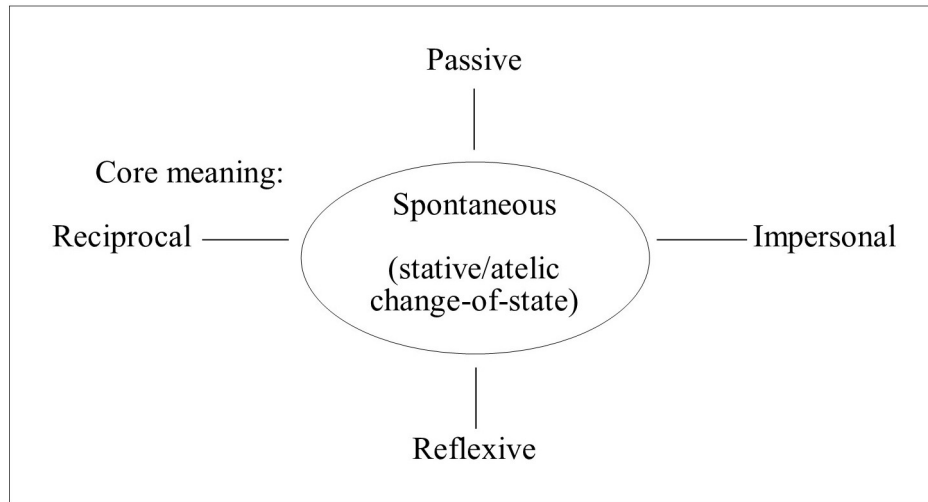


Figure 2. Semantic map of the Hittite middle voice

### Hittite Middle Voice Syntax

Lastly, we can discuss the relationship between the Hittite middle and transitivity. Luraghi describes Hittite as a transitivity language, in which there exists a heavy correlation between the middle voice and intransitivity or lack of subject control.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> One other feature of Hittite middle voice semantics deserves mention. Grammarians note certain Hittite verbs that display no discernable semantic distinction between active and middle forms (see, for example, Luraghi, “Basic Valency Orientation and the Middle Voice in Hittite,” 18, 19; Sturtevant and Hahn, *A Comparative Grammar of the Hittite Language*, 118, 138). These cases often receive a diachronic explanation. For example, in cases where the middle verb is transitive, Hoffner and Melchert observe a tendency for active forms to supplant middle forms over time (Hoffner and Melchert, *A Grammar of the Hittite Language*, 303). Conversely, Luraghi cites examples in which middle forms developed later but display the same meaning as their active counterpart (Luraghi, “Basic Valency Orientation and the Middle Voice in Hittite,” 18, 19). Connected to these observations is the claim that certain Hittite verbs are middle in form but active in function (i.e., deponent) (see, for example, Hoffner and Melchert, *A Grammar of the Hittite Language*, 302-3; Held, Schmalstieg, and Gertz, *Beginning Hittite*, 44). I hesitate at this final explanation. Many of the forms described as “deponent” might be classified according to commonly attested middle voice usages, while others might be appreciated as bearing the culturally specific perspective of their original speakers.

<sup>65</sup> Luraghi, “Basic Valency Orientation and the Middle Voice in Hittite,” 21.

<sup>66</sup> Luraghi, “Basic Valency Orientation and the Middle Voice in Hittite,” 9, 24-25. Luraghi claims that this correlation between intransitivity and the middle voice is manifested especially with

Nonetheless, this correlation is not iron-clad. Several examples of transitive Hittite middles can be furnished.<sup>67</sup> In fact, in light of the heightened subject-involvedness or affectedness laden in middle voice semantics, Rose has argued that in many cases the subject of Hittite middles can be seen as *higher* in agency or control than its active counterpart.<sup>68</sup>

Therefore, while it is correct to note a correspondence between the Hittite middle and less/in-transitive constructions, there is not a strict syntactic correlation between the two. Hittite middle verbs are attested with and without direct objects. The relationship between Hittite voice and transitivity is perhaps best described in terms of the direction of the verbal action: “the choice of one voice over another is in essence an encoding of the *direction* of transitivity.”<sup>69</sup> For the middle voice, the verbal activity leans inward, toward the subject. For the active voice, it extends outward, toward an external object.

## Conclusion

The Hittite language provides helpful information for understanding the IE middle voice. Hittite attests an original binary voice opposition between active and middle, with the passive developed from and a subset of the middle. Further, the potential connection between the PIE stative conjugation, the Hittite *-hi* conjugation, and the middle voice points to the “subject-focused” semantics of the middle. The Hittite middle voice indicated a focus on the subject’s involvement or affectedness in the verbal action. This core “subject focus” had several specific expressions, including passive, stative,

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intransitive middle change-of-state verbs that have causative active counterparts (Luraghi, “Basic Valency Orientation and the Middle Voice in Hittite,” 24-25).

<sup>67</sup> See Hoffner and Melchert, *A Grammar of the Hittite Language*, 303.

<sup>68</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 12-13, 27-28, 56.

<sup>69</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 56.

change-of-state, spontaneous, reciprocal, and reflexive actions. Finally, Hittite middle voice verbs functioned in syntactically transitive and intransitive clauses. Rather than being strictly intransitive, these verbs pointed the direction of transitivity to some degree back towards the subject.

## Sanskrit

We move now to the second-most ancient attested IE language—Sanskrit.<sup>70</sup> Grammarians frequently note the linguistic parallels between Sanskrit and Greek, especially in the field of voice.<sup>71</sup> Sanskrit linguistic development can be described in three diachronic phases: Vedic Sanskrit, Classical Sanskrit, and the language of the Prākritis.

Vedic Sanskrit comprises the oldest attested form of the Sanskrit language and is the literary language of liturgical texts known as the Vedas.<sup>72</sup> It is here that we encounter the oldest and most popular Sanskrit text, the *RgVeda*, which dates as far back as 1000 BC.<sup>73</sup> The Vedic Period continued until the fourth or fifth century BC.<sup>74</sup>

The Classical Sanskrit Period owes its existence to the famous Sanskrit grammarian Pānini. His monumental description of the Vedic Sanskrit of his day, the

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<sup>70</sup> IE Philologists classify Sanskrit as a member of the Aryan branch of IE languages, originating in Northwest India and extending down the Indian peninsula (Romano Lazzeroni, “Sanskrit,” in *The Indo-European Languages*, ed. Anna Giacalone Ramat and Paolo Ramat [New York: Routledge, 2006], 98). For an extensive treatment of the relationship between Sanskrit, its ancestors, and the rest of the IE language family see T. Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, (Glasgow: The University Press, 1973), 1-43.

<sup>71</sup> Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 6, 15-16, 295; F. Max Müller, *A Sanskrit Grammar for Beginners*, (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1870), 137-38, Monier Williams, *A Practical Grammar of the Sanskrit Language*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1864), 120. Note also the work of Mawet in Francine Mawet, *Grammaire Sanskrite à L’usage des Étudiantes Hellénistes et Laninistes* (Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2012).

<sup>72</sup> Stephanie W. Jamieson, “Sanskrit,” in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World’s Ancient Languages*, ed. Roger D. Woodward (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 673.

<sup>73</sup> Lazzeroni, “Sanskrit,” 101; Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 3.

<sup>74</sup> This date depends on the date given to the life of the famous grammarian Pānini. Jamieson puts his life around 500 BC (Jamieson, “Sanskrit,” 673), while Burrow places it in the fourth century BC (Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 48).



*Astadhyayi*,<sup>75</sup> became prescriptive grammatical law for Sanskrit writers who came after him.<sup>76</sup> With Pānini's work, Sanskrit linguistic development froze, as "all subsequent Sanskrit follows, or attempts to follow," his rules.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, the literature of Classical Sanskrit is in essence a mere representation of its Vedic forerunner.

Lastly, the language of the Prākritis (ca. 300 BC to AD 200) encapsulates a group of later literary languages utilized by the masses. These dialects did not develop directly from Classical Sanskrit, but rather from a parallel Indo-Aryan tradition dating back to the Vedic Period. They showed a greater measure of freedom in non-conformity to the grammatical rules of Pānini.<sup>78</sup>

The following survey will focus primarily on Vedic Sanskrit. This will allow a view into the most ancient Sanskrit texts and will provide helpful historical evidence relative to Hellenistic Greek. Further, because the classical Sanskrit texts often present a wooden conformity to the rules of Pānini, the language of the Vedas allows for the best picture into the living Sanskrit of its time.<sup>79</sup>

### **Sanskrit Voice Oppositions**

The Vedic Sanskrit verbal system displays the same binary voice opposition as

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<sup>75</sup> The term *Astadhyayi* means "[Work] in eight chapters" (Jamieson, "Sanskrit," 673). Pānini's grammar consists of about 4,000 brief formulaic rules and was probably composed in this way for the sake of oral instruction and memory (Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 48-49; William Dwight Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973], xiii). For an English translation of Pānini's grammar, see Sumitra M. Katre, trans., *Astadhyayi of Panini* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987).

<sup>76</sup> Jamieson, "Sanskrit," 673-74; Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 36; Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, xi-xiv.

<sup>77</sup> Jamieson, "Sanskrit," 673. Thus, the value of Classical Sanskrit can be assessed through two different lenses. On the one hand, we can view it as an ongoing attestation to the Vedic tradition. In this case, it extends and increases our evidence to the most antiquated Sanskrit of which we have sources. On the other hand, we can view it as an artificial representation of the Vedic tradition that fails to capture the living language of its own day. In this case, it paints a less than ideal portrait of either living period in Sanskrit (on this latter view, see especially Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, xi-xiv).

<sup>78</sup> Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 35-36; Lazzaroni, "Sanskrit," 102.

<sup>79</sup> Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, xiv-xv.

Hittite. The opposition is between active and middle, given by Pānini the semantically pregnant labels *parasmaipada* and *atmanepada*. The term *parasmaipada*, referring to the active voice, means “word for another.” The term *atmanepada*, referring to the middle voice, means “word for oneself.”<sup>80</sup> The *parasmaipada-atmanepada* opposition, then, by its very terminology gives us a view into the semantic significance of the Sanskrit “middle” voice. “Active” constructions denoted verbal activities that focused outward on another member of the sentence, especially the verbal object. “Middle” constructions denoted verbal activities that focused inward on the verbal subject.

Some Sanskrit grammarians refer to three voices—active, middle, and passive.<sup>81</sup> To be sure, the passive voice was available in the Vedic Period, but was less common and overlapped morphologically with the middle in most cases. Use of the passive became more developed and widespread in later periods of the language.<sup>82</sup> Alongside this increased use of the passive, in later Sanskrit the functional use of the active and middle became blurred.<sup>83</sup>

### **Sanskrit Middle Voice Morphology**

Morphologically, the Sanskrit verb inflected with two distinct sets of endings: active and middle. In most cases, the middle conjugation also served the purpose of the passive and so could be termed medio-passive.<sup>84</sup> Still, grammarians note some cases in

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<sup>80</sup> Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 294; Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, 200; Jan Gonda, *A Concise Elementary Grammar of the Sanskrit Language* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1966), 43; Müller, *A Sanskrit Grammar for Beginners*, 137; Williams, *A Practical Grammar of the Sanskrit Language*, 122-23.

<sup>81</sup> Lazzeroni, “Sanskrit,” 112; Gonda, *A Concise Elementary Grammar of the Sanskrit Language*, 43.

<sup>82</sup> Arthur Anthony MacDonell, *A Vedic Grammar for Students* (London: Oxford University Press, 1916), 283; Gonda, *A Concise Elementary Grammar of the Sanskrit Language*, 92.

<sup>83</sup> Jamieson, “Sanskrit”, 687; Gonda, *A Concise Elementary Grammar of the Sanskrit Language*, 43; Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 52, 294-95. For example, Whitney comments: “In the epics there is much effacement between active and middle, the choice of voice being very often determined by metrical considerations alone” (Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, 200).

<sup>84</sup> Williams, *A Practical Grammar of the Sanskrit Language*, 123-24.

which the verbal system developed distinct passive formations. One such example may be found in the present stem, where middle forms accent the verbal root while passive forms are created by a shift in accent to the suffix *ya*. For example, *náhyate* is middle (“he binds”), but *nahyáte* is passive (“he is bound”).<sup>85</sup> The relation between these two forms is evident. In both cases the same morpheme (*ya*) and the middle endings are used.<sup>86</sup> Thus, on morphological grounds we can perceive the overlap between middle and passive in the Sanskrit verbal system.

Some Sanskrit verbs inflected in the middle only. Others inflected in the active only. Still others were oppositional, displaying both sets of endings. One oft-noted morphological phenomena, which we see at work in Greek as well, occurred in verbs that regularly inflected for different voices in different tenses. For Sanskrit, this paradigmatic discrepancy typically occurred between the present (active) and perfect (middle) tenses of a single verb.<sup>87</sup> The Sanskrit verbal paradigm for the primary conjugation is presented below.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> These examples are from MacDonell, *A Vedic Grammar for Students*, 178.

<sup>86</sup> MacDonell, *A Vedic Grammar for Students*, 117, 178; Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 353-54; Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, 273, 275-77. Interestingly, Whitney notes that “of the roots making *ya*-stems, a very considerable part (over fifty) signify a state of feeling, or a condition of mind or body” (Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, 273). As will be seen across this dissertation, these semantic categories show a proclivity to middle voice marking.

<sup>87</sup> Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 295; Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, 200; MacDonell, *A Vedic Grammar for Students*, 117; Jan Gonda, *The Medium in the RgVeda* (Leiden: Brill, 1979), 81-82. Perhaps in these cases the middle ending called attention to the inherent subject-focused stativity of the perfect tense. This would be similar to the frequent alignment of the middle voice and future tense in Greek. In these cases, the middle ending highlights a particular subject focus in the semantics of a verb tense.

<sup>88</sup> This paradigm is adapted from Jamieson, “Sanskrit,” 687. For a more extensive survey of Sanskrit verbal personal conjugations, see Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 306-14; Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, 204-9; Gonda, *A Concise Elementary Grammar of the Sanskrit Language*, 44-73; MacDonell, *A Vedic Grammar for Students*, 124-39, 151-53.

Table 2. Primary personal endings of the Sanskrit verb

	Active ( <i>parasmaipada</i> )			Middle ( <i>ātmanepada</i> )		
	Singular	Dual	Plural	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st	-mi	-vas	-mas	-e	-vahe	-mahe
2nd	-si	-thas	-tha	-se	-āthe	-dhve
3rd	-ti	-tas	-anti	-te	-āte	-ante

The above paradigm for the primary middle conjugation is actually introduced by Pānini as a set of allomorphic endings to another middle (*ātmanepada*) conjugation, typically listed in grammars today as the secondary conjugation. What follows is Pānini's first list of *ātmanepada* endings (i.e., secondary middle endings).<sup>89</sup>

Table 3. Pānini's first list of present *ātmanepada* endings

	Middle ( <i>ātmanepada</i> )		
	Singular	Dual	Plural
1st	-í	-váhi	-máhi
2nd	-thás	-áthām	-dhvám
3rd	-tá	-átām	-jha <sup>90</sup>

With this latter conjugation in view, scholars make an intriguing connection between Hittite and Sanskrit verbal morphology: the *-i* ending of the *ātmanepada* 1st singular is a reflex of PIE *\*H<sub>2</sub>*.<sup>91</sup> As shown above, this morpheme is also used in the Hittite *-hi* conjugation and provides its stative/subject-focused semantics. Further, the

<sup>89</sup> In this observation and the presentation of the (secondary) *ātmanepada* paradigm, I am following Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 34-35.

<sup>90</sup> Most grammars list the 3rd plural ending as *-ánta*, *-áta*, or *-rán*. The *\*jh* as listed by Pānini was replaced by *\*ant* in the present indicative third plural, active and middle (so Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 34 fn. 35). For explanation of this morphological change, Rose points to Katre, *Astadhyayi of Panini*, xxxv.

<sup>91</sup> Kortlandt "1st Sg. Middle *\*H<sub>2</sub>*," 123, 135; Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 35.

opposition of *-i* (<\**H*<sub>2</sub>) to the *parasmaipada* 1st singular *-mi* suggests that these two Sanskrit conjugations may be a direct parallel to the Hittite *-hi/-mi* conjugations.<sup>92</sup>

### Sanskrit Middle Voice Semantics

These morphological observations propel us into semantic ones. The presence of PIE \**H*<sub>2</sub> in *ātmanepada* verbs, along with the *parasmaipada/ātmanepada* parallel to the Hittite *-mi/-hi* conjugations, suggests a semantic core for the Sanskrit middle voice in terms of *subject focus*. Sanskrit *ātmanepada* verbs emphasize a subject focus in the verbal action, while *parasmaipada* verbs do not.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, this is precisely the description one finds when reading Sanskrit grammarians. T. Burrow comments that “the middle is used when the subject is in some way or other specially implicated in the result of the action; when this is not so the active is used.”<sup>94</sup> Jan Gonda notes that “the middle in general expresses actions which the agent carries out ‘for himself, in his own interest.’”<sup>95</sup>

Thus, the Sanskrit middle endings originally indicated actions that were more heavily focused on, or directed toward, the verbal subject. In the Sanskrit literature, this general force manifested itself in several specific verbal types and semantic expressions. First, verbs that inflect only in the middle often originally expressed states rather than actions. As examples, F. Max Müller lists *edhate* (he grows), *spandate* (he trembles), *modate* (he rejoices), *śete* (he lies down).<sup>96</sup> In this case, we again find the overlap of inherently stative (and change-of-state) verbs and middle morphology.

Second, perhaps the most widely recognized use of the Sanskrit middle in

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<sup>92</sup> Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 35-36; Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, 205.

<sup>93</sup> See especially the discussion on Sanskrit in Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 33-43.

<sup>94</sup> Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 294.

<sup>95</sup> Gonda, *A Concise Elementary Grammar of the Sanskrit Language*, 43.

<sup>96</sup> Müller, *A Sanskrit Grammar for Beginners*, 137. Gonda also notes examples of verbs that, when inflected in the middle, denote states or changes-of-state. He sees middle voice morphology as fundamentally suitable for verbs of the “eventive” (i.e., stative/change-of-state) type (Gonda, *The Medium in the RgVeda*, 16-17).

Vedic texts is the indirect reflexive. Leonid Kulikov terms this use “self-beneficent” and claims that it “was one of the main functions of the Vedic, and, in general, ancient Indo-European middle.”<sup>97</sup> The classic example of the self-beneficent use of a Sanskrit verb is the opposition active *yajati* (he sacrifices) vs. middle *yajate* (he sacrifices for himself).<sup>98</sup>

Kulikov says that the self-beneficent middle type belongs to a wider functional domain called “autobenefactive.”<sup>99</sup> Other types of autobenefactive constructions include the possessive-reflexive and auto-directional. In the possessive-reflexive type, the subject is the possessor of another argument in the sentence, including but not restricted to the sentential direct object. For example, one finds the active *krntami* (“I cut off” [the necks of a demon]) opposed to the middle *krntate* (“he cuts off” [his nails]).<sup>100</sup>

In the auto-directional type, the motion of the direct object proceeds toward the subject. This group of middle-marked verbs includes those that denote the taking or obtaining of the object by the subject. They typically occur with the addition of a preverb, especially *á* (“to, toward”—in this case marking motion *toward* the subject). Examples include *dā* (active), “to give” vs. *ā-dā* (middle), “to take, receive”; *dhā* (active), “to put, place” vs. *(ā)dhā* (middle), “to take”; *as* (active), “to throw” vs. *ā-as* (middle), “to take, receive.”<sup>101</sup> The general subject focus of each of these “autobenefactive” verbal types is

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<sup>97</sup> Leonid Kulikov, “Voice and Valency Derivations in Old Indo-Aryan in a Diachronic and Typological Perspective: The Degrammaticalization of the Middle and Other Trends in the Vedic Verbal System,” in *Usare il Presente per Spiegare il Passato: Teorie Linguistiche Contemporanee e Lingue Storiche*, ed. Lucio Melazzo (Palermo: Il Calamo, 2008), 172. See also Leonid Kulikov, “Valency Changing Categories in Indo-Aryan and Indo-European: A Diachronic Typological Portrait of Vedic Sanskrit,” in *Multilingualism: Proceedings of the 23rd Scandinavian Conference of Linguistics*, ed. Anju Saxena and Åke Viberg (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2009), 83.

<sup>98</sup> Kulikov, “Voice and Valency Derivations,” 173. Other examples include active *pacati* (“he cooks”) vs. middle *pacate* (“he cooks [a meal for himself]”) and active *katam karoti* (“he makes a mat”) vs. middle *katam kurute* (“he makes a mat [for his own use]”). These examples are from Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 294.

<sup>99</sup> Kulikov, “Voice and Valency Derivations,” 172.

<sup>100</sup> Kulikov, “Voice and Valency Derivations,” 174-76. Other examples provided by Kulikov include active *nirnenij-ati* (“they wash” [the vessel]) vs. middle *nenikte* (“he washes” [his hands]) and active *ni limpati* (“he besmears” [the priest’s fingers]) vs. middle *ni limpate* (“he smears” [on his lips]).

<sup>101</sup> Kulikov, “Voice and Valency Derivations,” 176-79. Other preverbs can attend the Sanskrit verb as well, shifting focus to the subject and calling for middle morphology. Two of these, *pari* (“around”)

quite clear, and thus the middle morphology on them is not surprising.

Third, grammarians note a host of other uses of Sanskrit *ātmanepada* verbs. These include direct reflexive, reciprocal, and passive uses.<sup>102</sup> Perhaps the most promising attempt to appreciate the semantic force and usage of the Vedic middle is Jan Gonda's work, *The Medium in the RgVeda*.<sup>103</sup> In this work, Gonda questions scholars who have found no functional distinction between Sanskrit active and middle verbs.<sup>104</sup> Instead, surveying *ātmanepada* verbs and their literary contexts across the *RgVeda*, he seeks to be sensitive to the particular subject-focused nuance that each middle-marked verb communicated.

In addition to each of the uses already mentioned, Gonda finds Sanskrit middle voice verbs in cases of spontaneous process, in contrast to a factitive or causative active counterpart, adding an emotional nuance to the verbal idea, and in imperatives denoting

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and *úd* ("up"), can occur on verbs that denote "putting the referent of the direct object onto the subject"—especially putting on clothes, armor, or protection. Other such preverbs include *vi-*, *para-*, *anu-*, and *sam-* (Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 40-42, citing Śrīśa Chandra Vasu, ed. and trans., *The Astadhyayi of Pāṇini* [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1962], 1:125-29. See also Gonda, *The Medium in the RgVeda*, 91-96). That the addition of a word pointing verbal focus onto the involvement or affectedness of the subject would occasion a switch in morphology to *ātmanepada* (middle) endings is a valuable clue to the semantics of this voice.

<sup>102</sup> For some examples of these claims, especially the passive use of the middle, see Burrow (who actually argues against the direct reflexive use), *The Sanskrit Language*, 295, 354; Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, 200, 361-62; MacDonell, *A Vedic Grammar for Students*, 117. Gonda argues that explicit passive uses of the middle are actually rare. He seems to indicate that some middle forms, said to have passive use, are essentially "eventive" (Gonda, *The Medium in the RgVeda*, 21). In fact, it is interesting to note that many grammarians describe Sanskrit passives as frequently functioning "intransitively." Examples include *mriyāte* ("he dies"), *dhriyāte* ("he is steadfast"), *drsyāte* ("he appears"), and *pacyate* ("it becomes ripe") (Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 354; MacDonell, *A Vedic Grammar for Students*, 179; Gonda, *A Concise Elementary Grammar of the Sanskrit Language*, 92). These "intransitive" cases seem applicable to the middle voice. Many, in fact, can be classified as stative or change-of-state. However one interprets this phenomenon (either that these "passives" are better classified as medio-passives or simply that the passive voice has a close relationship with stative and change-of-state verbs), he is again confronted with the semantic overlap of middle and passive in the originally binary voice system of IE languages. Finally, Kulikov argues for the degrammaticalization of the middle in all cases outside of the "autobenefactive" (Kulikov, "Voice and Valency Derivations," 161-91; Kulikov, "Valency Changing Categories," 75-92). Even though he finds a diachronic tendency for certain words to supplant the functional use of the middle, Kulikov still admits to occasional uses of the middle for some of the other semantic functions mentioned above. Therefore, even if one agrees with Kulikov's conclusions, one must still admit to the capability of the middle to convey these nuances.

<sup>103</sup> Gonda, *The Medium in the RgVeda*.

<sup>104</sup> Gonda, *The Medium in the RgVeda*, 3-6.

polite requests.<sup>105</sup> To be sure, there are cases where Gonda admits that the functional distinction between the active and middle may be impossible for the modern reader to perceive. Yet even here he advises caution: “we should however be aware that there are huge gaps in our knowledge about finer distinctions, poetical traditions, [and] usages of families. Where we fail to see differences, a contemporary researcher might have been able to attach some significance to the alterations.”<sup>106</sup>

Therefore, Sanskrit *ātmanepada* verbs can be found on many different verbal types and in many different contexts. The general semantic force of the Sanskrit middle found a network of specific applications. Yet in each of these applications, the middle morphology was used to focus on the involvement or affectedness of the verbal subject.

### **Sanskrit Middle Voice Syntax**

Lastly, grammarians note that “in a number of cases there exists an opposition between the active, used transitively . . . and a medium, used intransitively.”<sup>107</sup> Examples of this opposition include *drmhāti* (active), “makes firm” vs. *drmhate* (middle), “becomes firm”; *vardhāti* (active), “increases, makes bigger” vs. *vardhate* (middle), “increases (intr.), becomes bigger”; and *vahāti* (active), “(chariot) carries (man)” vs. *vahate* (middle), “(man) rides (in chariot).”<sup>108</sup> However, there is not a strict syntactic correlation between the Sanskrit middle and intransitivity, for we also find this voice form used in transitive constructions. As examples, we find the sentences *ajam yajate*, “he sacrifices a

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<sup>105</sup> Gonda, *The Medium in the RgVeda*, 9-100. Gonda also sometimes found contexts where the middle ending was used for poetic and metrical reasons. These would constitute non-semantically driven uses of middle morphology.

<sup>106</sup> Gonda, *The Medium in the RgVeda*, 79.

<sup>107</sup> Gonda, *The Medium in the RgVeda*, 43. See also Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 294.

<sup>108</sup> These examples are obtained from Burrow, *The Sanskrit Language*, 294.



goat” and *dato dhāvate*, “he cleans his teeth.”<sup>109</sup> Both of these examples contain a syntactically transitive verb in the middle voice. The rationale behind the use of middle morphology is semantic, not syntactic. In the former case, a man sacrifices a goat *for his own benefit*. In the latter, a man cleans *his own teeth*.

Therefore, though middle marking may show a proclivity to intransitive constructions in certain verbs, there is by no means a unanimous association of the Sanskrit middle with intransitivity. In fact, the syntactic alignment of the middle voice with intransitive constructions is of secondary nature. The primary motivation for the use of this voice form is the communication of a semantic nuance, namely subject focus.<sup>110</sup>

## Conclusion

Evidence from the Sanskrit voice system yields information that is strikingly similar to the information from Hittite. Sanskrit had a binary voice opposition between active and middle, with the passive voice tied formally to the middle. Some elements of Sanskrit middle voice morphology also show relationship to PIE *\*H<sub>2</sub>* and to the Hittite *-hi* conjugations. Semantically, the Sanskrit middle voice highlighted the subject’s involvement or affectedness in the verbal action. This can be seen in the terms utilized for the active and middle voice by Pānini, namely *parasmaipada* (“word for another” = active voice) and *atmanepada* (“word for oneself” = middle voice). Once again, the middle voice was used in a variety of subject-focused expressions. Finally, there was not

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<sup>109</sup> These examples are obtained from Rose, *The Hittite -hi/-mi Conjugations*, 37. Transitive middle constructions are also noted in Gonda, *The Medium in the RgVeda*, 35 and Kulikov, “Valency Changing Categories,” 88.

<sup>110</sup> In other words, the syntactical phenomenon rightly observed by Gonda and Burrow is inextricably tied to a semantic one. For example, the opposition between the first two examples above is also between a factitive/causative (active) use and a change-of-state, or spontaneous process (middle) use. We have already seen and will continue to see that the change-of-state and spontaneous process categories are frequently coded with middle morphology in IE languages. This is not primarily because these verbal types are syntactically intransitive. Rather, it is because they are semantically subject-focused. The third example above shows most clearly the semantic nature of this opposition because the verbal meaning is actually changed by means of the voice morphology attached to the root. The middle-marked *vahate* (“he rides”) is not marked so because it is inherently intransitive. Rather, it is marked in this way because the verbal notion is inherently focused on the activity of the subject.

a strict association between the Sanskrit middle voice and syntactic transitivity or intransitivity. This reveals that the primary motivation for middle marking was semantic, not syntactic.

### **Classical Greek**

The literature of the Classical Greek Period can be dated from roughly 500–300 BC and serves as the precursor to Hellenistic Greek, which is the primary focus of this dissertation. Because of the obvious linguistic overlap between Classical and Hellenistic Greek, this section will provide a lengthy discussion of the morphology, syntax, and semantics of the middle voice in the Greek of this Period. Further, because of the overlap between Classical and Homeric (epic) Greek literature, this section will also consider evidence from Homeric Greek.<sup>111</sup>

#### **Classical Greek Middle Voice Morphology**

The Epic and Classical Greek verbal systems had ability to communicate three voices: active, middle, and passive.<sup>112</sup> In the present, imperfect, and perfect tenses, these three voice functions were communicated through only two voice forms—one form doing the duty of both middle and passive. The aorist and future tenses had a third voice form (formed in  $-\text{[}\theta\text{]}\eta\text{-}$ ), traditionally described by grammarians as “passive” in function.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Homeric Greek can be dated back to the 8th century BC. For dates and a general description of Homeric and Classical Greek. See Geoffrey Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and Its Speakers*, 2nd ed. (Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 43-78; Thomas R. Martin, *Ancient Greece: From Prehistoric to Hellenistic Times*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 2.

<sup>112</sup> Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 107; K. L. McKay, *Greek Grammar for Students: A Concise Grammar of Classical Attic with Special Reference to Aspect in the Verb* (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1977), 134; James Morwood, *The Oxford Grammar of Classical Greek* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 60; Basil Lanneau Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek from Homer to Demosthenes*, pt. 1 (New York: American Book Company, 1900), 61; Clyde Pharr, *Homeric Greek: A Book for Beginners* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 35, 298.

<sup>113</sup> A. N. Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar: Chiefly of the Attic Dialect* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1897), 362; Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 107.

This formal tripartite voice division of the aorist and future was not, however, original in the Greek verbal system. Ancient Greek evidence points to an original binary voice opposition between active and middle (or medio-passive), with the traditionally termed “passive” form being a later development from the middle.<sup>114</sup> These so-called passive forms “had not been completely established by the classical period.”<sup>115</sup> Thus, in Homer we still find passive uses of the aorist middle, as in ἔβλητο (“was hit”), ἐκτάμην (“was killed”), and ἐσχόμην (“was stayed”).<sup>116</sup> In Attic Greek, the aorist -(θ)η- forms had mostly won the day in functioning to communicate the passive voice, yet we still find the middle ἐσχόμην and its compounds serving this passive role.<sup>117</sup> The situation with the future tense was much less stable, as there are a plethora of future middle forms commonly functioning as passives.<sup>118</sup>

Despite the instability of the new aorist and future -(θ)η- forms to function as strict passives, it will be helpful to set forth the traditional paradigms as a reminder of each of the available Classical Greek voice forms. The table below represents the present, aorist, and future tense forms using the verb λύω.

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<sup>114</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 394; Evert van Emde Boas et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 447; Donald J. Mastronarde, *An Introduction to Attic Greek* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 91; Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, 362.

<sup>115</sup> McKay, *Greek Grammar for Students*, 134.

<sup>116</sup> These examples have been obtained from Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 218-19.

<sup>117</sup> Mastronarde, *Introduction to Attic Greek*, 159; Albert Rijksbaron, *The Syntax and Semantics of the Verb in Classical Greek: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), 140.

<sup>118</sup> Smyth lists thirty-three examples of verbs in Classical Greek whose future “middle” form commonly displayed passive meaning (Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 220). See also Guy L. Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, vol. 1 (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), 584; Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek*, 73-75. The instability of the future forms was perhaps because the future in -(θ)ησ- was a later form based off -(θ)η- aorist forms. Pharr notes that Homeric Greek attests the aorist passive form, but that the future passive form only arises in later texts (Pharr, *Homeric Greek*, 35). The instability of the future is further attested by Mastronarde, who notes that some future verbs use the middle form to communicate passive function, others have only a future passive form, and still others express passive meaning through either form (Mastronarde, *Introduction to Attic Greek*, 245).

Table 4. Present, aorist, and future indicative of λύω

		<b>Present Indicative of λύω</b>		
		<b>Active</b>	<b>Middle/Passive</b>	
1st Sg	λύω	λύομαι		
2nd Sg	λύω	λύῃ, λύει		
3rd Sg	λύει	λύεται		
2nd Dual	λύετον	λύεσθον		
3rd Dual	λύετον	λύεσθον		
1st Pl	λύομεν	λύόμεθα		
2nd Pl	λύετε	λύεσθε		
3rd Pl	λύουσι(ν)	λύονται		
		<b>Aorist Indicative of λύω</b>		
		<b>Active</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Passive</b>
1st Sg	ἔλυσα	ἐλύσαμην	ἐλύθην	
2nd Sg	ἔλυσας	ἐλύσω	ἐλύθης	
3rd Sg	ἔλυσε(ν)	ἐλύσατο	ἐλύθη	
2nd Dual	ἐλύεσατον	ἐλύσασθον	ἐλύθητον	
3rd Dual	ἐλύεσατην	ἐλύσασθην	ἐλυθήτην	
1st Pl	ἐλύσαμεν	ἐλυσάμεθα	ἐλύθημεν	
2nd Pl	ἐλύσατε	ἐλύσασθε	ἐλύθητε	
3rd Pl	ἔλυσαν	ἐλύσαντο	ἐλύθησαν	
		<b>Future Indicative of λύω</b>		
		<b>Active</b>	<b>Middle</b>	<b>Passive</b>
1st Sg	λύσω	λύσομαι	λυθήσομαι	
2nd Sg	λύσεις	λύσῃ, λύσει	λυθήσῃ, λυθήσει	
3rd Sg	λύσει	λύσεται	λυθήσεται	
2nd Dual	λύσετον	λύσεσθον	λυθήσεσθον	
3rd Dual	λύσετον	λύσεσθον	λυθήσεσθον	
1st Pl	λύσομεν	λυσόμεθα	λυθησόμεθα	
2nd Pl	λύσετε	λύσεσθε	λυθήσεσθε	
3rd Pl	λύσουσι(ν)	λύσονται	λυθήσονται	

Thus, while the Greek verbal system began with a binary opposition between active and middle voice forms, by the Epic and Classical Periods a new form, commonly called “passive,” was on the rise in the aorist and future tenses. This form had not yet

asserted itself to cover the full range of aorist and future passive uses. Nonetheless, its presence created a more complex, trinary morphological voice opposition in these two tenses.

At least two additional observations can be made regarding the morphology of Epic and Classical Greek voice. The first pertains to the inheritance of the PIE laryngeal *\*H<sub>2</sub>*. We noted the presence of this morpheme above in the PIE stative set of verbal endings. These verbs communicated not only states, but also a host of verbal ideas emphasizing the subject's involvement or affectedness. We saw the continuation of stative/subject-focused *\*H<sub>2</sub>* in the Hittite *-hi* and Sanskrit secondary *ātmanepada* verbs, both of which communicated the middle voice. As we arrive at the Greek verbal system, we find *\*H<sub>2</sub>* again, in both the perfect active and middle voice endings.

For the perfect active, we find the first-person singular ending *-α*, developed from *\*H<sub>2</sub>e* and the second person singular ending *-θα* (as in *οἶσθα*, replaced by *-ας*), developed from *\*tH<sub>2</sub>e*.<sup>119</sup> The presence of *\*H<sub>2</sub>* in these forms provides evidence of the stative semantics inherited by the Greek perfect from its PIE ancestor. We have seen above that the middle voice also likely derives from the PIE stative and is deeply related to the IE perfect. Therefore, we should not be surprised to find the presence of *\*H<sub>2</sub>* in the Greek middle voice endings as well. And so we do. PIE *\*H<sub>2</sub>* continues into *-η-* of the secondary first person medio-passive ending *-μην*, as well as *-α-* of the (later) primary first person medio-passive ending *-μαι*.<sup>120</sup> Additionally, of the first-person plural endings, Andrew L. Sihler notes that “the middle endings are the active endings with added

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<sup>119</sup> Henry M. Hoenigswald, “Greek,” in *The Indo-European Languages*, ed. Anna Giacalone Ramat and Paolo Ramat (London: Routledge, 1998), 255.

<sup>120</sup> On this see Andrew L. Sihler, *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 46, 474-75. The Greek secondary verbal endings were in fact developed first. The primary endings were formed later by adding *ι*, the *hic et nunc* particle of PIE (see Peter J. Gentry, “The Function of the Augment in Hellenistic Greek,” in *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis*, ed by Stephen E. Runge and Christopher J. Fresch [Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016], 365).

element *\*-dhH<sub>2</sub>*, thus secondary *\*-me-dhH<sub>2</sub>*, primary *\*-mos-dhH<sub>2</sub>*.”<sup>121</sup> The common inheritance of this PIE morpheme shows not only a formal relationship between the ancient Greek perfect and middle voice, but also the semantic relationship between them. Stative or subject-focused semantics have been infused into both.

The second additional morphological observation regarding ancient Greek voice pertains to the so-called aorist passive (-[θ]η-) forms mentioned above. To properly understand these forms we must return to another PIE morpheme, this time *\*eh<sub>1</sub>*. Within the PIE system, *\*eh<sub>1</sub>* was likely a stative affix.<sup>122</sup> Verbs inheriting this morpheme communicated stative or change-of-state semantics, and were therefore closely associated with passive ideas. In the Greek verbal system, *\*eh<sub>1</sub>* found its application in the -η- of second aorist “passive” forms.<sup>123</sup>

These Greek -η- aorists were initially formed from -μι verbs and functioned alongside the aorist middle forms in -μην/-σο/-το, etc.<sup>124</sup> Syntactically, they originally served as the intransitive counterpart to sigmatic aorist active forms of the same lexeme.<sup>125</sup> Thus, for example, we find ἐφηνά (“showed”) vs. ἐφάνην (“appeared”);

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<sup>121</sup> Sihler, *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*, 477. For an analysis of PIE *\*H<sub>2</sub>* in the Greek middle voice endings, see Sihler, *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*, 470-80.

<sup>122</sup> There is some debate as to whether the suffix was originally a stative or fientive marker. See Sihler, *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*, 497-98, 563-64; José Luis García Ramón, “From *Aktionsart* to Aspect and Voice: On the Morphosyntax of the Greek Aorists with -η- and -θη-,” in *The Greek Verb: Morphology, Syntax, and Semantics: Proceedings of the 8th International Meeting of Greek Linguistics, Agrigento, October 1-2, 2009*, ed. Annamaria Bartolotta (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 149, 155-57; Rachel Aubrey, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,” in *The Greek Verb Revisited: A Fresh Approach for Biblical Exegesis* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016), 578; Rutger J. Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek: A Study in Polysemy* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2003), 132 fn. 241.

<sup>123</sup> García Ramón, “From *Aktionsart* to Aspect and Voice,” 149-52, 162; Sihler, *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*, 497-98, 563-64; Aubrey, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,” 578.

<sup>124</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 395; Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 583; Carl W. Conrad, “New Observations on Voice in the Ancient Greek Verb,” Washington University in St. Louis, last modified November 19, 2002, <https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.wustl.edu/dist/8/2865/files/2020/10/newobsancgrkvc.pdf>, 5.

<sup>125</sup> Conrad, “New Observations on Voice in the Ancient Greek Verb,” 5; Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 395; Kölln, *Oppositions of Voice in Greek, Slavic, and Baltic*, 17-18; Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 583; Mastronarde, *Introduction to Attic Greek*, 243.

ἔφθαιρα (“destroyed”) vs. ἐφθάρην (“am destroyed”); and ἔστησα (“placed”) vs. ἔστην (“stood”).<sup>126</sup>

Semantically, there is evidence that this genetically stative -η- found its initial application on two types of verbal lexemes—“telic-transformative lexemes and stative lexemes with no inherited aorist.”<sup>127</sup> For intransitive telic-transformative (i.e., “change-of-state”) verbs, the addition of -η- was redundant. It denoted the reaching of the state by the subject—a meaning that was inherent in the aorist stem itself—as in ἐμίγη (“mingled”), ἐπάγη (“got stuck”), ἐδάη (“learned,” i.e., “got informed”), (ἐ)χολώθη (“became angry”), ἐάλη (“crouched”), and ἐκ . . . ῥυη (“flowed out”).<sup>128</sup> For transitive telic-transformative verbs, the η-aorist was typically passive in contrast to its -σα- counterpart, as in ἐτύπη (“was struck” [vs. τύψε, “struck”]) and ἐδάμη (“was subdued” [vs. δάμασσα/δαμάσσατο, “subdued”]).<sup>129</sup> Finally, in the case of stative verbs that originally had no aorist stem (i.e., only a present stem), an η-aorist could be created to denote entry into the state expressed by the lexeme. Examples of such verbs include ἐφάνη (“became visible”), ἐχάρη (“became glad”), and ἐμάνη (“became mad”).<sup>130</sup>

As the Greek language continued to change, three other developments occurred relative to these aorists in -η-. First, an extended form arose, for phonological reasons adding -θ- and creating so-called “first aorist passives” in θην/-θηζ/-θη, etc. Second, the forms in -(θ)η- competed with the older middle forms in -μην/-σο/-το, etc. and began

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<sup>126</sup> These examples taken from Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 395.

<sup>127</sup> García Ramón, “From *Aktionsart* to Aspect and Voice,” 179; Aubrey, “Motivated Categories, Middle Voice, and Passive Morphology,” 579. The key connection between -η- (<\*eh<sub>1</sub>) and these two semantic categories is that both categories express “an activity or a process in which *state* is a part of the state of affairs” (García Ramón, “From *Aktionsart* to Aspect and Voice,” 162).

<sup>128</sup> García Ramón, “From *Aktionsart* to Aspect and Voice,” 162-69, 180. Note that these verbs come from a variety of the classes described by Rutger J. Allan in his delineation of middle voice verbal types (on which see pp. 78-79 of this work), including spontaneous processes, mental processes, and motions.

<sup>129</sup> García Ramón, “From *Aktionsart* to Aspect and Voice,” 163, 169-71.

<sup>130</sup> García Ramón, “From *Aktionsart* to Aspect and Voice,” 162, 172-80.

appearing on a wider variety of lexemes and supplanting more of the middle voice uses.<sup>131</sup> Third, the future followed morphological suit with the aorist, developing corresponding “passive” forms in -(θ)ησ-.

The developmental points above have been helpfully outlined by Carl W. Conrad. His suggested stages of growth for the Greek aorist and future “passive” forms are presented below.<sup>132</sup>

1. In addition to the older second aorist middle-passive forms in -μην/σο/το, there was a third, non-thematic aorist which tended to have intransitive or even quasi-passive semantic functions.
2. As the language increasingly adopted the sigmatic (“first”) aorist active morphoparadigm, verbs with both sigmatic “first” aorist active and “third” aorist forms held the voice opposition “first” aorist “active/causative”; “third” aorist “intransitive/quasi-passive.”
3. Eventually, an extended form of the third aorist morphoparadigm (containing a long vowel, normally *Eta*, and secondary *active* endings) appeared in the -θη- forms. These forms were conjugated exactly like the -ην/ης/η forms. The -θη- aorist forms probably spread among Greek speakers at the same time the aorist actives in -σα- spread. They also communicated the same intransitive/quasi-passive/middle semantics that the old third aorist -ην/ης/η forms did.
4. As these -θη- aorist forms came more into use, they supplanted the older -μην/σο/το aorist forms.
5. Future-tense stems increasingly developed forms in -θησομαι/θηση/θησεται to complement the aorists in -την/της/τη. These new future forms carried the same semantic ambivalence as their aorist counterparts. They also tended to take the place of the older future middles formed in -σομαι/ση/σεται.

The main point in the discussion above is that the aorist and future -(θ)η- forms of Epic and Classical Greek were *never strictly passives*. Inheriting the stative PIE morpheme *\*eh<sub>1</sub>*, these verbs began as inherently stative/change-of-state verbs that were capable of functioning as passives depending on the lexeme from which they were

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<sup>131</sup> García Ramón, “From *Aktionsart* to Aspect and Voice,” 179. On the distribution and spread of Homeric and Classical Greek aorists in -(θ)η-, see especially Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 126-77.

<sup>132</sup> Conrad, “New Observations on Voice in the Ancient Greek Verb,” 5-6. Conrad builds off the work of Chantraine (P. Chantraine, *Morphologie Historique du Grec* [Paris: Klincksieck, 1961], 165ff) and Cooper (Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 583-88) in his historical reconstruction. Conrad’s reconstruction is strikingly similar to that of Herman Kølln, which was expounded in chapter 1.



formed. Still, as we have seen above, change-of-state and passive verb types fall naturally into the sphere of the middle voice in other ancient middle marking languages. Below we will see that this phenomenon continues in Greek. Thus, it is best to conceive of  $-(\theta)\eta$ - aorists as fundamentally middle. For this reason, they always retained and gradually overtook more and more of the functions of the middle voice and are best termed as “middle-passive.”

From a morphological standpoint, then, we find that Epic and Classical Greek voice was in the process of change. Originating from a simple binary opposition between active and middle, the present, imperfect, and perfect voice systems continued to display just two forms—one active and another “medio-passive.” In the aorist and future, a new form developed denoting passive events. Still, this new form never began or ended as a strict passive and should also be termed “middle-passive.” The aorist and future tenses, therefore, display three voice forms: one active, one medio-passive yet primarily middle in function, and one medio-passive yet more passive in function. This latter medio-passive form was in the process of taking over the middle voice functions of the former.

### **Classical Greek Middle Voice Semantics**

Epic and Classical Greek middle voice must also be described semantically. To begin, Herbert Weir Smyth defines the middle generally as denoting “that the action is performed with special reference to the subject.” In other words, the subject “may do something *to himself, for himself*, or he may act with something *belonging to himself*.”<sup>133</sup> A general definition along these lines is the consensus among grammarians. K. L. McKay states that the middle “is characterized by a reflexive idea, indicating a special interest or involvement of the subject in the outcome of the activity.”<sup>134</sup> Donald J. Mastronarde agrees, while clarifying that on these accounts the subject of a middle voice verb can still

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<sup>133</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 390.

<sup>134</sup> McKay, *Greek Grammar for Students*, 134.

be agentive: “in the middle voice the subject is agent but acts with some special reference to himself or herself, or to his or her possessions or own interest (*to* or *for* or *within himself* or *herself* or the like).”<sup>135</sup>

Within this general subject-focused rubric, several specific middle usage types are often adduced. First, the middle can be used for *direct reflexive* ideas, in which cases the subject acts directly on himself. This use is not frequent, and Classical Greek often prefers to use the reflexive pronoun, either with a middle or active verb, to denote it.<sup>136</sup>

Second, the middle can denote “*indirect reflexive*” ideas. This category is extremely broad, used for a host of subject-focused verbal actions. Again, Smyth defines the indirect middle as representing “the subject as acting *for himself*, with reference to *himself*, or with something belonging to himself.”<sup>137</sup> Guy L. Cooper claims that this use of the middle is the most common and “may be thought of as having a suppressed reflexive pronoun in a dative of advantage or disadvantage.”<sup>138</sup> Indirect middles in Classical Greek can occur as *media tantum* or in opposition to an active counterpart.

As Smyth’s definition above indicates, subsumed under the category of indirect middle are those cases in which a verb’s direct object lies in the possession of its subject. For example, we find ἐσπασμένοι τὰ ξίφη (“having drawn their swords,” *Xen. A.* 7.4.16) and παῖδας ἐκκεκομισμένοι ἦσαν (“they had removed their children,” *T.* 2.78).<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Mastronarde, *Introduction to Attic Greek*, 91.

<sup>136</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 390; van Emde Boas et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*, 453-54; Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 599; McKay, *Greek Grammar for Students*, 134; Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, 360; Rijksbaron, *The Syntax and Semantics of the Verb in Classical Greek*, 144-47.

<sup>137</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 390. See also van Emde Boas et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*, 452-53; Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek*, 65; Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, 360-61; Mastronarde, *Introduction to Attic Greek*, 91; Rijksbaron, *The Syntax and Semantics of the Verb in Classical Greek*, 147-50.

<sup>138</sup> Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 600.

<sup>139</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 391. So Cooper: “The accusative object of a middle of interest shows either that the object pertains naturally to the subject and falls within its sphere, or that the object is *not* naturally in close relation to the subject but that the verb by its action draws the object into the sphere

These cases reveal that the Classical Greek middle voice did not necessitate intransitive syntax. Whether transitive or intransitive, middle voice verbs served the primary function of communicating subject focus. In this case, the subject was highlighted through the affect accrued to an object in his or her possession.

Also subsumed under the category of indirect middle is the so-called *dynamic middle*. Cooper describes the dynamic middle as follows:

The middle voice may be used to show that the faculties and resources of the subject, all thought of as pertaining naturally to it and lying within its natural sphere, are mobilized, energized, and applied. In these cases the subject is displayed as exerting itself, working and drawing adjacent conceptions into its own sphere of control and effectiveness. This range of middle has been called, appropriately, the *dynamic middle*.<sup>140</sup>

Again, this category of middle voice usage is broad and can be applied to a variety of cases. The most important feature to note is the spotlight shone on the subject's contribution to the verbal action. Here Cooper groups middle-marked verbs that describe "the intelligence, volition, and emotions" of the subject, including *αισθάνομαι* ("notice"), *διανοέομαι* ("consider"), *ἠγέομαι* ("think"), *θεάομαι* ("see"), *λογίζομαι* ("reckon"), *πυνθάνομαι* ("inquire"), *ὀλοφύρομαι* ("lament"), *οἶμαι* ("think"), and *σκέπτομαι* ("consider").<sup>141</sup> Grammarians also group middle voice uses of *ποιέω* under this category. When used with a verbal noun, middle *ποιέομαι* creates a periphrasis "with the dependent substantive for the corresponding verb."<sup>142</sup> Active *ποιέω* with the same verbal noun, however, denotes the "bringing about," "effecting," or "fashioning" of the direct object. Smyth gives the following examples:<sup>143</sup>

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of the subject and establishes a relation of the object to the subject" (Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 601).

<sup>140</sup> Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 589.

<sup>141</sup> Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 594. English glosses for all verbs in Cooper's list except for *ὀλοφύρομαι* were obtained from BDAG. The gloss for *ὀλοφύρομαι* was obtained from LSJ.

<sup>142</sup> Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek*, 69.

<sup>143</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 391.

θήρᾱν ποιεῖσθαι (= θήρᾱν), “hunt”  
θήρᾱν ποιεῖν, “arrange a hunt”

λόγον ποιεῖσθαι (= λέγειν), “deliver a speech”  
λόγον ποιεῖν, “compose a speech”

ὁδὸν ποιεῖσθαι (= ὁδεύειν), “make a journey”  
ὁδὸν ποιεῖν, “build a road”

In each case above, the use of middle ποιέομαι contrasts with its active counterpart to highlight the subject’s involvement in the verbal action.

Third, grammarians note the *reciprocal* use of the Classical Greek middle voice. Such verbs had dual or plural subjects, each portrayed as acting towards the other.<sup>144</sup> Reciprocal middles were common with verbs of contending, conversing, greeting, and embracing. They are frequently found in compound verbs with the preposition δία and can be found both in *media tantum* and oppositional middles.<sup>145</sup>

Fourth, some grammarians claim that middle forms could be used with *causative* meaning. In these cases, “the subject has something done by another for himself.”<sup>146</sup> Διδάσκω is commonly cited as displaying this meaning by its middle form. For example, we find ἐγὼ γάρ σε ταῦτα ἐδίδαξάμην, “for I had you taught this” (X. C. 1.6.2). Further examples include παρατίθεσθαι σῖτον, “to have food served up” (X. C. 8.6.12) and ἑαυτῷ σκηνὴν κατεσκευάσατο, “he had a tent prepared for himself” (X. C. 2.1.30).<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 392; Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, 361. See also van Emde Boas et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*, 459-60; Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 599; Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek*, 66; McKay, *Greek Grammar for Students*, 135. Reflexive and reciprocal pronouns could be added to active or middle verbs to communicate reciprocal sense as well (Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 392). Jannaris claims that Classical Greek preferred to communicate the reciprocal by means of active verbs (which he calls “transitive”) with pronouns such as these (Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, 361).

<sup>145</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 392; Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 599.

<sup>146</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 392. See also Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 607-8; Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek*, 67; Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, 361. Allan objects to the label “causative middle” (Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 115-17).

<sup>147</sup> These examples from Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 392.

Grammarians note other semantic features of the Classical Greek middle as well.<sup>148</sup> It “may denote more vigorous participation on the part of the subject than the active,” as in σεύεσθαι (“dart”) vs. θέειν (“run”).<sup>149</sup> Some verbs ending in -εω form middles to denote “that the subject is acting in a manner appropriate to his state or condition.” Πολιτεύειν, for example, means “be a citizen,” while πολιτεύεσθαι means “act as a citizen, perform one’s civic duties.” Πρεσβεύειν means “be an envoy” while πρεσβεύεσθαι means “negotiate as an envoy” or “send envoys.”<sup>150</sup>

Many verbs commonly occurring in the active voice form their future tense in the middle voice. The semantic significance of this phenomenon is debated, but two intriguing observations have been made. First, there appears to be an overlap between the volition expressed by the middle voice and an original volitive force of the future tense.<sup>151</sup> Second, future middle forms may show proclivity to certain semantic classes of verbs. This includes verbs of physical action and bodily activity in general, as well as verbs of perception and mental activity.<sup>152</sup> As we will see below, these semantic categories are prone to middle marking because of the heightened focus they give to an affected subject.

Many Epic and Classical Greek verbs were *media tantum*—that is, they are

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<sup>148</sup> Two additional semantic descriptions suggested by Rijksbaron are the “pseudo-reflexive” and “pseudo-passive.” In the pseudo-reflexive, the “subject changes his own situation” and is an agent (e.g., ἀπηλλάχθην, “I went away”). In the pseudo-passive, the subject “is internally affected by the change” and is an experiencer (e.g. ἐφοβήθην, “I became afraid”) (Rijksbaron, *The Syntax and Semantics of the Verb in Classical Greek*, 151-55, 162).

<sup>149</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 393.

<sup>150</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 392-93.

<sup>151</sup> “The verbs with deponent futures show the congruence of the volitive side of the middle and the volitive force of the future petrified into the Classical declension where the future tense, certainly in independent sentences, has only rarely other than purely temporal significance” (Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 594). See also McKay, *Greek Grammar for Students*, 135.

<sup>152</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 219; van Emde Boas et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*, 451; Mastrorarde, *Introduction to Attic Greek*, 150. Examples of verbs forming future middles include ἀκούω, ἀλαλάζω, ἀμαρτάνω, βαίνω, βιώω, γιγνώσκω, δάκνω, δαίω, εἰμί, ἐσθίω, θαυμάζω, -θνήσκω, κράζω, κύπτω, λαμβάνω, μανθάνω, οἶδα, ὄμνυμι, ὀράω, πάσχω, πίπτω, ῥέω, σιγάω, σιωπάω, τρέχω, τυγχάνω, and φεύγω. For a complete list see Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 219-20.

only formed with middle endings. Such cases were probably lexically determined. Their middle ending is an expression of their inherent semantically middle DNA.<sup>153</sup> Many other verbs, however, were oppositional, displaying both middle and active forms. It is often in these cases that we are able to see the semantic force of the middle most clearly. We have seen some examples of active-middle oppositions in the paragraphs above. More examples of active-middle oppositions from Classical Greek literature are listed below.<sup>154</sup>

ἀμύνειν τί τινι, “to ward off something from someone”  
 ἀμύνεσθαι τι, “to defend oneself against something”

δικάζειν, “to give judgment”  
 δικάζεσθαι, “to go to law with a person, conduct a case”

παύειν, “to make to cease, stop” (transitive)  
 παύεσθαι, “to cease” (intransitive)

τιμωπεῖν τινι, “to avenge someone”  
 τιμωρεῖσθαι τινα, “to avenge oneself on someone”

τίνειν δίκην, “to pay a penalty”  
 τίνεσθαι δίκην, “to exact a penalty”

φυλάττειν τινά, “to watch someone”  
 φυλάττεσθαι τινα, “to be on one’s guard against someone”

The discussion thus far has focused on verbs medio-passive in form to which grammarians have attached a middle function. The function of middle voice morphology, however, has not always proved so obvious. In cases of active-middle alternations between a single verb, a semantic distinction is not always clear. Cooper claims that “the distinctions of (at least active and middle) are so primordial, and their expressiveness extends so readily in so many different directions that preciousness and over-analysis are

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<sup>153</sup> Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 592. See also the discussion of middle morphology coding inherent subject-affectedness in Egbert J. Bakker, “Voice, Aspect, and Aktionsart: Middle and Passive in Ancient Greek,” in *Voice: Form and Function*, ed. Barbara A. Fox and Paul J. Hopper (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994).

<sup>154</sup> These examples are found in Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 393-94. See also Mastronarde, *Introduction to Attic Greek*, 93; Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 602; Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, 361; Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek*, 69.

constant threats in the doctrine of the middle voice.”<sup>155</sup> A. N. Jannaris sees a regular confusion between the active and middle in Classical times: the active was used where the middle was expected, and vice versa. For him, this confusion indicated a loss of feeling the true force of the middle that continued into Hellenistic times.<sup>156</sup>

So also in the case of *media tantum* Classical Greek grammarians often struggled to find a specific middle force. This confusion was compounded by synonymous verbs occurring as *activa tantum*, so that Peter Barber claims that some instances of the middle “will resist a coherent synchronic explanation and will ultimately have to be understood as an arbitrary feature stored in the lexicon.”<sup>157</sup> In short, to many grammarians the Classical Greek middle seemed simply to function as active.

Therefore, these grammarians describe another function of the middle voice—*deponent*.<sup>158</sup> Deponent verbs are those that had “an active meaning but only middle (or middle and passive) forms.”<sup>159</sup> In this way their voice form does not properly reflect their voice function, which is perceived to be active. Examples of middle-marked verbs labeled as deponent include γίγνομαι (“I become, am born”), βούλομαι (“I desire, want”), αισθάνομαι (“I perceive”), and θεάομαι (“I behold”).<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Cooper, *Attic Greek Prose Syntax*, 592.

<sup>156</sup> Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, 363-64.

<sup>157</sup> Peter Barber, “Classical Greek Morphology (Survey),” in *EAGLL*, vol. 1, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 292.

<sup>158</sup> The term “deponent” was taken from Latin grammar, and there has been much debate on whether the transfer of this category to Greek was legitimate. The majority of recent scholarship argues it was not and that applying the concept to the Greek middle has hindered appreciation of the middle’s force in many cases. For examples, see the summaries of Neva Miller, Bernard Taylor, Rutger Allan, and Jonathan Pennington in chapter 1 of this work. Stratton Ladewig sees the transfer from Latin to Greek as legitimate because historically Latin grammar was built upon a Greek mold (see, for example, Stratton L. Ladewig, “Defining Deponency: An Investigation into Greek Deponency of the Middle and Passive Voices in the Koine Period” [PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2010], 73-75), but this view is called into question by the study of Taylor (Bernard A. Taylor, “Greek Deponency: The Historical Perspective” in *Biblical Greek in Context: Essays in Honor of John A. L. Lee*, ed. James K. Aitken and Trevor V. Evans [Peters: Leuven, 2015], 177-90). As will become clear in the following pages, I agree that the deponency category fails to appreciate the kind and range of verbal actions the middle was meant to communicate.

<sup>159</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 107.

<sup>160</sup> Mastronarde, *Introduction to Attic Greek*, 93; Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek*, 77.

Smyth describes two types of Classical Greek deponent verbs. Those with aorist middle (-σα-) forms he terms “middle deponents” and those with so-called aorist passive (-[θ]η-) forms he terms “passive deponents.” As examples of middle deponent verbs, he cites ἄλλεσθαι (“to jump”), πέτεσθαι (“to fly”), ὀρχεῖσθαι (“to dance”), οἴχεσθαι (“to be gone”), δέρχεσθαι (“to look”), ἀκροᾶσθαι (“to listen”), μέμφεσθαι (“to blame”), οἴεσθαι (“to conjecture, think”), ἡγεῖσθαι (“to consider”), and ὀλοφύρεσθαι (“to lament”). As examples of passive deponent verbs he includes the following:<sup>161</sup>

αἰδομαι (ἡγάσθην)	I feel shame
ἀμιλλάομαι (ἡμιλλήθην)	I contend
ἄρνεομαι (ἡρνήθην)	I deny
ἄχθόμαι (ἡχθέσθην)	I am grieved
δέομαι (έδεήθην)	I want
δύναμαι (έδυνήθην)	I am able
ἐπίσταμαι (ἡπιστηθην)	I understand
εὐλαβέομαι (ἡυλαβήθην)	I am cautious
ἡδομαι (ἡσθην)	I take pleasure in
(έν-) θυμέομαι (ένεθυμήθην)	I consider
(δια-) λέγομαι (διελέχθην)	I converse
(μετα-) μέλομαι (μετεμελήθην)	I regret
(δια-) νοέομαι (διενοήθην)	I reflect
οἶομαι (ᾠήθην)	I think
φιλοτιμεόμαι (έφιλοτιμήθην)	I am ambitious

“Deponency” is, therefore, a household term used in the majority of Classical Greek grammars used today.<sup>162</sup> However, two interrelated problems arise with tagging verbs such as the ones cited above with this label. The first pertains to passive deponents specifically; the second pertains to all deponents generally.

First, grammarians label -(θ)η- aorists as passive deponents because they do not display a passive function. But requiring these forms to display a passive function betrays a misunderstanding of their origins and capabilities. We have seen above that aorists in -(θ)η- are fundamentally middle. They arose from an ancient change-of-state

<sup>161</sup> For Smyth’s middle deponent examples, see Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 393. For a full list of his passive deponents, see Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 220-21.

<sup>162</sup> Though the recent major grammar by van Emde Boas et al. appears to express hesitancy at the term. They mention “deponent” verbs in just one footnote (see van Emde Boas et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*, 451).



morpheme, \**eh*<sub>1</sub>, were originally used for stative and change-of-state verbal types, encompassed passive constructions, and then continued to spread across the domain of middle voice uses. Therefore, it is entirely appropriate to find Classical Greek aorists in -(θ)η- functioning for both the passive and middle voices. Further, we should not be surprised when Smyth states that “deponents usually prefer the passive to the middle forms of the aorist.”<sup>163</sup> At least in part, this is because the “passive” -(θ)η- forms were supplanting the duties of the middle -σα- ones.

This observation does not, however, entirely settle the matter because some grammarians do not see these “passive deponents” functioning as middles, but as actives. This fact leads us to a second problem with the concept of deponency in Greek, which pertains to all middle deponents generally. Classical Greek grammarians describe middle-marked verbs, especially *media tantum*, as deponent because they detect in them a mismatch between form and function. Yet this analysis likely betrays a larger misunderstanding of the semantic value and capabilities of the middle voice.

A perusal over the “deponent” verbs listed above reveals that some of these same verbs can be grouped into middle voice semantic categories already described. Αἰσθάνομαι, θεάομαι, and ἠγέομαι, for example, all denote a subject who is exerting his own faculties of intelligence and sense. Not surprisingly, each of these verbs have been categorized by Cooper as dynamic middles. The same “dynamic middle” label could be given to δέρχομαι, ἀκροάομαι, ὀλοφύρομαι, and βούλομαι. Γίγνομαι and οἶχομαι fall under the category of stative or change-of-state verbs, semantic classes that we have already seen recurrently calling for middle morphology, not only in Greek but also in each of the IE languages surveyed.

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<sup>163</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 107. To be fair, Smyth shows awareness of both the original function of aorists in -(θ)η-, though he simply labels this original use “intransitive.” He is also aware that these forms could function as middles in the Classical Period (see Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 219, 222, 395). Still, reconciling these statements with his insistence on the “passive deponent” category makes for a puzzling endeavor.

It appears that grammarians have viewed deponent verbs as active in voice for at least two reasons. First, they have worked with an overly simplistic definition of the active voice. Epic and Classical Greek grammars yield the following definitions for the active voice: “the active voice denotes the subject as acting”;<sup>164</sup> “the active voice denotes that the action proceeds from the subject”;<sup>165</sup> “the active voice represents the subject as performing the action of the verb”;<sup>166</sup> “the active voice is usually *transitive*, in that it represents the subject as *acting* on some person or thing.”<sup>167</sup>

These definitions are probably emphasizing that Greek active voice verbs typically have an agentive subject and often occur with transitive syntax.<sup>168</sup> However, the middle voice uses described above reveal that the middle voice is also capable of containing a fully agentive subject with transitive syntax. Something deeper must be operative in the use of the active voice in Classical Greek. Therefore, these “deponent” verbs are not active simply because they have an agentive subject or a direct object. Rather, it is better to see that they are middle in function—and thus true to their form—because they are subject-focused.

Second, grammarians have tagged these middle-marked verbs as deponent because of an overly limited view of the functions of the middle voice. Unless they could clearly see the subject as acting in some “reflexive” way, they were often prone to calling the verb’s function active. Yet categories such as the dynamic middle cited above, and statements such as the one by Smyth that the middle “may denote more vigorous

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<sup>164</sup> Pharr, *Homeric Greek*, 298.

<sup>165</sup> Gildersleeve, *Syntax of Classical Greek*, 61.

<sup>166</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 389.

<sup>167</sup> Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, 356.

<sup>168</sup> Though they leave room for the active voice to be associated with intransitive syntax as well (see, for example, Jannaris, *An Historical Greek Grammar*, 356-57; Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 389-90).

participation on the part of the subject,”<sup>169</sup> indicate that a broader definition of the middle voice is required.

Rutger J. Allan, in his study of the Classical Greek middle, provides a promising way forward in appreciating the semantic breadth of the middle voice. Allan defines the middle in relation to the “prototypical transitive event.” He describes this prototypical transitive event as follows: “an agent-subject volitionally initiates physical activity resulting in a transfer of energy to a patient-object that absorbs the energy and thereby undergoes an internal change of state.”<sup>170</sup> Here, the full force of the subject’s action flows into a direct object, and the effect is felt entirely by that same object.

Examples of the prototypical transitive clause include:

- a) Mary cut the meat.
- b) John destroyed the house.<sup>171</sup>

Obviously, language displays many subtle deviations from this prototypical transitive event type,<sup>172</sup> and it is here that Allan finds the meaning of the Classical Greek middle voice. For him, the middle denotes a “marked coding of a departure” from the prototypical transitive event.<sup>173</sup> The semantic feature that is “marked” by middle voice morphology is subject-affectedness. That is, “contrary to the prototypical transitive, the subject, in some way or other, undergoes an effect of the event. This effect can be of a

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<sup>169</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 393.

<sup>170</sup> Rutger J. Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek: A Study in Polysemy*, Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology 11 (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2003), 19. Recognizing the phenomenon of prototypical transitivity paves the way for an analysis of higher or lower transitive events (see *ibid.*, 6-7). Allan uses Langacker’s “billiard-ball model” from cognitive grammar to illustrate his definition (Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 8-14, following Ronald W. Langacker, *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, vol. 2 [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991]).

<sup>171</sup> T. Givón, *Syntax: A Functional-Typological Introduction*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1984), 20, as cited by Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 8.

<sup>172</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 10. Herein lies the genius of Hopper and Thompson’s article on transitivity (Paul J. Hopper and Sandra J. Thompson, “Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse,” in *Language* 56:2 [1980], 251-99). They describe transitivity from a semantic angle, arguing that it occurs along a continuum of more or less transitive events (see the discussion under “Classical Greek Middle Voice Syntax” below).

<sup>173</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 19.

physical or mental nature, and it can be direct or indirect (in that it involves an external object).”<sup>174</sup>

Understanding the middle’s abstract meaning as subject-affectedness enables Allan to appreciate the breadth and coherence of its many uses. Further, as with each of the languages reviewed thus far, this understanding positions him to see the intimate relationship between the middle and passive voices in Greek. The middle denotes subject-affected events, of which the passive is simply one instantiation. No wonder the passive is developed from the middle, and no wonder we find the two voices overlapping formally in most cases.<sup>175</sup>

How, then, does Allan describe the Classical Greek active voice? First, “as a rule, the verb in a prototypical transitive clause has the active voice.”<sup>176</sup> In other words, the active is normally used for those events highest in transitivity. This does not mean, however, that the active voice must denote the absence of subject-affectedness. Indeed, one does not need to look far to detect this semantic feature in an active-marked verb. Rather “the active voice is *neutral* as to the semantic feature of subject-affectedness.”<sup>177</sup> Therefore, both the middle and the active voices can have subject-affectedness inherent in the lexeme that they mark. The distinction between the active and middle in ancient Greek is between a voice *unmarked* for subject-affectedness (active) and one *marked* for it (middle, or middle-passive).

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<sup>174</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 19. In describing the abstract meaning of the middle voice as “subject-affectedness,” Allan is following John Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 373, and E. J. W. Barber, “Voice – Beyond the Passive,” *Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society* (1975), 16-24.

<sup>175</sup> That Allan subsumes the passive voice under the category of “middle” will become clear through his eleven middle usage types below. For a thorough and insightful explanation of the relationship between middle and passive in Greek, see Barber, “Voice – Beyond the Passive” (and the summary of his essay in chapter 1 of this work).

<sup>176</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 19.

<sup>177</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 19 (italics mine). On this see also van Emde Boas et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*, 447.

Therefore, the many uses of the Classical Greek middle voice are not random or arbitrary, but belong to a “polysemous network of interrelated meanings” that revolves around the primary semantic feature of subject-affectedness.<sup>178</sup> In fact, Allan suggests that the subject-affected middle voice shows eleven usage types in Classical Greek. These types, with their definitions, are presented below.<sup>179</sup>

Table 5. Rutger J. Allan’s middle voice usage types

Middle Type	Semantic Role of Subject	Definition
Passive Middle	Patient	The entity undergoing the event or other second argument is selected as subject
Spontaneous Process Middle	Patient	Involves subjects that undergo an internal, physical change of state
Mental Process Middle	Experiencer	An animate subject that experiences a mental affectedness
Body Motion Middle	Agent and Patient	An entity that brings about a change of state to itself—either a change of location or a change in body posture
Collective Motion Middle	Agent and Patient	Motion types that are naturally and necessarily performed by groups of (typically animate) individuals, namely <i>gathering</i> and <i>dispersing</i>
Reciprocal Middle	Agent and Patient	Actions which naturally have two participants, A and B: A performs the same action with respect to B as B with respect to A
Direct Reflexive Middle	Agent	A human agent that volitionally performs an action on him or herself
Perception Middle	Experiencer	A typically volitional subject perceives an object through one of the senses and is thereby mentally affected

<sup>178</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 57.

<sup>179</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 57-117. See also Rutger J. Allan, “Voice,” in *EAGLL*, vol. 3, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 494-502.

Middle Type	Semantic Role of Subject	Definition
Mental Activity Middle	Agent, Experiencer, and sometimes Beneficiary	An animate subject that volitionally performs a mental activity, whereby the subject itself is mentally affected
Speech Act Middle	Agent; perhaps additionally Beneficiary or Experiencer	A subject that is involved in the speech act in a special way
Indirect Reflexive Middle	Agent, Beneficiary, and typically Recipient	A transitive action as a result of which the subject receives some kind of benefit

As Allan explains each of these middle voice uses, he also seeks to show which uses are closely related to one another semantically. This in turn allows him to create a “semantic map” of the Homeric and Classical Greek middle voice. This map then allows him to present important data related specifically to the aorist tense and its two formations in  $-\sigma\alpha-$  and  $-(\theta)\eta-$ . He perceives that in some middle uses the subject is more closely aligned with the prototypical patient, while in others the subject is closer to the prototypical agent.

Assessing the distribution of the two aorist forms, he finds that the aorist in  $-(\theta)\eta-$  spread across middle voice usage types increasingly from the Homeric to the Classical Period. Beginning with those that are the most patient-like (passive and spontaneous process), it spread to other patient-like uses (mental process, collective motion, and body motion) and even eventually into agent-like uses.<sup>180</sup> In this way we see the observations above on the aorist in  $-(\theta)\eta-$  confirmed. These forms are not strictly passive but are fundamentally middle, and they were spreading across the middle domain in the Epic and Classical Periods. For visualization, Allan’s maps are presented below.

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<sup>180</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 148-77.

First, note the distribution of aorist forms in Homer.<sup>181</sup>

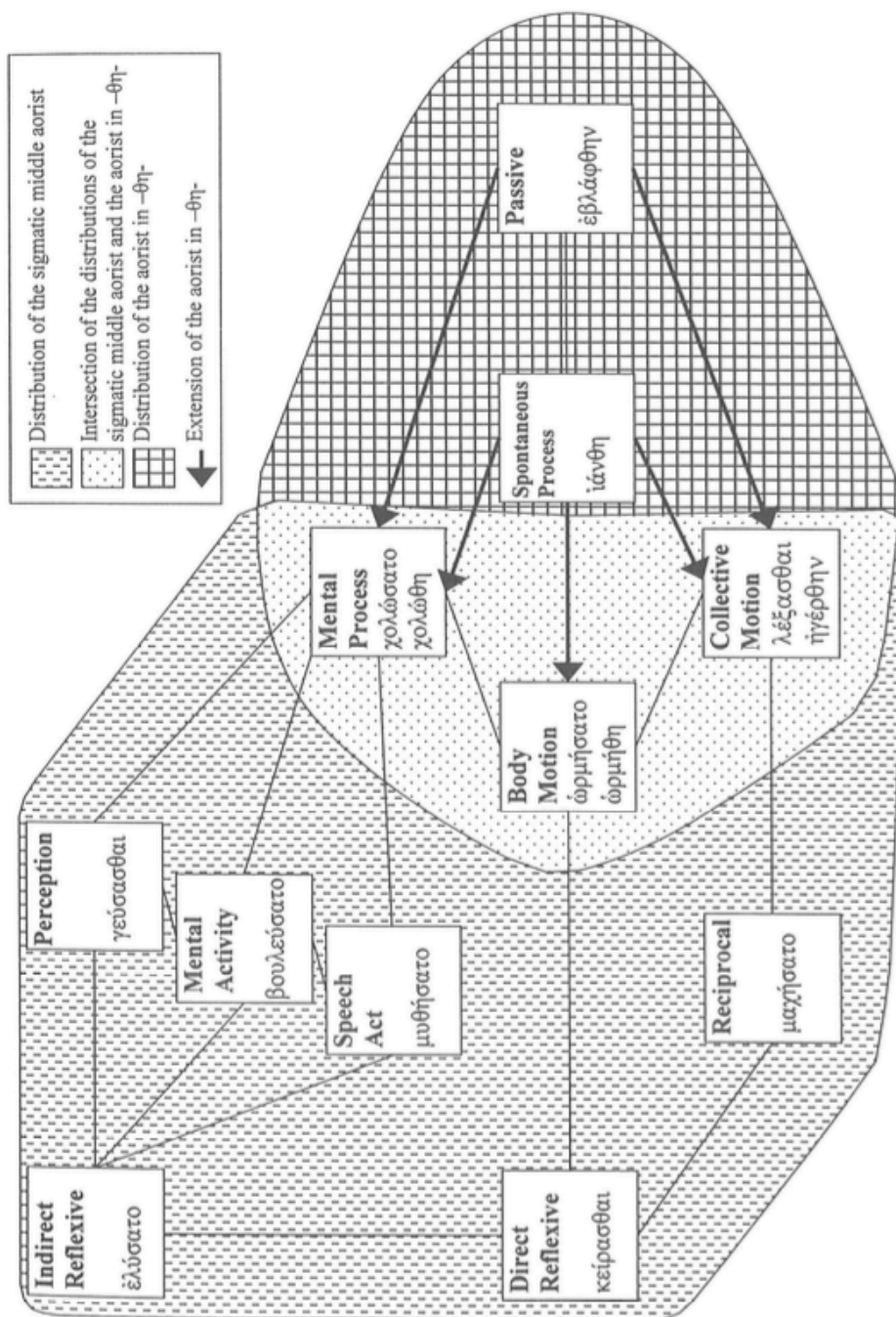


Figure 3. Homeric distribution of aorists in -σα- and -(θ)η-

<sup>181</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 147.

Second, note the distribution of these same forms in the Classical Period.<sup>182</sup>

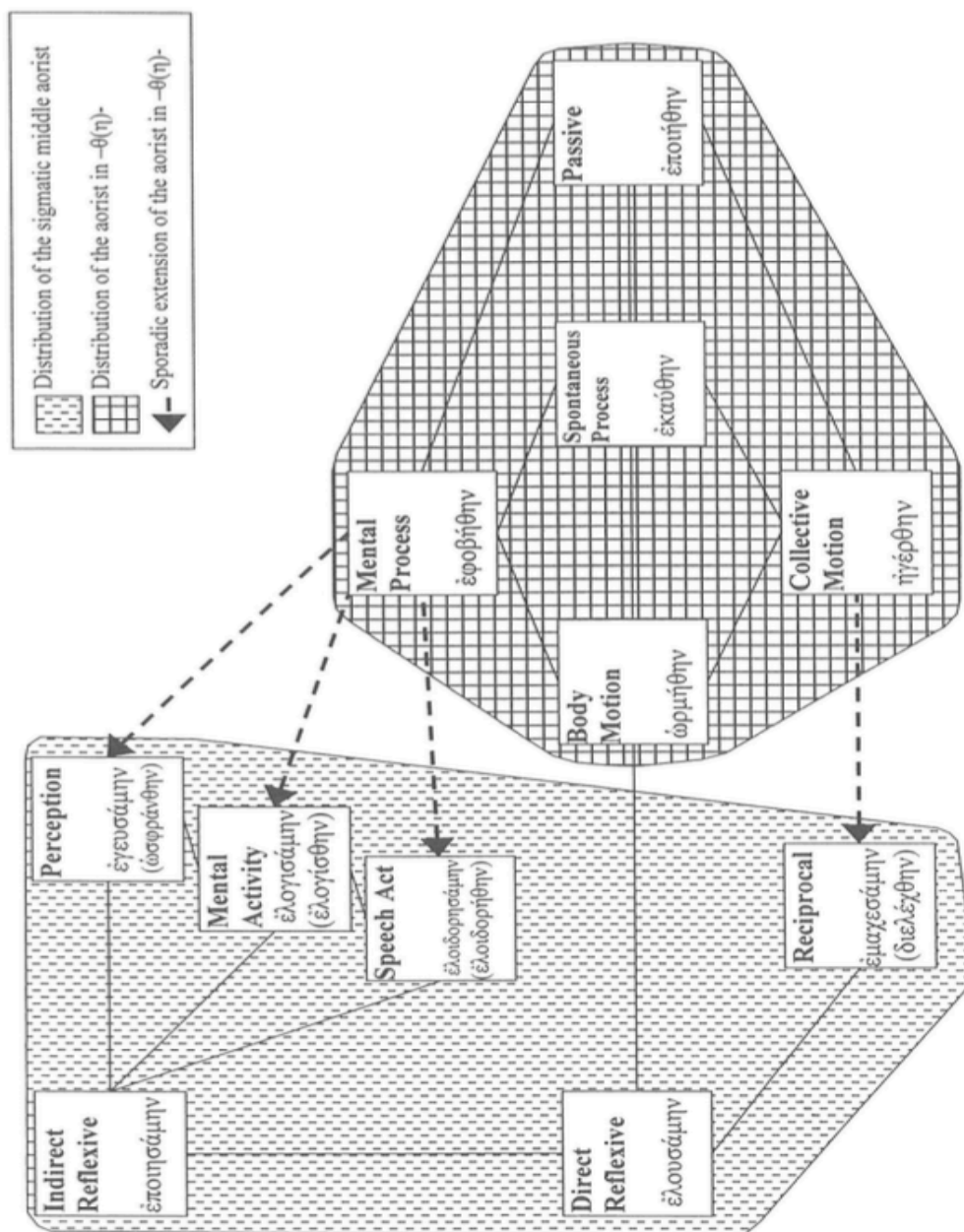


Figure 4. Classical distribution of aorists in -σα- and -(θ)η-

<sup>182</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 156.



Before moving to a discussion about syntax, let us sum up our findings on the semantics of the Classical Greek middle. Grammarians have located several functions of this voice in ancient Greek, all highlighting a focus on the subject. Still, in many other cases these same grammarians have struggled to find a distinction between a middle-marked verb and the active voice. This struggle has led to the creation of a major group of middle-marked verbs termed “deponent.” A closer inspection of these deponent verbs, however, reveals that they too convey one or more nuances of the subject-focused meaning of the middle. Therefore, in one way or another, each Classical (and Epic) Greek middle voice verb highlights the subject’s participation or affectedness in the verbal action. These verbs are marked for one broad core meaning, which can be termed “subject focus.”

### **Classical Greek Middle Voice Syntax**

As with the previous languages surveyed, it will be helpful to conclude our discussion of Classical Greek voice with some comments on middle voice syntax, particularly the relationship between the Greek middle and transitivity. The first observation along these lines is simple and similar to that made for PIE, Hittite, and Sanskrit: The Classical Greek middle was utilized in both transitive *and* intransitive constructions. If there was a proclivity to syntactic intransitivity, it was by far not unanimous.

Simply put, we find middle-marked verbs with and without a direct object. When a direct object is present, it can occur in both the accusative and oblique cases. In fact, transitive or intransitive syntax depends more on the particular middle voice usage at hand than on the sole fact that the middle ending is used. For example, spontaneous process or body motion middle uses show a natural association with intransitivity. This is expected since these uses fall along a spectrum where the subject is more like the prototypical patient. Uses such as the direct or indirect reflexive, however, more naturally

display an association with transitivity. For the direct reflexive, the expressed object would be a reflexive pronoun. For the indirect reflexive, it could be virtually any nominal lexeme. This association with transitivity is also to be expected since the direct and indirect reflexive uses fall along a spectrum where the subject is more like the prototypical agent.

The division of labor between transitive and intransitive middle voice uses can be viewed morphologically in the aorist tense. The maps by Rutger J. Allan presented above reveal that  $-\sigma\alpha-$  forms tended to cover the more agent-like middle uses in the Classical Period, while  $-(\theta)\eta-$  forms tended to cover the more patient-like middle uses. Therefore, we can perhaps posit a stricter correlation between  $-\sigma\alpha-$  middles and transitive syntax on the one hand, and  $-(\theta)\eta-$  middles and intransitive syntax on the other. This coheres with our findings that the  $-(\theta)\eta-$  aorist was created from an inherently intransitive morpheme (stative  $*eh_1$ ), was initially applied to the intransitive uses of stative and change-of-state verbs, and also functioned as the intransitive alternate to transitive sigmatic forms. Still, it must be said that due to the relative novelty of the  $-(\theta)\eta-$  forms and their spread into the domain of their sigmatic counterparts, we cannot present the clear-cut equation:  $-\sigma\alpha-$  = transitive;  $-(\theta)\eta-$  = intransitive.

Rutger J. Allan's study on the Classical Greek middle necessitates one further qualification pertaining to Greek middle voice transitivity. Thus far we have discussed transitivity purely along the lines of formal syntax. Transitive verbs are those which take a direct object; intransitive verbs are those which do not.<sup>183</sup> Yet Allan's usage types remind us that transitivity can be viewed semantically as well. The subject of middle-marked verbs can fill various semantic roles including agent, beneficiary, experiencer,

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<sup>183</sup> A third option in verbal transitivity is the presence of di-transitivity. Di-transitive verbs are those which require three arguments—as in the sentences “I taught him Greek” (subject and two objects), “I made him king” (subject, object, object complement), and “I gave them directions” (subject, object, indirect object) (See Rijksbaron, *The Syntax and Semantics of the Verb in Classical Greek*, 137). It does not appear that the middle voice served cases of di-transitivity. Instead, these constructions were relegated to the domain of the active voice.

and patient. These roles situate middle voice uses along a semantic continuum of higher or lower transitivity and show that transitivity can be present in a given verb to greater or lesser degree based on certain semantic features.

Paul J. Hopper and Sandra J. Thompson sought to show this very phenomenon in their article entitled “Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse.” They present the following list of elements that may affect transitivity in a verbal clause:<sup>184</sup>

Table 6. Semantic elements affecting transitivity

	<b>High Transitivity</b>	<b>Low Transitivity</b>
A. Participants	2 or more participants, A and O	1 participant
B. Kinesis	action	non-action
C. Aspect	telic	atelic
D. Punctuality	punctual	non-punctual
E. Volitionality	volitional	non-volitional
F. Affirmation	affirmative	negative
G. Mode	realis	irrealis
H. Agency	A high in potency	A low in potency
I. Affectedness of O	O totally affected	O not affected
J. Individuation of O	O highly individuated	O non-individuated

Each of these elements is listed as high or low according to the degree of transitivity, or effect on an object, it displays. The more “high transitivity” categories that are present in a given verbal situation, the higher the clause itself will be in transitivity, and vice versa. Thus Hopper and Thompson show that transitivity occurs on a sliding scale—a clause itself can be characterized as semantically more or less transitive.<sup>185</sup>

In light of Hopper and Thompson’s study and Allan’s description of the middle as a “marked departure from the prototypical transitive event,” we can also say that the

<sup>184</sup> Hopper and Thompson, “Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse,” 252.

<sup>185</sup> Hopper and Thompson, “Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse,” 253.

Classical Greek middle voice always displays *reduced* semantic transitivity.<sup>186</sup> This can be just slightly reduced, as in the case of the indirect reflexive where the subject is still very much an agent. It can be reduced to a greater degree so that it also aligns with syntactic intransitivity, as in the case of spontaneous process middles. Or, it can be reduced entirely, as in the case of the passive middle.

Therefore, when considering the relationship between the Greek middle voice and transitivity, it is important to distinguish between semantic and syntactic transitivity. Viewed semantically, the middle always marks a lowering of the degree of transitivity present in its clause. The subject is not marked solely as prototypical agent, but as agent-beneficiary, experiencer, or even patient. Viewed syntactically, the middle shows no strict association with transitivity. Middle-marked verbs can be either transitive or intransitive. Though the lines may be more neatly divided in the aorist tense between its  $-\sigma\alpha-$  and  $-(\theta)\eta-$  forms, the scenario is still not clear-cut. This syntactic phenomenon is to be expected since the middle covers such a wide range of event types.

Transitivity features reveal to us, then, that the middle voice in Classical Greek does not necessarily imply absence of agency or absence of effect on some other entity, for these features can still be present in a middle-marked verb. Syntactic intransitivity itself is not the most salient feature pertaining to the middle voice. The most salient feature is a semantic one, namely a marked focus on the subject.<sup>187</sup>

## Conclusion

This section has provided a lengthy discussion of the Classical Greek voice system. In many ways, we have seen connections with the voice systems of PIE, Hittite,

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<sup>186</sup> The language of reduced transitivity is Hopper and Thompson's (Hopper and Thompson, "Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse, 254).

<sup>187</sup> This is precisely along the lines of Hopper and Thompson's statement that "morphosyntactic markings tend to be sensitive to transitivity as a whole, rather than to the actual presence or absence of a second participant" (Hopper and Thompson, "Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse, 255). In other words, the Greek middle voice is marked for reduced (semantic) transitivity.

and Sanskrit. Classical Greek also points to an original binary voice opposition between active and middle. The Greek passive voice was an extension and subset of the middle. Interestingly, we found the continuation of PIE stative/subject-focused *\*H<sub>2</sub>* at work in the Greek primary and secondary medio-passive endings. Additionally, we found the continuation of stative/change-of-state PIE *\*eh<sub>1</sub>* at work in the so-called aorist (and future) passive infix *-(θ)η-*. This led to the conclusion that these *-(θ)η-* forms are fundamentally medio-passive.

Semantically, the Classical Greek middle voice marks the subject's involvement or affectedness in the verbal action. Once again, this subject focus found expression in a variety of middle voice "types." An appreciation of the capabilities of the middle voice and of the origins of the Greek *-(θ)η-* forms also led us to question the traditional category of deponency for middle-marked verbs. Finally, in Classical Greek we again found no strict correlation between the middle voice and syntactic transitivity. We did, however, find the need to distinguish between syntactic and semantic transitivity. Because of its focus on the verbal subject, the middle voice always displays a reduced semantic transitivity relative to the prototypical transitive event.

### Hellenistic Greek

The Hellenistic Greek Period encompasses Greek literature from the years 300 BC to AD 300. The grammatical voice system during this period was largely the same as in the Classical Period. There was, however, a decreased use of the middle voice in Hellenistic Greek, as well as some morphological change in aorist and future middle forms.<sup>188</sup> Because of the large overlap between middle voice morphology, syntax, and

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<sup>188</sup> F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), §307; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 3rd ed. (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), 803, 814. The middle voice is used 3,730 times in the GNT (compared to 20,735 active voice verbs and 3,659 passive voice verbs) (see Andreas J. Köstenberger, Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek* [Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020], 195).

semantics in the Classical and Hellenistic Periods, this section will be significantly shorter than the previous one.

### **Hellenistic Greek Middle Voice Morphology**

Hellenistic Greek displays the same voice paradigms as Classical Greek. Middle and passive forms are still identical in the present, imperfect, and perfect tenses, so that these tenses have a binary division between active and medio-passive. The aorist and future tenses still have a trinary division between active, middle, and so-called passive forms in  $-(\theta)\eta/(\theta)\eta\sigma-$ . These “passive” forms continue to perform other middle voice functions.

Still, Hellenistic Greek voice differs the most from Classical Greek in the realm of morphology. At times Hellenistic Greek prefers the active form where Classical Greek preferred the middle. This can be seen in two ways. First, some verbs that took future middle forms in the Classical Period take active forms in the Hellenistic Period. For example, we find the active  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\eta}\sigma\omega$  in the place of Classical  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\eta}\sigma\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ , and active  $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\omega$  in the place of Classical  $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ .<sup>189</sup> Second, certain verbs frequently formed in the middle voice in Classical Greek are more commonly formed in the active in Hellenistic Greek. We can note, for example, a diminished use of middle voice  $\pi\omicron\iota\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$  with verbal nouns.<sup>190</sup> In these ways, we find a decreased use of the middle voice in the Hellenistic Period.

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<sup>189</sup> Heinrich von Siebenthal, *Ancient Greek Grammar for the Study of the New Testament* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2019), 296. See also Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 333. But note the future middle of 14x  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$  in the LXX (0x in GNT) and the future middle of  $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\omega$  69x combined in the LXX and GNT.

<sup>190</sup> Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 802; von Siebenthal, *Ancient Greek Grammar*, 296. But note the use of  $\pi\omicron\iota\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$  32x combined in the LXX and GNT. As with  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$  and  $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\omega$  in the note above, the shift to active forms was by no means complete. Conversely, sometimes we find a shift in the other direction—a form commonly active in Classical Greek may take the middle voice in Hellenistic (BDF, 165 [§316]; von Siebenthal, *Ancient Greek Grammar*, 299). The use of active and middle forms simply varied between time periods, authors, and localities (so James Hope Moulton, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, vol. 1 [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1906], 158-59; Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 333).

The most significant morphological variation in voice occurred in the aorist and future -(θ)η- forms. These forms continued to spread and supplant the use of sigmatic middle forms during the Hellenistic Period. Thus, while the -(θ)η- form was used increasingly to communicate the middle voice, it was also utilized alongside the old aorist or future middle form with identical meaning. We can note, for example, the use of ἀπεκρίθην (alongside ἀπεκρίνατο) and ἐγενήθην (alongside ἐγενόμην).<sup>191</sup> This spread of the -(θ)η- form would continue until it completely replaced all sigmatic aorist and future middle forms. In Modern Greek, for example, the aorist and future tense forms are divided between active forms and medio-passive forms inherited from -(θ)η-.<sup>192</sup>

### **Hellenistic Greek Middle Voice Semantics**

The semantic value of the middle voice in Hellenistic Greek is also the same as in Classical Greek. The middle continues to communicate a marked focus on the subject's involvement or affectedness in the verbal action. We find the following definitions in Hellenistic Greek grammars: the middle voice “describes the subject as participating in the results of the action.”<sup>193</sup> “The middle calls special attention to the subject.”<sup>194</sup> Middle verbs “present the ‘action’ (or whatever the verb denotes) as being primarily caused by the subject entity (as its agent). In addition to this they indicate greater subject-affectedness.”<sup>195</sup>

As in Classical Greek, the distinction between some active and middle verbs in

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<sup>191</sup> For examples of this in the LXX and GNT, see pp. 102-4 (γίνομαι) and pp. 189-91 (ἀποκρίνομαι).

<sup>192</sup> See the description of Modern Greek voice forms in David Holton, Peter Mackridge, and Irene Philippaki-Warburton, *Greek: A Comprehensive Grammar*, rev. Vassilios Spyropoulos (New York: Routledge, 2012), 140-64, 275-84. So also Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 334; BDF, 161 (§307).

<sup>193</sup> H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan: 1955), 157.

<sup>194</sup> Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 804.

<sup>195</sup> von Siebenthal, *Ancient Greek Grammar*, 300.

Hellenistic Greek may have been small and at times difficult for the modern reader to perceive. But the definitions above indicate that the middle voice still had a semantic significance in the Hellenistic Period. Hellenistic Greek writers felt the subject-focused nuance of the middle voice and were able to distinguish it from the active voice.

From the core “subject-focused” meaning of the middle, Hellenistic Greek grammarians describe many different categories of middle voice usage. These categories are again similar to the ones described for Classical Greek. They include the direct reflexive, indirect reflexive, reciprocal, and causative or permissive middle uses.<sup>196</sup> Each of these categories are expressions of the way the subject is affected or highly involved in the verbal action. In light of them, we can again see that the middle voice had a functioning semantic force in the Hellenistic Period.

Finally, though many middle verbs in Hellenistic Greek clearly focus specially on the subject, many others are not so clear. For this reason, many Hellenistic grammars continue to wrestle with the possibility of “deponent” middle verbs. For some, the deponent middle is a common middle category in Hellenistic Greek.<sup>197</sup> For others, “one

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<sup>196</sup> Grammarians typically note that the direct reflexive middle was used less frequently than in Classical Greek. Hellenistic Greek preferred the active verb plus reflexive pronoun (see, for example, Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 806-7). The indirect reflexive middle category is again extremely broad, indicating various ways in which the subject acts for himself, by himself, or in his own interest. This category is also labeled the intensive, dynamic, or special interest middle (see Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996], 419; Köstenberger, Merkle, and Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek*, 197). In the “causative” or “permissive” middle, the subject permits or causes something to be done to himself. The classic example given for this middle use is Acts 22:16 (ἀναστὰς βάπτισαι [“rising, have yourself baptized”]). This is a questionable category. There are certainly contexts (as in Acts 22:16) where the subject of the middle verb allows or causes something to be done for himself, but this is deduced more from context than the verb’s middle ending (see also the critique of this category for Classical Greek in Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 115-17). Hellenistic Greek grammars also sometimes describe a “redundant middle” category. In this case, a middle voice verb is used with reflexive pronoun. This is also a questionable category. In many of the examples cited, a verb’s middle morphology is present for reasons other than direct reflexivity. In these cases, the reflexive pronoun is *necessary* to communicate the reflexive idea. At the very least, the addition of the reflexive pronoun may be emphatic (for an example of the “redundant middle” category, see Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 418-19; Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 811).

<sup>197</sup> See, for example, Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 428. For a thorough defense of deponency in Hellenistic Greek, see Stratton L. Ladewig, “Defining Deponency.”



might be justified in seeing some middle sense in all middle verbs.”<sup>198</sup> Because of the increased spread of aorist and future  $-(\theta)\eta-$  forms, there is also much discussion of “passive” deponents in grammars of the Hellenistic Period.

In the previous section, I presented concerns over the category of deponency for the Classical Greek voice system. Those same concerns apply for Hellenistic Greek. If we understand the diachronic development of the  $-(\theta)\eta-$  form, and if we understand the various applications that middle voice “subject focus” can take, and if we are sensitive to the notion that ancient Greeks may have felt the “middle sense” of verbs more keenly than we do, then we should be hesitant to use the deponent label. In the coming chapters, I will seek to explain the subject-focused semantics of many middle-marked Greek verbs given this label.

### **Hellenistic Greek Middle Voice Syntax**

Finally, the syntax of middle voice verbs in Hellenistic Greek is the same as it was in Classical Greek. Verbs with active, middle, and passive function in Hellenistic Greek can all be either transitive or intransitive.<sup>199</sup> The same verb can vary in transitivity based on its usage. To be sure, the switch from active to middle voice sometimes alters a verb’s transitivity, but this is not always the case. Middle voice verbs can be found in Hellenistic Greek without an object, with an accusative object, and with an object in oblique cases. They can even be transformed into passive clauses. All of this shows that

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<sup>198</sup> Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 72. Note also Dana and Mantey: “the student should employ all the knowledge he has and all the linguistic sense at his command in seeking an intelligent explanation of any and every occurrence of the middle” (Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 159). For a recent Hellenistic Grammar that questions the concept of deponency, see Köstenberger, Merkle, and Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek*.

<sup>199</sup> When the passive voice has an accusative object, this object is often retained from a ditransitive active construction. For example, the sentence “They served John a meal” (ditransitive) can be transformed into “John was served a meal” (passive with retained object). This accusative can be defined adverbially as an accusative of respect (Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 66).

there is not a strict correlation between the middle voice and syntactic transitivity.<sup>200</sup>

At the same time, we should again be careful to distinguish between *syntactic* transitivity and *semantic* transitivity as we assess the Hellenistic Greek middle. Semantically, the middle voice marks a departure from the prototypical transitive event. The subject of these verbs is either an experiencer, beneficiary, recipient, or patient as the verbal action points back on him in some way. Therefore, while syntactically either transitive or intransitive, the middle voice in Hellenistic Greek always displays decreased semantic transitivity relative to this prototypical transitive event.<sup>201</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The evidence from Hellenistic Greek reveals a voice system largely similar to Classical Greek. Some of the major differences are a switch to active voice forms in some verbs and an increased use of the aorist and future  $-(\theta)\eta-$  forms to communicate the middle voice. The Hellenistic Greek middle continued to mark subject focus. It displayed no strict connection with syntactic intransitivity but was associated with reduced semantic transitivity.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a diachronic sketch of middle voice phenomena in PIE, Hittite, Sanskrit, Classical Greek, and Hellenistic Greek. The goal of this study was twofold. First, this allows us to see common middle voice features in related IE languages. Second, this allows us to appreciate middle voice traits that Greek inherited from its ancestors. These findings will potentially help us to better understand middle-

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<sup>200</sup> For a thorough warning not to conflate the categories transitivity and voice, see Roberston, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 330-31.

<sup>201</sup> See pp. 82-85 of this work for a more complete discussion of the Greek middle voice and semantic transitivity.

marked verbs in the LXX and GNT. The evidence above allows us to draw at least four major conclusions.

First, *each language operated with an original binary active-middle voice opposition*. To the speakers of these languages, a verbal action was fundamentally either active or middle. Another way of saying this is that a verbal action could be portrayed as either *default* or *subject-focused*. Viewed this way, the passive voice was a subset of the middle, being the most heightened expression of “subject-affectedness.” This binary voice opposition was reflected morphologically as passive forms developed later and as middle and passive verbs often took the same form. Therefore, these voice systems were different from English, which operates with the binary active-passive voice opposition. When an English speaker approaches a language such as Greek, he must learn to think about verbal actions in a slightly different way.

Second, *morphologically, the middle forms of each language inherited a “subject-focused” DNA*. This can be seen in the continuation of PIE stative  $*H_2$  in the Hittite, Sanskrit, and Greek middle voice endings. It can also be seen in the continuation of PIE stative/change-of-state  $*eh_1$  in Greek  $-(\theta)\eta-$  forms. Not only do these morphological observations enable us to connect the categories stative verb, perfect tense, and middle voice, they help us to see the “subject-focused” semantic core of the middle.

Third, *in each language the middle’s core meaning (“subject focus”) was applied to a wide variety of verbal types and expressions*. The middle voice fundamentally marked the subject’s involvement or affectedness in the verbal action. This meaning was applied to kinds of actions such as passive, stative, spontaneous process, direct reflexive, and indirect reflexive (to name a few). Again, these applications were not random or arbitrary but revolved around the core meaning of “subject focus.” Therefore, when approaching a language such as Greek, we should be prepared to find middle marking on many different kinds of verbs. While the rationale for this marking

may not be immediately apparent, we should seek to appreciate the reason the verb was formed in this way.<sup>202</sup>

Fourth, *in each language the middle voice was not strictly associated with syntactic (in)transitivity but was associated with reduced semantic transitivity*. When thinking about the middle voice and transitivity, we must consider both syntactical and semantic features. On the one hand, we cannot make the simple equation “middle verb = intransitive syntax.” The subject of a middle verb can be agentive, and his action can affect a direct object (i.e., be syntactically transitive). On the other hand, because of the middle’s focus on the verbal subject, we can think of the middle as marking a departure from the prototypical transitive event. Not surprisingly, this reduced semantic transitivity often lends itself to intransitive syntax.

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<sup>202</sup> As we seek to appreciate the rationale for middle marking on ancient Greek verbs, we can remember that this tells us something about how ancient Greek speakers/writers viewed reality. To them, a verbal action may have seemed inherently subject-focused (even though it may not seem so to us). For this helpful reminder, see Jonathan T. Pennington, “Setting Aside ‘Deponency’: Rediscovering the Greek Middle Voice in New Testament Studies,” in *The Linguist as Pedagogue: Trends in the Teaching and Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Matthew Brook O’Donnell (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 188-90.

## CHAPTER 3

### MIDDLE VOICE IN THE LXX AND GNT (PART 1): THE PASSIVE, SPONTANEOUS PROCESS, AND MENTAL STATE MIDDLE TYPES

The previous chapter outlined a historical sketch of the middle voice in ancient Indo-European languages. We considered middle voice morphology, syntax, and semantics in Proto-Indo-European, Hittite, Sanskrit, Classical Greek, and Hellenistic Greek. This sketch provides a general framework for analyzing middle voice usage in the Septuagint and Greek New Testament.

Morphologically, one of the most significant observations for Greek occurred in the aorist tense. The so-called aorist passive form actually developed from intransitive constructions denoting the passive voice *and* a network of other meanings associated with the middle voice. These forms in  $-(\theta)\eta-$  are actually passive or middle in function and were supplanting the use of sigmatic middle forms during the Hellenistic Period. As such, we would expect to find them used in both middle and passive constructions in the LXX and GNT.

Semantically, the middle voice was capable of conveying a wide range of meanings. This meant that middle morphology could be found on a vast array of lexemes and verbal types. Yet these many meanings are not random and unrelated. They all revolve around the core semantics of “subject focus.” In one way or another, they point the direction of the verbal action back onto its subject. Therefore, we would expect to find many semantic “types” of middle voice verbs in the LXX and GNT. At the same time, at a bare minimum we would expect to find a marked focus on the subject’s involvement in the verbal event in each case.

Syntactically, we found that the middle voice was not strictly associated with intransitive constructions. Middle-marked verbs are often used with intransitive syntax, but they are also capable of occurring with a formal direct object. The main rationale for middle marking is semantic, not syntactic. Therefore, we would expect to find both transitive and intransitive middle voice verbs in the LXX and GNT. We would also expect to find these verbs covering a range of semantic transitivity.

What remains is to analyze the data. This will be the task of the next four chapters. In these chapters I will apply Rutger J. Allan's eleven types of middle voice usage in Classical Greek to middle voice usage in Hellenistic Greek—specifically the Septuagint and Greek New Testament. The goal will be to appreciate more fully the middle marking on verbs in this literature. This chapter will consider the passive, spontaneous process, and mental state middle types. Chapter 4 will consider the body motion, collective motion, and reciprocal middle types. Chapter 5 will consider the direct reflexive, perception, and mental activity middle types. Finally, chapter 6 will consider the speech act and indirect reflexive middle categories.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Passive Middle**

The passive middle category describes medio-passive forms (whether in  $-\text{[}\theta\text{]}\eta\text{-}$  or  $-\sigma\alpha\text{-}$ ) that have passive function. In such clauses, the patient is promoted to subject-status. The agent can be expressed or implied. The important factor is that the agent is at least conceptually, or contextually, present.<sup>2</sup> Below are examples of the passive middle with agent both expressed and implied.

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<sup>1</sup> For the LXX examples in chapters 3-6, I have used LXX chapter and verse numbers.

<sup>2</sup> See Rutger J. Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek: A Study in Polysemy*, Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology 11 (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2003), 58. See also Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 431. Wallace lists reasons why the agent may only be implied: it may be obvious from context, the focus of the passage may be on the subject, the verb functions as an equative verb, or the agent is suppressed for rhetorical effect (Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 435-38).

## Σώζω

### Isaiah 45:17

Ἰσραὴλ σώζεται ὑπὸ κυρίου σωτηρίαν αἰώνιον· οὐκ αἰσχυνθήσονται οὐδὲ μὴ ἐντραπῶσιν ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος

Israel **is saved** by the Lord with an eternal salvation; they will not be ashamed, nor disgraced forever.

### Isaiah 45:22

ἐπιστρέφητε πρὸς με καὶ σωθήσεσθε, οἱ ἀπ' ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς· ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ θεός, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἄλλος

Turn to me and you will **be saved**, you who are from the end of the earth; I am God, and there is no other.

Isaiah 45 provides illustration of σώζω in passive clauses. In Isaiah 45:17, the agent (the Lord) is explicitly mentioned by a prepositional phrase with ὑπό. In Isaiah 45:22, the agent is implied (no ὑπό phrase) but conceptually present. The latter half of the verse and the broader context of Isaiah 45 make it clear that this salvation is accomplished “by the Lord.”

## Βαπτίζω

### Matthew 3:13

Τότε παραγίνεται ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰορδάνην πρὸς τὸν Ἰωάννην τοῦ βαπτισθῆναι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John in order to **be baptized** by him.

### Acts 18:8

Κρίσπος δὲ ὁ ἀρχισυνάγωγος ἐπίστευσεν τῷ κυρίῳ σὺν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν Κορινθίων ἀκούοντες ἐπίστευον καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο

And Crispus the synagogue ruler believed in the Lord with his whole house, and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and **were baptized**.

In Matthew 13:13, John the Baptist, the agent of passive βαπτισθῆναι, is explicitly mentioned through a prepositional phrase with ὑπό. Acts 18:8 shows, however, that the agent does not need to be explicitly mentioned for a medio-passive form of βαπτίζω to be rendered as passive. In this latter case, given the evidence of 1 Corinthians 1:14 that Paul baptized Crispus (and the theological problems with rendering this form as a direct reflexive middle), we can say that the agent of ἐβαπτίζοντο is conceptually present.

Again, the category “passive middle” refers to middle *forms* that have passive *function*. Still, this category may seem confusing. Does this indicate the blurring of two separate voice categories? But the passive middle category is helpful for at least two reasons. First, it reminds us that the Greek voice system was originally binary, between the active and middle voices. Second, it shows the close semantic relationship between the passive and middle voices. We must remember that the middle voice covers a spectrum of scenarios in which the subject is affected by the verbal action. The passive voice lies at one extreme end of this spectrum. In this sense, the passive is a subset of the middle, being the most highly affected middle voice type.

### **The Spontaneous Process Middle**

The spontaneous process middle involves a subject that undergoes an internal, physical change of state. Spontaneous process actions are distinguished from the passive middle in that they do not involve an implied external agent. Still, like the passive middle their subject occupies the semantic role of patient.<sup>3</sup> Spontaneous process events are inherently one-participant events, and the middle marking that attends them highlights a focus on the subject’s affectedness in the verbal action.

Hellenistic Greek attests a number of middle-marked verbs that can be classified as spontaneous process middles. In many cases, these spontaneous process middles have a causative active counterpart. Their aorist tense forms are always marked with -(θ)η-. Below are examples of this middle voice type in the LXX and GNT.

### **Ἀπόλλυμι**

First, ἀπόλλυμι provides helpful examples of the spontaneous process middle. Ἀπόλλυμι is used frequently in the LXX and GNT, occurring 466 times. When used in

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<sup>3</sup> For these comments on spontaneous process middle verbs, see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 60.



the active voice, it most often has the causative meaning “destroy,” as in Psalm 5:7 and Matthew 12:14.

**Psalm 5:7**

ἀπολεῖς πάντας τοὺς λαλοῦντας τὸ ψεῦδος· ἄνδρα αἱμάτων καὶ δόλιον βδελύσσεται κύριος

You will **destroy** all those who speak the lie; a man of bloodshed and deceit the Lord loathes.

**Matthew 12:14**

ἐξεληθόντες δὲ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι συμβούλιον ἔλαβον κατ’ αὐτοῦ ὅπως αὐτὸν ἀπολέσωσιν

And going out, the Pharisees took counsel against him as to how they might **destroy** him.

In Psalm 5:7, the future active ἀπολεῖς indicates that God will destroy, or “cause to perish,” liars (τοὺς λαλοῦντας τὸ ψεῦδος [accusative direct object]). In Matthew 12:14, the aorist active subjunctive ἀπολέσωσιν again occurs with an explicit direct object (αὐτὸν) and causative meaning. The Pharisees want to cause Jesus to perish, or to “destroy” him.

On a few occasions, the active form of ἀπόλλυμι occurs with the meaning “lose.” Though these occurrences may lack the causative sense of the examples above (thus, they have lowered *semantic* transitivity), they still stand in marked contrast and heightened transitivity when compared to their middle counterparts. As an example of active-transitive ἀπόλλυμι meaning “lose,” note Mark 8:35.<sup>4</sup>

**Mark 8:35**

ὃς γὰρ ἐὰν θέλῃ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ σῶσαι ἀπολέσει αὐτήν· ὃς δ’ ἂν ἀπολέσει τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἕνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου σώσει αὐτήν

For whoever wants to save his soul **will lose** it, but whoever **will lose** his soul for my sake and the gospel’s will save it.

These active voice examples stand in contrast to occurrences of ἀπόλλυμι in the medio-passive form. While some medio-passive forms of ἀπόλλυμι are to be rendered

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<sup>4</sup> For an example of this usage from the LXX, note Tob 7:6b: καὶ ἀκούσας ὅτι Τωβιτ ἀπόλεσεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ, ἐλυπήθη καὶ ἔκλαυσεν (“And hearing that Tobit had lost his eyes, he grieved and wept”).

as passives,<sup>5</sup> all occurrences denoting middle function have spontaneous process meaning. The subject of these verbs is a patient who undergoes an internal, physical change of state. In the case of ἀπόλλυμι, he changes from life to death, or “perishes.”

### **Numbers 16:33**

καὶ κατέβησαν αὐτοὶ καὶ ὅσα ἐστὶν αὐτῶν ζῶντα εἰς ᾄδου, καὶ ἐκάλυπεν αὐτοὺς ἡ γῆ, καὶ **ἀπόλοντο** ἐκ μέσου τῆς συναγωγῆς

And they and as much as was theirs went down alive into Hades, and the earth covered them, and **they perished** from the midst of the congregation.

### **Luke 13:3**

οὐχί, λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀλλ’ ἐὰν μὴ μετανοῆτε πάντες ὁμοίως **ἀπολεισθε**

No, I tell you, but unless you repent you will all likewise **perish**.

In the verses above, ἀπόλλυμι has a middle voice function. With no direct object or focus on an external agent, the medio-passive morphology on these verbs highlights the subject’s involvement in the verbal action. Specifically, it denotes “spontaneous process” action, as the subject undergoes a change-of-state. In Numbers 16:33, those involved in Korah’s rebellion passed into the state of death. In Luke 13:3, those who refuse to repent also face the destructive prospect of “perishing.”

Before moving on from examples involving ἀπόλλυμι, we should note one other use of this term in the active voice. On some occasions, the syntax and semantics of ἀπόλλυμι in the active voice overlap closely with its use in the middle. Note the following two examples from Micah and Luke.

### **Micah 7:2a**

ὅτι **ἀπόλωλεν** εὐλαβῆς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς, καὶ κατορθῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις οὐχ ὑπάρχει

Because the godly **has perished** from the land, and the upright among men does not exist.

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<sup>5</sup> The clearest examples to be rendered as passives are those with explicit agency clauses. For example, see 1 Macc 11:18; 1 Cor. 10:9, 10 (with agency expressed by ὑπό) and probably Matt. 26:52; 1 Cor 8:11 (with agency expressed by ἐν). The spontaneous process middle is more closely aligned with the passive than any other middle use. In some medio-passive uses of ἀπόλλυμι, it is difficult to determine whether external agency is implied (i.e., passive function) or the focus is on the subject’s change of state (i.e., spontaneous process function). Sometimes the distinction is too fine to make much of an exegetical difference. Ultimately, this demonstrates the close relationship between the passive and middle voices in Greek.

### Luke 15:32

εὐφρανθῆναι δὲ καὶ χαρῆναι ἔδει, ὅτι ὁ ἀδελφός σου οὗτος νεκρὸς ἦν καὶ ἔζησεν, καὶ ἀπολωλὼς καὶ εὐρέθη

But it is necessary to rejoice and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and (now) lives, and was lost and has been found.

Ἀπόλωλεν in Micah 7:2 and ἀπολωλὼς in Luke 15:32 are both marked for the active voice, yet they are intransitive and have meanings similar to the middle voice examples above.<sup>6</sup> How do we account for this apparent breakdown in distinction between the voices? The answer is likely in the tense form used. Both forms occur in the perfect tense. Indeed, there are no perfect middle forms of ἀπολλύμι in the LXX or GNT, and most perfect active forms have functions similar to the ones cited above.<sup>7</sup>

This usage aligns with our observations in chapter 2 on the historical relationship between the perfect tense and the middle voice. The perfect tense typically denotes a state—in Micah 7:2 the state of having “perished” and in Luke 15:32 the state of being “lost.” Stative actions are inherently one-participant events focused on the “activity” (state) of the subject. Therefore, the subject focus of the perfect tense aligns closely with the subject focus of the middle voice. The perfect middle form was a later innovation because middle endings on the perfect tense were often semantically redundant.<sup>8</sup> Such is probably the case with these uses of ἀπολλύμι. The subject’s place in the state of being “lost” (or “perished”), which could have been highlighted with a middle ending, is already being highlighted by the perfect tense.

### Ξηραίνω

Another verb that displays spontaneous process middle meaning is ξηραίνω. In

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<sup>6</sup> That “lost” overlaps with the idea of “perished” can be seen in Luke 15:32, where ἀπολωλὼς (“lost”) parallels νεκρὸς (“dead”).

<sup>7</sup> For other examples, see Ps 118:76; Ezek 12:22; Matt 15:24; Luke 19:10. For a particularly intriguing example, note how the perfect active of ἀπολλύμι is aligned with other medio-passive verbs in Num 17:27: Ἴδου ἐξαναλώμεθα, ἀπολώλαμεν, παρανηλώμεθα (“Behold, we are utterly destroyed, we have perished, we are ruined”).

<sup>8</sup> On this, see especially the discussion on pp. 35-38.

the active, ξηραίνω conveys the transitive-causative meaning “to dry something up.” In the middle, ξηραίνω typically conveys the intransitive-spontaneous process meaning “to dry up.” For example, note the following active forms in Psalm 73 and James 1.

**Psalm 73:15**

Σὺ διέρρηξας πηγὰς καὶ χειμάρρους, σὺ ἐξήρανας ποταμοὺς Ἡθαμ

You broke through springs and brooks, you dried up the rivers of Etham.

**James 1:11**

Ἀνέτειλεν γὰρ ὁ ἥλιος σὺν τῷ καύσωνι καὶ ἐξήρανε τὸν χόρτον, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτοῦ ἐξέπεσεν καὶ ἡ εὐπρέπεια τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἀπόλετο

For the sun rises with its burning heat and dries up the grass, and its flower falls and the beauty of its appearance perishes.

Both active forms of ξηραίνω are transitive and causative, and their subject fills the semantic role of agent. In Psalm 73:15, God causes the rivers to dry up. In James 1:11, the scorching heat of the sun causes the grass to dry up.

The following middle forms of ξηραίνω, however, communicate spontaneous process meaning.

**Mark 11:20-21**

Καὶ παραπορευόμενοι πρωὶ εἶδον τὴν συκὴν ἐξηραμμένην ἐκ ῥιζῶν. καὶ ἀναμνησθεὶς ὁ Πέτρος λέγει αὐτῷ· Ῥαββί, ἴδε ἡ συκὴ ἣν κατηράσω ἐξήρανται

And passing by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. And remembering, Peter said to him, “Rabbi, behold the fig tree which you cursed has withered.”

In Mark 11:20-21, the middle voice of ἐξηραμμένην and ἐξήρανται communicates an internal change of state on the part of the fig tree. The tree has dried up. The effect of this verbal action is focused entirely on the verb’s subject, which fills the semantic role of patient. In order to communicate this “subject focus,” Mark codes ξηραίνω with middle voice forms.

Ξηραίνω does not only provide additional evidence of the semantic distinction between middle and active verbal forms. This verb also displays the use of the -(θ)η-morpheme to communicate the middle voice. In fact, of the 72 occurrences of ξηραίνω in

the LXX and GNT, 58 occur as -(θ)η- forms. Many of these forms communicate middle spontaneous process meaning, as in Matthew 21:20 and Isaiah 40:7.

### **Matthew 21:20**

καὶ ἰδόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ ἐθαύμασαν λέγοντες· Πῶς παραχρῆμα ἐξηράνθη ἡ συκῆ;  
And when they saw, the disciples marveled, saying, “How did the fig tree wither immediately?”

The context of Matthew 21:20 is the same as the Mark 11:20-21 passage cited above. Matthew’s ἐξηράνθη communicates the same middle meaning as Mark’s ἐξήρανται, and it is unnecessary to force this aorist in -(θ)η- to be read as passive. Instead, in both cases the focus of the verbal action is on the internal change of the fig tree to a withered state.

### **Isaiah 40:7**

ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσεν  
The grass withers, and the flower fades.

In Isaiah 40:7, ἐξηράνθη again communicates a middle “spontaneous process” meaning. We do not need to read the form as passive simply because of the -(θ)η- morpheme, and there is no external agent mentioned that would require such a reading. Instead, in context Isaiah likens human frailty to the change of state grass often undergoes when it withers and dies. To describe this “subject-focused” action, the LXX translator coded ξηραίνω with -(θ)η- morphology.<sup>9</sup>

### **Γίνομαι**

Perhaps the best examples of a spontaneous process middle using -(θ)η- morphology can be seen with the verb γίνομαι. As indicated through its lexical form ending in -μαι, γίνομαι is inherently middle (subject-focused) in meaning. Further,

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<sup>9</sup> Notice that ἐξηράνθη is paralleled by the active ἐξέπεσεν in the next clause, adding more evidence that ἐξηράνθη is *not* to be read as passive. Both verbs communicate an intransitive, one-participant event. Subject-affectedness is explicitly communicated in the case of ἐξηράνθη through its -(θ)η- morpheme. This subject-affectedness may be inherent in verb ἐξέπεσεν but is simply not coded morphologically.

γίνομαι is inherently a spontaneous process middle, meaning “be born, happen, become, be.”<sup>10</sup> Its subject fills the semantic role of patient and often undergoes a change of state. Most importantly, usage of this verb in the LXX and GNT attests no semantic distinction between forms traditionally considered aorist middle (forms in -μην/σο/το) and forms traditionally considered aorist passive (forms in -[θ]η-). Both forms denote the middle voice, communicating spontaneous process meaning. For example, note the use of γίνομαι in Matthew 11.

### **Matthew 11:21**

Οὐαὶ σοι, Χοραζὶν· οὐαὶ σοι, Βηθσαϊδᾶ· ὅτι εἰ ἐν Τύρῳ καὶ Σιδῶνι ἐγένοντο αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γινόμεναι ἐν ὑμῖν, πάλαι ἂν ἐν σάκκῳ καὶ σποδῶ μετενόησαν

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that happened among you had happened in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in dust and ashes.

### **Matthew 11:23**

καὶ σύ, Καφαρναούμ, μὴ ἕως οὐρανοῦ ὑψωθῆσῃ; ἕως ᾅδου καταβήσῃ· ὅτι εἰ ἐν Σοδόμοις ἐγενήθησαν αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γινόμεναι ἐν σοί, ἔμεινεν ἂν μέχρι τῆς σήμερον

And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend into Hades. For if the miracles that happened among you had happened in Sodom, it would have remained until now.

The forms ἐγένοντο and ἐγενήθησαν are interchangeable in these two parallel statements of Jesus. Both forms focus solely on the subject’s involvement in the action: the miracles “happened.” No external agent is mentioned which would force ἐγενήθησαν to be read as passive. Both forms are (spontaneous process) middle.

Another straightforward example can be seen in Genesis 1:3.

### **Genesis 1:3**

Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός Γενηθήτω φῶς. Καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς

And God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light.

Although one form is imperative and the other indicative, both forms of γίνομαι in Genesis 1:3 communicate the same middle meaning. The forms focus entirely on the subject’s involvement in the verbal action and communicate a change of state on the part

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<sup>10</sup> BDAG, s.v. “γίνομαι.”

of the subject. In the first half of the verse, God commands the light to “come into existence.” In the second half of the verse, the light “comes into existence.”

## **Φαίω**

Finally, helpful examples of the spontaneous process middle can be seen with the verb φαίω. Not only does φαίω show further examples of aorists in -(θ)η- with middle meaning, but it also provides examples of active and middle forms that are both syntactically intransitive and yet still display distinction in meaning. In the active, φαίω means “shine, give light,” while in the middle, φαίω means “appear.” Note, for example, the following uses of φαίω in the active voice.

### **Genesis 1:17**

καὶ ἔθετο αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῷ στερεώματι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ὥστε φαίνειν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς

And God set them [the lights] in the firmament of heaven so that they might give light upon the earth.

### **John 1:5**

καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

In both of these cases, active voice φαίω is syntactically intransitive.<sup>11</sup> Still, its subject is semantically an agent. The focus of both verbs is not on an affected subject, but on an affected object (expressed by a prepositional phrase). The lights of Genesis 1 and John 1 “shine on” and thus “light up” (affect) the earth and darkness, respectively.

These uses of φαίω in the active voice stand in contrast to the use of φαίω in the middle voice, as the following examples show.

### **Matthew 2:19**

Τελευτήσαντος δὲ τοῦ Ἡρώδου ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ’ ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ

And when Herod had died, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.

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<sup>11</sup> Φαίω can occur with an accusative direct object, as in Ezek 32:8: πάντα τὰ φαίνοντα φῶς ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ συσκοτάσουσιν ἐπὶ σέ (“Everything that shines light in the heaven will darken over you”) (cf. also Ezek 32:7). Such cases are akin to the use of a cognate accusative. Ultimately the object “light” could be assumed with every occurrence of φαίω in the active voice.

### **Matthew 23:28**

οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔξωθεν μὲν **φαίνεσθε** τοῖς ἀνθρώποις δίκαιοι, ἔσωθεν δὲ ἐστε μεστοὶ ὑποκρίσεως καὶ ἀνομίας

So also you, on the outside you **appear** to men as righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

### **Numbers 23:4**

καὶ **ἐφάνη** ὁ θεὸς τῷ Βαλααμ, καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτὸν Βαλααμ Τοὺς ἑπτὰ βωμοὺς ἠτοίμασα καὶ ἀνεβίβασα μόσχον καὶ κριὸν ἐπὶ τὸν βωμόν

And God **appeared** to Balaam, and Balaam said to him, “I prepared seven altars and I brought up a calf and a ram upon the altar.

### **Luke 24:11**

καὶ **ἐφάνησαν** ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν ὡσεὶ λῆρος τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα, καὶ ἠπίσταν αὐταῖς

And these words **appeared** to them as nonsense, and they did not believe them.

In each of the four instances above, φαίνω functions as a spontaneous process middle, meaning “appear.” Notice that, like its active voice uses, these middle voice uses of φαίνω are syntactically intransitive. In each middle voice example, however, the focus is on the affected subject of the verb. The subject changes states as it becomes visible/apparent to the eyes or mind of another.<sup>12</sup>

Further, the latter two examples above show φαίνω in the aorist tense with -(θ)η- morphology. These cases do not differ in meaning from the former two present tense medio-passive forms. Indeed, the similar contexts of Matthew 2:19 and Numbers 23:4, with the angel/Lord “appearing” to someone, lend evidence to this interpretation.<sup>13</sup> In fact, φαίνω never occurs in the aorist “middle” (-σα-) form in the LXX or GNT. When these Greek writers wanted to communicate the middle voice for this verb in the aorist tense, it was natural and appropriate for them to use the -(θ)η- form.

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<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, the subject of φαίνω in Matt 2:19 and Num 23:4 displays agency and volition. Still, the focus is on the affected subject who moves from an “invisible” state to a “visible” one.

<sup>13</sup> There is also a compelling parallel between Num 23:3 and 23:4. In Num 23:3, the future middle form φανεῖται parallels and communicates the same meaning as the aorist form ἐφάνη cited above in Num 23:4. Both forms communicate the (spontaneous process) middle voice, meaning “appear.”



## Conclusion

The above analysis of ἀπολλύμι, ξηραίνω, γίνομαι, and φαίνω shows that the middle voice in the LXX and GNT sometimes functioned to communicate “spontaneous process” actions. Such actions involved an internal, physical change of state on the part of the subject. These events were naturally one participant (syntactically intransitive) events in which the subject filled the semantic role of patient.

These spontaneous process middles were coded with -(θ)η- morphology in the aorist tense. Further, they consistently displayed semantic distinction from their active counterparts. Often the active counterpart was syntactically transitive with causative meaning. Even when both active and middle forms were syntactically intransitive, however, we were still able to detect a distinction in meaning. This distinction resided in a lower *semantic* transitivity on the part of the middle voice verb, as it focused back on its affected subject.

### The Mental State Middle

Middle voice verbs in the mental state category involve a subject that is affected mentally. This mental affectedness can be emotional (as in ἀγαλλιάομαι, “I rejoice”) or cognitive (as in ἐπίσταμαι, “I know”). As such, the subject of these verbs often fills the semantic role of experiencer. Mental state middles can either occur as *media tantum* or as oppositional middles. As oppositional middles, the active counterpart is often causative, as in the examples of φοβέομαι, αἰσχύνομαι, and πείθω below.<sup>14</sup>

### Φοβέομαι

In the vast majority of cases in the LXX and GNT, φοβέομαι occurs in the middle (or medio-passive) form. When it is found in the active form, however, its function is causative. For example, we find the following occurrence in 2 Chronicles.

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<sup>14</sup> For these comments on mental state middle verbs, see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 64-67.

## 2 Chronicles 32:18

καὶ ἐβόησεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ Ἰουδαῖστί ἐπὶ λαὸν Ἱερουσαλημ τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ τείχους τοῦ **φοβῆσαι** αὐτοὺς καὶ κατασπάσαι, ὅπως προκαταλάβωνται τὴν πόλιν

And he cried out with a great voice in Judean to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall in order to **make them afraid** and pull them down, so that they might seize the city.

The aorist active imperative φοβῆσαι is clearly causative. The direct object αὐτούς is the affected entity in the clause, as the servants of Sennacherib seek to inflict fear in the people of Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup> This causative active use of φοβέομαι stands in marked contrast to its many middle voice uses.

## Exodus 14:10

καὶ Φαραὼ προσῆγεν· καὶ ἀναβλέψαντες οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ὄρωσιν, καὶ οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι ἐστρατοπέδευσαν ὀπίσω αὐτῶν, καὶ **ἐφοβήθησαν** σφόδρα· ἀνεβόησαν δὲ οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ πρὸς κύριον

And Pharaoh approached, and when they looked up, the sons of Israel saw with their eyes, and the Egyptians were encamped behind them, and they **became** exceedingly **afraid**, and the sons of Israel cried out to the Lord.

## Matthew 10:28

καὶ μὴ **φοβεῖσθε** ἀπὸ τῶν ἀποκτενόντων τὸ σῶμα τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν μὴ δυναμένων ἀποκτείνει· **φοβεῖσθε** δὲ μᾶλλον τὸν δυνάμενον καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα ἀπολέσαι ἐν γεέννῃ

And do not **fear** those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; rather, **fear** the one who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

## Acts 16:38

ἀπήγγειλαν δὲ τοῖς στρατηγοῖς οἱ ῥαβδούχοι τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα· **ἐφοβήθησαν** δὲ ἀκούσαντες ὅτι Ῥωμαῖοί εἰσιν

And the policemen reported these words to the magistrates. And they **became afraid** when they heard that they were Romans.

In each of the examples above, φοβέομαι is used in the middle voice to portray the verbal subject in the experience of fear. In Exodus 14:10, the Israelites experience great fear in the face of the daunting Egyptian army. In Matthew 10:28, Jesus claims that a person ought to fear God much more than people. In Acts 16:28, the Roman authorities become fearful that they have not given Paul (a Roman citizen) a proper trial.

Each of these middle voice verbs focuses attention on a highly affected subject,

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<sup>15</sup> In 2 Chr 32:18, φοβῆσαι translates a factitive use of נָרַי in the *Piel* stem. The only other occurrence of active voice φοβέω appears in Wis 17:9: καὶ γὰρ εἰ μηδὲν αὐτοὺς παραχῶδες ἐφόβει (“For even if no terrifying thing frightened them . . .”).

and this affectedness is mental. It is important to note that this middle marking does not necessitate that the clause be syntactically intransitive or that the direct object is unimportant. In Matthew 10:28, the second use of φοβεῖσθε is followed by the accusative direct object τὸν δυνάμενον [καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα ἀπολέσαι]. Here, φοβεῖσθε is syntactically transitive and its direct object (God) is of great importance in the clause. Thus, while not detracting from the importance of God as the appropriate source of fear, the middle voice of φοβεῖσθε also emphasizes the proper mental experience one is to have in relation to him.<sup>16</sup>

Further, note that the instances of aorist middle φοβέομαι in Exodus 14:10 and Acts 16:38 occur with -(θ)η- forms.<sup>17</sup> There is no external agent explicitly stated to suggest reading these forms as passive. Though there is an obvious broader contextual source of fear, the verbs are most naturally read as middle in their respective clauses. In fact, there is no -σα- aorist middle of φοβέομαι in the LXX or GNT. Of the 182 non-active occurrences of φοβέομαι in the aorist, each one is in the -(θ)η- form. Thus, we see again that -(θ)η- forms were capable of communicating either the middle or passive voice.

### **Αἰσχύνομαι**

Αἰσχύνομαι also displays a meaningful distinction between its active and middle forms. As with φοβέομαι, its active forms communicative a causative sense while its middle forms communicate a focus on the mental state of its subject. Consider the following active form.

#### **Proverbs 29:15**

πληγαὶ καὶ ἔλεγχοι διδῶσιν σοφίαν, παῖς δὲ πλανώμενος αἰσχύνει γονεῖς αὐτοῦ

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<sup>16</sup> For other instances of φοβέομαι with an accusative direct object, see Matt 14:5; Mark 6:20; Luke 22:2; John 9:22; Acts 9:26.

<sup>17</sup> These are probably ingressive aorists, denoting entry into the state of fear (see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 65).

Blows and reproofs give wisdom, but a child who goes astray **causes shame** to his parents.

In Proverbs 29:15, the child who wanders from the path of righteousness is an agent of shame to his parents. The subject of the active verb αἰσχύνει is not the experiencer of shame, but rather the causer of shame to others. This active voice use of αἰσχύνομαι contrasts with the following middle voice uses.

#### **Proverbs 20:4**

ὄνειδιζόμενος ὀκνηρὸς οὐκ **αἰσχύνεται**, ὡσαύτως καὶ ὁ δανιζόμενος σῆτον ἐν ἀμῆτῳ  
The lazy person, although he is reprov'd, **is not ashamed**; likewise also the one who borrows grain at the harvest.

#### **1 John 2:28**

Καὶ νῦν, τέκνια, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἵνα ἐὰν φανερωθῆ σχωμέν παρρησίαν καὶ μὴ **αἰσχυνθῶμεν** ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ

And now, children, remain in him, in order that when he appears we might have confidence and not **be ashamed** from him at his coming.

Rather than focusing attention on a highly affected object, both examples of middle voice αἰσχύνομαι above focus attention on an affected subject. In particular, the focus is on the subject's mental/emotional experience of shame. In Proverbs 20:4, the lazy man does not feel such shame even when reprov'd. In 1 John 2:28, the readers are to remain faithful to Jesus so that they do not experience shame when he returns. Notice that, in these examples, the heavy subject focus lends itself naturally to one-participant, intransitive clauses. Notice also that 1 John 2:28 provides another example of an aorist form in -(θ)η- denoting the middle voice.

#### **Πείθω**

We also find helpful examples of the mental state middle in the verb πείθω. To begin, πείθω again displays the alternation between causative active and subject-focused middle forms. Note the following active examples.

#### **1 Samuel 24:8a**

καὶ **ἔπεισεν** Δαυὶδ τοὺς ἄνδρας αὐτοῦ ἐν λόγοις καὶ οὐκ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἀναστάντας θανατῶσαι τὸν Σαουλ

And David **persuaded** his men with words and did not allow them to rise and put Saul to

death.

**Acts 18:4**

διελέγετο δὲ ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον, ἔπειθέν τε Ἰουδαίους καὶ Ἕλληνας

And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath, persuading both Jews and Greeks.

Both uses of active *πείθω* above are causative. The accusative direct object following them marks the affected entity of the clause. In 1 Samuel 24:8, David persuades his men to spare Saul's life. In Acts 18:4, Paul persuades Jews and Greeks that Jesus is the Christ.

When used in the middle voice, however, *πείθω* focuses on the mental affectedness of its subject. The subject is “persuaded” or “convinced,” as in Acts 26:26 and Hebrews 13:18.

**Acts 26:26**

λανθάνειν γὰρ αὐτὸν τούτων οὐ πείθομαι οὐθέν, οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἐν γωνίᾳ πεπραγμένον τοῦτο

For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his [the king's] notice, for this has not been done in a corner.

**Hebrews 13:18**

Προσεύχεσθε περὶ ἡμῶν, πειθόμεθα γὰρ ὅτι καλὴν συνείδησιν ἔχομεν, ἐν πᾶσιν καλῶς θέλοντες ἀναστρέφεσθαι

Pray for us, for we are convinced that we have a good conscience, wanting to conduct ourselves well in all things.

The examples of *πείθω* above are formally ambiguous between middle and passive voices. Yet there is no clear external agent requiring us to read them as passives. In Acts 26, Paul is convinced that King Agrippa knows about the death and resurrection of Christ. In Hebrews 13, the church leaders are convinced in their own minds that they are behaving well. These verb forms are focused on the affectedness and mental experience of their subjects. Therefore, they should be read as middles.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> It is often difficult to know whether *πείθω* communicates the middle or passive voice, as BDAG attests (BDAG, s.v. *πείθω*, 3). This can also be the case when *πείθω* is used with *-(θ)η-* morphology in the aorist, as in Acts 17:4: καὶ τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπίσθησαν καὶ προσεκληρώθησαν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Σιλᾷ (“And some of them were persuaded and joined to Paul and Silas”). Is *ἐπίσθησαν* to be read as passive (pointing to Paul's words as the external agent that persuaded the people) or middle (pointing to the simple fact that the people were persuaded in their minds about Jesus [cf. the following *-(θ)η-* form,

When used in the in the middle voice, *πείθω* can also mean “obey.” This is a natural extension of the meaning “be persuaded,” because being persuaded about something often leads to following, or obeying, a certain course of action. Note the following examples.

#### **Hebrews 13:17**

**Πείθεσθε** τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν καὶ ὑπέικετε, αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἀγρυπνοῦσιν ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν ὡς λόγον ἀποδώσοντες

**Obey** your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account.

#### **4 Maccabees 6:4**

**Πείσθητι** ταῖς τοῦ βασιλέως ἐντολαῖς, ἐτέρωθεν κήρυκος ἐπιβοῶντος  
While a herald cried out on the other side, “**Obey** the commandments of the king!”

In Hebrews 13:17, the formally ambiguous *πείθεσθε* is to be read as middle. The church is called to obey their leaders, not be obeyed by them. In 4 Maccabees 6:4, we find the -(θ)η- form *πείσθητι* used for the same “middle” sense (“to obey”). These verbs are not middle or passive in form but active in meaning (i.e., deponent).<sup>19</sup> These are middle voice verbs, communicating an extension of the mental-state middle meaning, “be persuaded.”

In fact, these “extended” uses of *πείθω* demonstrate the range of transitivity that the middle voice is capable of displaying. Uses of middle voice *πείθω* meaning “obey” are higher in transitivity than uses of middle voice *πείθω* meaning “be persuaded.” This can be seen semantically in that the subject of a verb meaning “obey” fills the role of agent, while the subject of a verb meaning “be persuaded” fills the role of experiencer. This can also be seen syntactically in Hebrews 13:17 and 4 Maccabees 6:4,

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*προσεκληρώθησαν*, to be read as middle])? Ultimately both nuances are true. This ambiguity highlights the close relationship between the middle and passive voices in Greek as both focus on an affected subject.

<sup>19</sup> This is true even though the middle *πείθεσθε* is aligned with active *ὑπέικετε* (“submit”) in Heb 13:17. Alignment with active *ὑπέικετε* does not prove that middle *πείθεσθε* is also active in meaning. The reason for its middle marking lies in *πείθω*’s basic meaning, “to persuade.” We should be sensitive to the nuances of each member of a verbal pair, and in this case the use of middle voice *πείθω* calls attention to the mental commitment involved in obedience. This example, then, provide clues for the broader problem of middle-marked verbs with active synonyms or contextually active parallels. At times the answer to this dilemma lies in understanding each verb’s root meaning.

as both occurrences of middle voice *πειθω* are followed by a direct object (in the dative).<sup>20</sup> In Hebrews 13:17, the writer calls the church to obey τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὑμῶν (“your leaders”). In 4 Maccabees 6:4, a man is called to obey ταῖς ἐντολαῖς (“commandments”). Therefore, we see again that the middle voice operates within a range of transitivity, both semantically and syntactically.

Finally, we find several instances of *πειθω* in the second perfect and pluperfect tenses in the LXX and GNT. These uses communicate a meaning similar to the mental state middle examples given above, and yet they are marked for the active voice. Consider the following examples.

**Proverbs 28:1**

φεύγει ἀσεβῆς μηδενὸς διώκοντος, δίκαιος δὲ ὥσπερ λέων πέποιθεν

The ungodly flee when no one is pursuing, but the righteous **is confident** as a lion.

**2 Corinthians 10:7**

Τὰ κατὰ πρόσωπον βλέπετε. εἴ τις πέποιθεν ἑαυτῷ Χριστοῦ εἶναι, τοῦτο λογιζέσθω πάλιν ἐφ’ ἑαυτοῦ ὅτι καθὼς αὐτὸς Χριστοῦ οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς

Look at the things before your face. If anyone is **convinced** in himself that he belongs to Christ, let him consider again about himself that just as he belongs to Christ, so also do we.

These second perfect active forms communicate the same meaning that we have seen in other middle-marked forms above. They indicate the mentally “confident” or “convinced” state of the subject. This “subject-focused” meaning is particularly clear in 2 Corinthians 10:7 through the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτῷ. Paul is speaking to the person who is experiencing confidence in his own mind.

At other times, second perfect active forms of *πειθω* communicate the meaning “to trust in.” This use is frequent in the LXX.

**Psalms 117:8**

ἀγαθὸν πεποιθέναι ἐπὶ κύριον ἢ πεποιθέναι ἐπ’ ἄνθρωπον

<sup>20</sup> When *πειθω* communicates the passive voice, the agent is marked with the dative (σὺ οὖν μὴ πεισθῆς αὐτοῖς [“Therefore do not be persuaded by them”], Acts 23:21). When *πειθω* means “obey” in the middle voice, the dative is retained to mark the object (BDAG, s.v. *πειθω*, 3). In these latter cases, the dative marks both the verbal object and the “source of influence” calling for obedience from the verbal subject.

It is better **to trust** in the Lord than **to trust** in men.

### **Luke 18:9**

Εἶπεν δὲ καὶ πρὸς τινὰς τοὺς **πεποιθότας** ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ὅτι εἰσὶν δίκαιοι καὶ ἐξουθενοῦντας τοὺς λοιποὺς τὴν παραβολὴν ταύτην

And he also said this parable to some who **trusted** in themselves that they were righteous, and despised the rest.

The examples above are similar to cases of middle voice *πείθω* meaning “to obey.” They are a natural extension of the meaning “to be convinced/confident” because one trusts in things of which he is confident.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, these second perfect active forms of *πείθω*, meaning “to trust in,” also communicate a mental state meaning.

How are we to account for the similar meaning between these active and middle forms? The answer is likely found in the tense form used, as in the spontaneous process middle uses of *ἀπολλύμι* seen above. We have noted the close historic and semantic relationship between the perfect tense and the middle voice. This close relationship rendered the middle ending redundant in many cases because the perfect tense itself denoted the subject focus of the middle voice. In the case of *πείθω*, the second perfect forms focus on the “convinced” mental state of their subjects. While a perfect middle form of *πείθω* did eventually arise in Greek,<sup>22</sup> these second perfect active forms reflect a relic of the past, when the perfect tense form itself was sufficient to communicate subject-focused (“middle”) meaning.

### **Σπλαγχνίζομαι**

Some mental process middle verbs can be classified as *media tantum*. The middle morphology on such verbs marks a subject-focused meaning inherent in the verb itself. Note, for example, the use of *σπλαγχνίζομαι*.

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<sup>21</sup> As a kind of bridge between the meaning “be confident” and the meaning “trust in,” we can note the many periphrastic constructions involving *πείθω* in the LXX. For example, 2 Sam 22:3: ὁ θεὸς μου φύλαξ ἔσται μου, πεποιθὼς ἔσομαι ἐπ' αὐτῷ (“my God is my guard, I will be confident in [= trust in] him”) (cf. Isa 8:17; 10:20).

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, 2 Macc 9:27; Tob 14:4; Luke 20:6; Rom 8:38; Heb 6:9.



### Mark 8:2

**Σπλαγγίζομαι** ἐπὶ τὸν ὄχλον ὅτι ἤδη ἡμέραι τρεῖς προσμένουσίν μοι καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσιν τί φάγωσιν

I **have compassion** on the crowd, because they have already remained with me three days and they do not have anything to eat.

### Mark 6:34

καὶ ἐξελθὼν εἶδεν πολὺν ὄχλον, καὶ **ἐσπλαγγίσθη** ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς ὅτι ἦσαν ὡς πρόβατα μὴ ἔχοντα ποιμένα, καὶ ἤρξατο διδάσκειν αὐτοὺς πολλὰ

And coming out, he saw a great crowd, and he **had compassion** on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things.

Both of Mark’s uses of *σπλαγγίζομαι* above show that Jesus experienced compassion or pity. The verb’s relationship to the noun *σπλάγγιον* (“inward parts, entrails”) shows that this experience is deep within Jesus—in his heart.<sup>23</sup> This focus on the subject’s deep emotional experience is surely the rationale for verb’s middle marking. It is also important to note the parallel between *σπλαγγίζομαι* in Mark 8:2 and *ἐσπλαγγίσθη* in Mark 6:34, where the aorist *-(θ)η-* form occurs in a similar context and has the same meaning as the present tense *-μαι* form. Here we see another use of the aorist in *-(θ)η-* to communicate the middle voice.<sup>24</sup>

### Σέβομαι

*Σέβομαι* provides a final, interesting study of a verb used almost unanimously in the middle voice across the LXX and GNT.<sup>25</sup> While this verb, meaning “to worship,” occurs in the middle voice thirty times, the rationale for its middle marking is not immediately clear. Consider the following examples.

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<sup>23</sup> “As often in the ancient world, inner body parts served as referents for psychological aspects: of the seat of the emotions, in our usage a transference is made to the rendering *heart*” (BDAG s.v. “σπλάγγιον,” 2).

<sup>24</sup> In fact, of the twelve occurrences of *σπλαγγίζομαι* in the GNT, ten occur as aorists in *-(θ)η-* and all ten are used to denote the middle voice. 2 Macc 6:8 has the active form *σπλαγγίζειν*. LSJ links this to the Attic form *σπλαγγενύω*, meaning “to eat the innards of a victim after a sacrifice” (LSJ, s.v. “σπλαγγενύω” [cf. BDAG s.v. “σπλαγγίζομαι.”]). In Prov 17:5 we find the compound *ἐπισπλαγγίζομαι*: ὁ δὲ ἐπισπλαγγιζόμενος ἐλεηθήσεται (“but the one who has compassion will be shown mercy”). This is the same middle voice usage as the simplex middle forms seen above.

<sup>25</sup> There is one active voice form in 4 Macc 5:24. This form does not seem to differ in meaning from other middle voice forms.

#### Joshua 4:24

ὅπως γνῶσιν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς γῆς ὅτι ἡ δύναμις τοῦ κυρίου ἰσχυρά ἐστιν, καὶ ἵνα ὑμεῖς **σέβησθε** κύριον τὸν θεὸν ὑμῶν ἐν παντὶ χρόνῳ

So that all the nations of the earth might know that the power of the Lord is mighty, and so that you might **worship** the Lord your God in every time.

#### Jonah 1:9

καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς Δοῦλος κυρίου ἐγὼ εἰμι καὶ τὸν κύριον θεὸν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐγὼ **σέβομαι**, ὃς ἐποίησεν τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ τὴν ξηρὰν

And he said to them, “I am a servant of the Lord and I **worship** the Lord God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

#### Acts 18:7

καὶ μεταβὰς ἐκεῖθεν εἰσηλθεν εἰς οἰκίαν τινὸς ὀνόματι Τιτίου Ἰούστου **σεβομένου** τὸν θεόν, οὗ ἡ οἰκία ἦν συνομοροῦσα τῇ συναγωγῇ

And departing from there, he came into the house of a man by the name of Titus Justus, a **worshipper** of God, whose house was next door to the synagogue.

In each example above, the subject of middle voice *σέβομαι* is actively involved in worship. In this sense, the subject is agentive. Further, each example is followed by an accusative direct object (κύριον τὸν θεὸν ὑμῶν [Josh 4:24], τὸν κύριον θεόν [Jonah 1:9], τὸν θεόν [Acts 18:7]). Upon first glance, it appears these middle-marked verbs are functioning for the active voice.

What, then, is the rationale for the middle marking on *σέβομαι*? The answer is likely that this verb focuses on the mental or emotional experience of worship. Worship is an act in which the subject is deeply engaged on many levels. We can see this mental or emotional nuance when we consider the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the two LXX examples cited above. Both instances of *σέβομαι* translate a form of ירא (“to fear”). Indeed, five out of six cases where *σέβομαι* has a Hebrew *Vorlage*, it translates a form of ירא.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the LXX translators saw *σέβομαι* as a fitting verb to communicate the experiential state of fear, reverence or awe involved in worship. This nuance is confirmed by LSJ, who defines *σέβομαι* as to “*feel awe or fear before God, feel shame.*”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See also Josh 22:25; Job 1:9; Isa 29:13. Isa 66:14 is a free translation of the noun עבד (“servant”).

<sup>27</sup> LSJ, s.v. “σέβομαι.”

Therefore, σέβομαι can be classified as a mental state middle. Though at first glance this verb appears to be simply active in function, a closer inspection reveals its middle voice semantics. It is marked for “subject focus” as its subject fills the semantic roles of agent and experiencer. Its focus is on the mental experience of its subject aligns it with other mental state middles such as φοβέομαι and αισχύνομαι.<sup>28</sup>

## Conclusion

In conclusion, middle voice morphology in the LXX and GNT also continued to be used according to the category of “mental state middle.” Φοβέομαι, αισχύνομαι, πείθω, σπλαγχνίζομαι, and σέβομαι all belong to a broad class of verbs whose middle marking denoted focus on the mental experience of their subjects. Such verbs could occur as *media tantum* or in opposition to causative active counterparts. They function within a range of transitivity, either in one- or two-participant events. In the aorist tense, this middle category was often marked with the -(θ)η- infix. Again, the core semantics of the middle voice in each of these examples lies in the realm of “subject focus.”

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<sup>28</sup> Σέβομαι is related to the form σεβάζομαι (“to worship” [BDAG, s.v. σέβομαι]). Σεβάζομαι occurs only once in the LXX and the GNT, in Rom 1:25: οἵτινες μετήλλαξαν τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ ψεύδει, καὶ ἐσεβάσθησαν καὶ ἐλάτρευσαν τῇ κτίσει παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα, ὃς ἐστὶν εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας· ἀμήν (“who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever; amen”). The form ἐσεβάσθησαν is likely to be understood in the same way as other forms of σέβομαι above. In this case, σεβάζομαι provides another example of the -(θ)η- middle.

## CHAPTER 4

### MIDDLE VOICE IN THE LXX AND GNT (PART 2): THE BODY MOTION, COLLECTIVE MOTION, AND RECIPROCAL MIDDLE TYPES

This chapter will apply Rutger J. Allan’s body motion, collective motion, and reciprocal middle voice types to the Septuagint and Greek New Testament. We will consider examples of several verbs that align with these categories. Again, the goal is to understand and appreciate more fully the form and function of middle voice verbs in this literature (and in the Hellenistic Greek Period). We begin with the body motion middle type.

#### **The Body Motion Middle**

A host of middle voice verbs in the LXX and GNT can be classified as “body motion middles.” Such verbs include middle uses of στρέφω (“to turn”), ἐγείρω (“to rise”), πορεύομαι (“to go”), ἔρχομαι (“to come”), νήχομαι (“to swim”) and ὀρχέομαι (“to dance”). At first glance, the rationale for middle marking on these verbs can be confusing since, to the English ear, such verbs sound “active.” The subject appears simply to be an agent, actively accomplishing the verbal action.

Careful consideration of this verbal type, however, reveals that body motion verbs fall within the sphere of middle semantics. Allan notes that “body motion involves an animate entity that volitionally brings about a change of state to himself. Thus, the subject is both agent and patient.”<sup>1</sup> Such verbs actually display a high degree of focus on

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<sup>1</sup> Rutger J. Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek: A Study in Polysemy*, Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology 11 (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2003), 76.

the verbal subject. In fact, we can see a relationship between the body motion middle and the direct reflexive.

### Στρέφω

As with spontaneous process and mental state middles, some middles of body motion have a causative active counterpart. For example, this is the case with στρέφω.

Note the following examples of στρέφω in the active voice.

#### Matthew 5:39

ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν μὴ ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ· ἀλλ' ὅστις σε ῥαπίζει εἰς τὴν δεξιὰν σιαγόνα, **στρέψον** αὐτῷ καὶ τὴν ἄλλην

But I say to you not to resist the evil person, but whoever strikes you on the right cheek, **turn** to him the other also.

#### Psalms 29:12

**ἔστρεψας** τὸν κοπετόν μου εἰς χαρὰν ἐμοί, διέρρηξας τὸν σάκκον μου καὶ περιέζωσάς με εὐφροσύνην

**You have turned** my mourning into joy for me, you have torn my sackcloth and girded me with gladness.

In both of the examples above, the subject effects the turning of an object other than himself. This turning could involve a change in direction, as in Matthew 5 where Jesus commands his disciples to turn the other cheek to their enemies rather than retaliate against them. This turning could also involve a change in identity, as in Psalm 29 where God turns David's mourning into joy. In all active voice cases but one in the LXX and GNT, this affected ("turned") entity is marked as the accusative direct object.<sup>2</sup>

While these active examples are transitive and causative, examples of στρέφω in the middle voice in the LXX and GNT are unanimously intransitive. Note Proverbs 26:14 and Acts 13:46.

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<sup>2</sup> There is one instance of intransitive στρέφω in the active voice, found in Acts 7:42 (ἔστρεψεν δὲ ὁ θεὸς καὶ παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς λατρεύειν τῇ στρατιᾷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ["But God turned and handed them over to serve the host of heaven"]). This use is identical to the middle voice uses of στρέφω below. The simplest explanation for it is that subject-affectedness is present but *unmarked* in Acts 7:42, while it is present and *marked* in similar middle voice instances (see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 19-29, as well as his broader discussion of synonymous active-middle verbs in Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 203-47).

### Proverbs 26:14

ὡσπερ θύρα στρέφεται ἐπὶ τοῦ στρόφιγγος, οὕτως ὀκνηρὸς ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης αὐτοῦ

Just as a door turns on its hinge, so is a lazy person upon his bed.

### Acts 13:46

παρρησιασάμενοί τε ὁ Παῦλος καὶ ὁ Βαρναβᾶς εἶπαν· Ὑμῖν ἦν ἀναγκαῖον πρῶτον λαληθῆναι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ· ἐπειδὴ ἀπωθεῖσθε αὐτὸν καὶ οὐκ ἀξίους κρίνετε ἑαυτοὺς τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς, ἰδοὺ στρεφόμεθα εἰς τὰ ἔθνη

And Paul and Barnabas, speaking boldly, said, “It was necessary first to speak the Word of God to you. Since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles.”

In both of these examples, the effect of the action spins entirely back onto the subject. The subject can be viewed as both agent and patient. This is the case when the subject is animate and volitional, as in Acts 13:46 where Paul and Barnabas decide to turn their ministry focus to the Gentiles. This is also the case when the subject is inanimate and nonvolitional, as in Proverbs 26:14 where a lazy person is likened to a door that turns back and forth on its hinges. In both cases the activity of the subject causes a change in the subject itself.

The first two examples of στρέφω in the middle voice were in the present tense. For the aorist and future tenses, outside of the active voice, στρέφω only occurs in the -(θ)η- form. At times these forms are best read as passive, but often they are ambiguous.

### 1 Samuel 10:6

καὶ ἐφαλεῖται ἐπὶ σὲ πνεῦμα Κυρίου, καὶ προφητεύσεις μετ’ αὐτῶν καὶ στραφήσῃ εἰς ἄνδρα ἄλλον

And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man.

### 1 Maccabees 1:40

κατὰ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῆς ἐπληθύνθη ἡ ἀτιμία αὐτῆς, καὶ τὸ ὕψος αὐτῆς ἐστράφη εἰς πένθος  
Her dishonor was multiplied according to her glory, and her exaltation was turned into mourning.

It is difficult to know whether to read the examples of στρέφω above as passive or middle. On the one hand, these forms could convey the middle voice, simply describing the subject as “turning” into something else. On the other hand, while not

explicitly mentioned, context seems to point to the presence of an external agent. In 1 Maccabees 1:40, the joy of exaltation is turned into mourning through the presence of destruction. In 1 Samuel 10:6, Saul is changed by the Spirit of the Lord. For this reason, it is probably best to translate both forms as passives.

At other times, however, these -(θ)η- forms are clearly middle.

### **Isaiah 63:10**

αὐτοὶ δὲ ἠπειθήσαν καὶ παρώξυναν τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον αὐτοῦ· καὶ ἐστράφη αὐτοῖς εἰς ἔχθραν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐπολέμησεν αὐτούς

But they disobeyed and provoked his Holy Spirit, and he turned against them for enmity, and he warred against them.

### **Matthew 9:22**

ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς στραφεὶς καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὴν εἶπεν· Θάρσει, θύγατερ· ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε. καὶ ἐσώθη ἡ γυνὴ ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης

But Jesus, turning and seeing her, said, “Take courage, daughter, your faith has saved you.” And the woman was healed from that very hour.

### **John 12:40**

Τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἐπώρωσεν αὐτῶν τὴν καρδίαν, ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νοήσωσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ στραφῶσιν, καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς

He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes and understand in their heart and turn, and I would heal them.

In each of the examples above, we find στρέφω in the -(θ)η- form and communicating the middle voice. The subject of these verbs is both agent and patient, the one who performs the turning and the one who himself changes direction. In Isaiah 63:10, God turns against his people because of their sin. In Matthew 9:22, Jesus turns to look at a woman who has come to him for healing. In John 12:40, people see, understand, and turn in repentance. In each case, the -(θ)η- form of στρέφω highlights the affectedness of the subject in his physical motion and can be classified as a body motion middle.

### **Ἐγείρω**

Another example of a body motion middle with a causative active counterpart can be seen in the verb ἐγείρω (“to raise”). In the active voice, the subject of ἐγείρω

raises something other than itself. In the middle voice, the subject of ἐγείρω itself rises.

Note the following active voice examples.

**Judges 2:16**

καὶ ἤγειρεν αὐτοῖς κύριος κριτὰς καὶ ἔσωσεν αὐτοὺς ἐκ χειρὸς τῶν προνομευόντων αὐτούς

And the Lord **raised** judges for them and saved them from the hand of those who were plundering them.

**Acts 3:15**

τὸν δὲ ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς ἀπεκτείνετε, ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, οὗ ἡμεῖς μάρτυρές ἐσμεν

You killed the author of life, whom God **raised** from the dead, of whom we are witnesses.

Both examples above are transitive and causative. In each case, God is the subject who causes something else to rise up. In Judges 2, God raises up leaders to save Israel from her enemies. In Acts 3 we find the most significant “raising” in the Bible—God raised Jesus from the dead. These examples can be compared to the following uses of ἐγείρω in the middle or passive voice.

**Isaiah 5:11**

οὐαὶ οἱ ἐγειρόμενοι τὸ πρωὶ καὶ τὸ σικερα διώκοντες, οἱ μένοντες τὸ ὄψε· ὁ γὰρ οἶνος αὐτοὺς συγκαύσει

Woe to those who **rise** in the morning and pursue strong drink, who remain to the evening, for their wine will set them on fire.

**John 13:4**

ἐγείρεται ἐκ τοῦ δείπνου καὶ τίθησιν τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ λαβὼν λέντιον διέζωσεν ἑαυτὸν

[Jesus] **rose** from the supper and took off his outer garment and, taking a towel, he girded himself.

The two examples above show middle voice ἐγείρω in the present tense. In both examples, the middle voice focuses attention on the activity of a subject who causes a change of motion to himself. For this reason, both examples are naturally intransitive. Isaiah 5:11 describes those who rise up from their beds. John 13:4 describes Jesus rising up from a reclined position in order to serve his disciples.

We find identical uses of ἐγείρω in the aorist and future tenses, only we find these uses coded with -(θ)η- morphology. To be sure, some of these forms communicate



the passive voice. Others, however, clearly communicate the middle.<sup>3</sup> Consider the following examples.

#### **Romans 6:4**

συνετάφημεν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον, ἵνα ὡσπερ ἠγέρθη Χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν

Therefore, we were buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.

In Romans 6:4, ἠγέρθη communicates the passive voice. We can draw this conclusion, not simply because of the presence of -(θ)η- itself, but because the prepositional phrase διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς communicates instrumentality or agency for this verb. Further, we are helped in this interpretation by the numerous New Testament texts that speak of the God the Father's agency in the resurrection of Christ.<sup>4</sup> For this reason, we are also safe to interpret many of the other forms of ἠγέρθη referring to Christ's resurrection as denoting the passive voice.<sup>5</sup> On numerous other occasions, however, -(θ)η- forms of ἐγείρω do not have this passive sense.

#### **1 Chronicles 22:19a**

νῦν δότε καρδίας ὑμῶν καὶ ψυχὰς ὑμῶν τοῦ ζητῆσαι τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ ὑμῶν καὶ ἐγέρθητε καὶ οἰκοδομήσατε ἅγιασμα κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ ὑμῶν

Now, give your hearts and your souls to seek for the Lord your God, and rise and build a sanctuary for the Lord your God.

#### **Matthew 1:24**

ἐγερθεῖς δὲ ὁ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕπνου ἐποίησεν ὡς προσέταξεν αὐτῷ ὁ ἄγγελος κυρίου καὶ παρέλαβεν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ

And rising from sleep, Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took his wife.

#### **Luke 11:31**

βασιλίσσα νότου ἐγερθήσεται ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῶν ἀνδρῶν τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινεῖ αὐτούς· ὅτι ἦλθεν ἐκ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς ἀκοῦσαι τὴν σοφίαν Σολομῶνος, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλείον Σολομῶνος ὧδε

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<sup>3</sup> All non-active aorist and future forms of ἐγείρω in the LXX and GNT are coded with -(θ)η- morphology. Therefore, if ἐγείρω communicates the middle voice, it must do so with this form.

<sup>4</sup> See Acts 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 37; Rom 4:24; 8:11; 10:9.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Matt 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; Mark 14:28; Luke 9:22.

The queen of the South **will rise** in the judgment with the men of this generation and will condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, one greater than Solomon is here.

Each of the examples above displays a -(θ)η- form of ἐγείρω that communicates the middle voice. In each instance the subject is both agent and patient, accomplishing an action that simultaneously affects the motion of himself. In 1 Chronicles 22:19, the Israelites are called into action—to “get up” and build the temple of the Lord. In Matthew 1:24, Joseph’s own body “got up,” or rose, from sleep. In Luke 11:31, the queen of the South herself rises up and condemns others on the judgment day. This last example is particularly instructive because it parallels the very next verse, which switches the -(θ)η- form of ἐγείρω to a middle voice form of ἀνίστημι.

#### **Luke 11:32**

ἄνδρες Νινευῖται **ἀναστήσονται** ἐν τῇ κρίσει μετὰ τῆς γενεᾶς ταύτης καὶ κατακρινοῦσιν αὐτήν· ὅτι μετενόησαν εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωνᾶ, καὶ ἰδοὺ πλεῖον Ἰωνᾶ ὧδε

The men of Nineveh **will rise** in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, one greater than Jonah is here.

Therefore, -(θ)η- forms of ἐγείρω were an appropriate way to communicate the middle voice of this verb in the LXX and GNT. Context must ultimately determine whether we should read these forms as middle or passive. When they are to be read as middles, we can classify them according to the “body motion” type.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, middle morphology on ἐγείρω highlights the subject’s affectedness in his act of “rising.”

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<sup>6</sup> There are some active imperative forms of ἐγείρω that function identically to its middle voice forms. For example, in Matt 9:5 we read: τί γάρ ἐστιν εὐκοπότερον, εἰπεῖν· Ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν· Ἐγείρε καὶ περιπάτει; (“For what is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk?’”). Like other middle voice occurrences, this example is syntactically intransitive and commands the subject himself to “get up.” Indeed, elsewhere we find this exact use of ἐγείρω, but with the -(θ)η- form (καὶ προσῆλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἀνάμενος αὐτῶν εἶπεν· Ἐγέρθητε καὶ μὴ φοβεῖσθε [“And Jesus approached and, touching them, said, ‘Rise and do not fear’”]). It is unclear why the biblical writers alternated between active and middle forms in these cases. At the very least, we should say that the middle form makes subject focus explicit, while the active form simply does not.

## Πορεύομαι

Thus far we have considered body motion middles with active counterparts. Yet there are also *media tantum* verbs sometimes labeled “deponent” that are better classified as “body motion middles.” This is the case with πορεύομαι (“I go, travel”) and ἔρχομαι (“I come, go”). Consider the following examples involving πορεύομαι.

### Romans 15:25

νυνὶ δὲ πορεύομαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλὴμ διακονῶν τοῖς ἁγίοις

But now **I am going** into Jerusalem, ministering to the saints.

### 2 Timothy 4:10

Δημᾶς γάρ με ἐγκατέλιπεν ἀγαπήσας τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα, καὶ ἐπορεύθη εἰς Θεσσαλονίκην, Κρήσκης εἰς Γαλατίαν, Τίτος εἰς Δαλματίαν

For Demas, loving the present age, has deserted me and **gone** to Thessalonica, Crescens to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia.

### 2 Kings 3:7

καὶ ἐπορεύθη καὶ ἐξαπέστειλεν πρὸς Ἰωσαφατ βασιλέα Ἰουδα λέγων Βασιλεὺς Μωαβ ἠθέτησεν ἐν ἐμοί· εἰ πορεύσῃ μετ’ ἐμοῦ εἰς Μωαβ εἰς πόλεμον;

And he **went** and sent to Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, saying, “The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you **go** with me to Moab to war?”

Πορεύομαι occurs 1,269 times in the Greek Bible, never with active voice endings.<sup>7</sup> Yet the notion of “going” or “traveling” sounds very active, so that the verb appears to display a mismatch between form and function.<sup>8</sup> Consideration of the semantics of this verb, however, show that it falls easily within the semantic range of the middle voice. The subject of a verb of motion like πορεύομαι is heavily affected, being transported from one location to another. In the examples above, Paul’s entire body is on the move to Jerusalem in Romans 15:25. In 2 Timothy 4:10, Demas himself has moved away from Paul and into Thessalonica. In 2 Kings 3:7, King Jehoram himself went to King Jehoshaphat for military help, and King Jehoshaphat promises to transport himself into battle. In each of these instances, the subject is both agent and patient, moving and

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<sup>7</sup> Πορεύω does occur in the active voice in Classical Greek. When it does, it typically has a causative sense of “make to go, carry, convey” (LSJ, s.v. “πορεύω”).

<sup>8</sup> It is classified as deponent, for example, in Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 430.

being moved. This is precisely the kind of subject focus that middle-marked verbs communicate.

Not surprisingly, we also find that the middle meaning of πορεύομαι is communicated through -(θ)η- forms in the aorist tense. Of the 606 aorist forms of πορεύομαι in the LXX and GNT, only one of them occurs in the sigmatic middle form.<sup>9</sup> These -(θ)η- forms do not differ in meaning from the sigmatic form, however, as the example above in 2 Kings 3:7 shows. In that one verse we see a -(θ)η- aorist meaning “to go” and a sigmatic future middle meaning the same thing. Therefore, πορεύομαι gives us a nice snapshot of the capability of the -(θ)η- form to do the same duty as the sigmatic middle in Hellenistic Greek.

### Active Synonyms

There are other, less common verbs of motion that can also be classified as body motion middles. For example, we can note νήχομαι (“to swim” [cf. Job 11:12]) and ὀρχέομαι (“to dance” [cf. Matt 11:17]). Both of these verbal motions appear extremely “active.” Yet, when we consider the high degree of physical exertion and affectedness that the subject himself undergoes in the activities of swimming and dancing, the rationale for their middle marking appears entirely appropriate.

We can also explain the middle voice use of the verb ἔρχομαι (“to come, go”) similarly to the explanation of πορεύομαι above. Ἐρχομαι occurs as a *media tantum* verb in the present tense.<sup>10</sup> While these occurrences are often labeled deponent, they are much better classified according to the body motion middle type. The subject who “comes” or

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<sup>9</sup> Exod 3:18b: Ὁ θεὸς τῶν Εβραίων προσκέκληται ἡμᾶς: πορευσώμεθα οὖν ὁδὸν τριῶν ἡμερῶν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, ἵνα θύσωμεν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν (“The God of the Hebrews has summoned us. Therefore, let us go a three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we might sacrifice to our God.”)

<sup>10</sup> The principal parts for ἔρχομαι are formed from two different roots (\*ερχ in the present tense, \*ελευθ in the aorist, future, and perfect tenses). The root \*ελευθ takes middle forms only in the future tense. These future middle forms may be explained both in terms of body motion middle verbs and the semantic overlap between the middle voice and future tense. (For a morphological explanation of ἔρχομαι, see William D. Mounce, *The Morphology of Biblical Greek* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], 260, 319.)

“goes” in these cases is both agent and patient as he himself is transported from one place to another.

Still, a verb such as ἔρχομαι or motion-specific verbs such as νήχομαι or ὀρχέομαι raise questions. If the rationale for middle marking on these verbs is tied in part to their lexical semantics (i.e., body motion), then what do we make of synonymous verbs that are marked for the active voice? Why, for example, is ἔρχομαι marked for the middle voice in the present tense, but for the active voice in its (lexically related) aorist tense form (ἤλθον)? Why is the synonymous body-motion verb βαίνω (“I come”) marked for the active, not the middle voice? Why are body-motion specific verbs such as νήχομαι and ὀρχέομαι given middle morphology, but other body-motion specific verbs such as τρέχω (“I run”) given active morphology? We could give many such examples comparing middle voice verbs with active voice synonyms.

The answer to these questions can be difficult and should be sought on a case-by-case basis. In some cases, we should keep in mind that each verb carries its own unique shades of meaning—verbs are typically not entirely synonymous.<sup>11</sup> The choice of middle or active marking on a given verb may be due to the particular shade of meaning the verb conveys. In other cases, the presence of middle or active marking may be given a diachronic explanation. Perhaps a verb’s middle or active marking points backward to its usage at a previous period of the language.<sup>12</sup>

In all cases of active-middle synonymous pairs, however, we can give one basic, positive explanation regarding the middle-marked verb. We can say that the verb with middle morphology explicitly codes subject focus. This does not mean that subject

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<sup>11</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 203-4.

<sup>12</sup> This may be the case with the verb βαίνω, which forms the root (or second) aorist ἔβην. Root aorists of this kind may express the middle voice derivationally rather than inflectionally, and were likely the forms out of which the -(θ)η- (medio-passive) aorists arose. In this case, middle endings on a form like ἔβην would be redundant (much like the middle endings on certain perfect tense verbs cited above). The middle meaning was conveyed through the strong aorist form, not a particular set of endings (see Herman Kølln, *Oppositions of Voice in Greek, Slavic, and Baltic* [København: Munksgaard, 1949], 7, 17).

focus is not present in an active voice verb. It simply means that such a verb does not morphologically mark subject-focused semantics. Simply put, verbs marked with middle morphology are *marked* for the subject focus; verbs marked with active morphology are *unmarked* for it.<sup>13</sup>

## Conclusion

In sum, many verbs denoting body motions continued to be marked for the middle voice in Hellenistic Greek. Some of these verbs occurred alongside causative active forms. Others occurred as *media tantum*. In the aorist tense, the middle forms of these verbs were marked in -(θ)η-. Ultimately, the middle morphology on these verbs appropriately highlighted a highly affected subject. In “body motion” actions, the subject is both agent and patient as he “moves himself” in a certain way. Because body motion middle verbs focus their effect entirely on the subject, these verbs naturally occur with intransitive syntax.

## The Collective Motion Middle

The collective motion middle category consists mainly of verbs of gathering or dispersing. Such verbs are “naturally and necessarily performed by groups of (typically animate) individuals” who act collectively to accomplish the verbal action.<sup>14</sup> Collective motion middles present more cases that may, at first glance, simply appear “active” in their voice function.

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<sup>13</sup> Rutger J. Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 19-29. Note also the positive explanation of middle-marked verbs made by Pennington, whose “linguistic analysis of the middle voice does not claim that *all* verbs which could be conceived of as in the middle voice categories *must* occur only in the middle. Instead, it explains *why* so many verbs which do occur in the middle only do so (descriptive versus prescriptive)” (Jonathan T. Pennington, “Setting Aside ‘Deponency’: Rediscovering the Greek Middle Voice in New Testament Studies,” in *The Linguist as Pedagogue: Trends in the Teaching and Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Matthew Brook O’Donnell [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009], 194).

<sup>14</sup> See Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 82.

Closer inspection, however, reveals that these verbs also fall within the sphere of middle voice semantics. The subject of middle voice verbs of gathering or dispersing can be viewed as both agent and patient. It is agent in that it takes part in initiating and performing the action. At the same time, it is patient in that it is made part of a gathering or dispersing event by the other members of the group who perform the same action. The actions of these other members cause and enable the subject to perform the collective motion. Thus, collective motion middles focus on both the involvement and affectedness of the subject in the verbal action.<sup>15</sup>

As with other middle categories we have seen, collective motion middles have causative active counterparts. Further, their aorist forms are marked with -(θ)η-. Below are some examples of this middle type.

### **Συνάγω**

Perhaps the most common collective motion middle in the LXX and GNT can be seen in the verb συνάγω (“to gather”). Active forms of this verb are causative, as shown below.

#### **Deuteronomy 30:3**

καὶ ἰάσεται κύριος τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου καὶ ἐλεήσει σε καὶ πάλιν **συνάξει** σε ἐκ πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν, εἰς οὓς διεσκόρπισέν σε κύριος ἐκεῖ

And the Lord will heal your sins and have mercy on you and **gather** you again from all the nations, to which the Lord scattered you there.

#### **Matthew 27:27**

Τότε οἱ στρατιῶται τοῦ ἡγεμόνος παραλαβόντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον **συνήγαγον** ἐπ’ αὐτὸν ὅλην τὴν σπεῖραν

Then the soldiers of the governor, taking Jesus into the Praetorium, **gathered** the whole cohort against him.

In Deuteronomy 30:3, God promises to gather his people out of exile. In Matthew 27:27, Pilate’s soldiers gather other soldiers as they prepare Jesus for crucifixion. In both cases, the gathered group is marked as an accusative direct object.

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<sup>15</sup> See Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 82-83.

Syntactically and conceptually, the subject stands apart from the gathered group, causing the gathering to happen.

In the middle voice, however, both the syntax and semantic role of the subject for *συνάγω* change. Syntactically, middle voice *συνάγω* is used in intransitive clauses. Semantically, the subject of these verbs becomes both agent and patient as it participates in the collective gathering. Note first the following non-aorist examples.

**1 Samuel 17:2a**

Καὶ Σαουλ καὶ οἱ ἄνδρες Ἰσραηλ συνάγονται καὶ παρεμβάλλουσιν ἐν τῇ κοιλάδι·  
And Saul and the men of Israel gathered and encamped in the valley.

**Mark 6:2**

Καὶ συνάγονται οἱ ἀπόστολοι πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ ἀπήγγειλαν αὐτῷ πάντα ὅσα ἐποίησαν καὶ ὅσα ἐδίδαξαν  
And the apostles gathered to Jesus, and they reported to him all that they did and taught.

It is most natural to read the above instances of *συνάγονται* as middle in function. Their subjects are actively involved in creating the gathering event. In 1 Samuel 17:2, the people of Israel gather and encamp (*παραεμβάλλουσιν*, active voice) to fight against the Philistines. In Mark 6:2, the disciples gather to Jesus after being sent on a mission trip. At the same time, the gathering of these subjects is enabled only by the gathering of their comrades. The Israelites of 1 Samuel 17 and the disciples of Mark 6 are both agent and patient, causing and being caught up in their own gathering.

We find the same middle voice usage of *συνάγω* in the aorist tense, marked by the *-(θ)η-* infix.

**Genesis 49:1**

Ἐκάλεσεν δὲ Ἰακώβ τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν Συνάχθητε, ἵνα ἀναγγείλω ὑμῖν, τί ἀπαντήσῃ ὑμῖν ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων τῶν ἡμερῶν·

And Jacob called his sons and said, “Gather together, in order that I might announce to you what will happen to you at the end of the days.”

**Psalms 2:2**

παρέστησαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς, καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες συνήχθησαν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ κατὰ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ κατὰ τοῦ χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ

The kings of the earth have stood by one another, and the rulers have gathered together, against the Lord and against his anointed one.



### Matthew 13:2

καὶ συνήχθησαν πρὸς αὐτὸν ὄχλοι πολλοί, ὥστε αὐτὸν εἰς πλοῖον ἐμβάντα καθῆσθαι, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος ἐπὶ τὸν αἰγιαλὸν εἰστήκει

And great crowds gathered to him, so that, getting into a boat, he sat down, and the whole crowd stood on the shore.

We should read each of the aorist examples of συνάγω above as communicating the middle voice. Each instance is intransitive, with the subject filling the role of both agent and patient in the gathering event. Genesis 49:1 gives a helpful example because συνάγω occurs as an imperative. There Jacob commands his sons to gather to himself (not “be gathered” by someone else) so that he can speak to them. In Psalm 2:2, συνάγω should not be read as passive because the hostile agency of the kings and rulers is in view. They actively gather themselves to make a stand against the Messiah. Finally, Matthew 13:2 is helpful because it parallels the example in Mark 6:2 given above. Both verses give a simple example of a group gathering themselves to Jesus. While in Mark 6:2 the middle voice event was communicated with present tense συνάγονται, in Matthew 13:2 it is communicated by the aorist -(θ)η- form συνήχθησαν. Therefore, once again we find -(θ)η- forms used for the middle voice.

### Ἀθροίζω

We find similar examples of the collective motion middle in other verbs of gathering and dispersing in the LXX and GNT. Note, for example, the uses of ἀθροίζω below.

### Ezekiel 36:24

καὶ λήμψομαι ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῶν ἐθνῶν καὶ ἀθροίσω ὑμᾶς ἐκ πασῶν τῶν γαιῶν καὶ εἰσάξω ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν γῆν ὑμῶν

And I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the lands and bring you into your land.

### Luke 24:33

καὶ ἀναστάντες αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, καὶ εὔρον ἠθροισμένους τοὺς ἑνδεκα καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτοῖς

And rising at that same hour, they returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those with them gathered together.

### **Numbers 20:2**

καὶ οὐκ ἦν ὕδωρ τῆ συναγωγῆ, καὶ ἠθροίσθησαν ἐπὶ Μωυσῆν καὶ Ααρων

And there was no water among the congregation, and they **gathered** against Moses and Aaron.

In Ezekiel 36:24, we find a causative active example of ἠθροίζω. God is the agent, and he promises to cause a great gathering of his people after the exile. In Luke 24:33, we find the perfect medio-passive form ἠθροισμένους. After encountering the risen Christ, two of his disciples return to the other disciples who were gathered together. This form is to be read as middle in function. The disciples had formed (and thus become part of) their own gathering. Finally, in Numbers 20:2, the people of Israel rose up against Moses and Aaron in rebellion because they lacked water. This is a hostile gathering; the congregation is acting as both agent and patient. Here is another -(θ)η- form communicating the middle voice.

### **Διασπείρω**

Διασπείρω offers examples similar to the ones above, only now with the act of dispersing.

### **Deuteronomy 4:27**

καὶ διασπερεῖ κύριος ὑμᾶς ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν καὶ καταλειφθήσεσθε ὀλίγοι ἀριθμῶ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, εἰς οὓς εἰσάξει κύριος ὑμᾶς ἐκεῖ

And the Lord **will scatter** you among all the nations, and you will be left few in number among the nations, into which the Lord will bring you there.

### **1 Samuel 14:34a**

καὶ εἶπεν Σαουλ Διασπάρητε ἐν τῷ λαῷ καὶ εἶπατε αὐτοῖς προσαγαγεῖν ἐνταῦθα ἕκαστος τὸν μόσχον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἕκαστος τὸ πρόβατον αὐτοῦ

And Saul said, “**Disperse** among the people and tell them to bring here each his bull and each his sheep.”

### **1 Maccabees 11:47**

καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἐπὶ βοήθειαν, καὶ ἐπισυνήχθησαν πρὸς αὐτὸν πάντες ἅμα καὶ διεσπάρησαν ἐν τῇ πόλει καὶ ἀπέκτειναν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ εἰς μυριάδας δέκα

And the king called the Judeans for help, and they gathered to him all together and **scattered** in the city and killed on that day up to one hundred thousand.

We see a causative active example of διασπείρω in Deuteronomy 4:27, where the Lord promises to scatter his people in the exile when they disobey him. The examples in 1 Samuel 14:34 and 1 Maccabees 11:47 contrast with this. In 1 Samuel 14, Saul tells the Israelites to disperse themselves in order to collect animals for sacrifice.<sup>16</sup> In 1 Maccabees 11, a group of Judeans first gathers (ἐπισυνήχθησαν) to the king and then scatters abroad for war. Both of these occurrences can be read naturally as middles. In each middle voice example, the verbal syntax shifts to intransitive as the groups scatter themselves. Further, the members of each group are heavily affected by this scattering event. They act as both agent and patient, causing the scattering to happen and being caught up in the scattering as it happens. Note, once again, that these collective motion middle examples occur in the aorist -(θ)η- form.

Of course, not all medio-passive forms of συνάγω, ἀθροίζω, διασπείρω, or other collective motion verbs are clearly to be read as middles. In determining whether to read a medio-passive collective motion verb as middle or passive, we must consider the contextual importance of an external agent to the gathering or dispersing event.<sup>17</sup> In ambiguous cases where there is no clear focus on an external agent, it is often best to read the form as a middle. In other cases, when we can detect an external agent to the collective event, we should read the form as passive. This is clearest when the agent is explicitly marked by ὑπό plus the genitive,<sup>18</sup> but other contextual factors can point to the prominence of an external agent as well.

**Psalm 67:2**

Αναστήτω ὁ θεός, καὶ διασκορπισθήτωσαν οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ φυγέτωσαν οἱ μισοῦντες αὐτὸν ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ

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<sup>16</sup> The NETS translation of 1 Sam 14:34 translates διασπάρητε as a direct reflexive: “And Saoul said, ‘Disperse yourselves among the people . . .’” (Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* [Oxford: Oxford University Press], 2007).

<sup>17</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 83-84.

<sup>18</sup> For an example with ὑπό plus the genitive, note Ps Sol 4:19: σκορπισθήσονται σάρκες ἀνθρωπαρέσκων ὑπὸ θηρίων (“May the flesh of men-pleasers be scattered by the wild animals”).

Let God arise, and let his enemies **be scattered**, and let those who hate him flee from before him.

### Acts 8:1b

Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ διωγμὸς μέγας ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τὴν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις· πάντες δὲ **διεσπάρησαν** κατὰ τὰς χώρας τῆς Ἰουδαίας καὶ Σαμαρείας πλὴν τῶν ἀποστόλων

And a great persecution happened on that day against the church in Jerusalem, and they **were** all **scattered** throughout the villages of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

There is no agency phrase in either of the examples above. Nevertheless, context points to the prominence of an external agent and leads us to read the medio-passive collective motion verb as passive. In Psalm 67:2, God causes the scattering of his enemies as he rises up in victory. So also in Acts 8:1, context indicates that the church was scattered through, or because of, the instrument of persecution.<sup>19</sup>

This leads to one other important contextual factor to consider when analyzing medio-passive verbs of collective motion in the LXX and GNT: God's agency in the exile. Many verbs of gathering and dispersing in the Bible occur in exilic contexts. In the Bible, God is the ultimate agent in dispersing his people into and gathering his people from exile.<sup>20</sup> This perspective should inform us when reading verses like the ones below.

### Isaiah 11:12

καὶ ἀρεῖ σημεῖον εἰς τὰ ἔθνη καὶ συνάξει τοὺς ἀπολομένους Ἰσραὴλ καὶ **τοὺς διεσπαρμένους** τοῦ Ἰουδα συνάξει ἐκ τῶν τεσσάρων πτερυγῶν τῆς γῆς

And he will raise a sign for the nations and will gather the lost ones of Israel, and **the scattered ones**<sup>21</sup> of Judah he will gather from the four ends of the earth.

### Joel 4:2b

διακριθήσομαι πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἐκεῖ ὑπὲρ τοῦ λαοῦ μου καὶ τῆς κληρονομίας μου Ἰσραὴλ, οἱ **διεσπάρησαν** ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν

I will enter into judgment with them there on behalf of my people and my inheritance, Israel, those who **were scattered** among the nations.

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<sup>19</sup> Cp. Acts 11:19: "Now those *who were scattered* (διασπαρέντες) *because of the persecution* that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except Jews."

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Deut 30:3 (συνάγω); Deut 4:27 (διασπείρω); Ezek 36:24 (ἀθροίζω); Deut 30:3; Jer 9:15; Ezek 11:16 (διασκορπίζω).

<sup>21</sup> Though the perfect tense of this participle leads us to read the verb as stative (Israel is in a scattered state), we can still understand its voice as passive (Israel has been put into a scattered state by God).

Formally, we could read the collective motion verbs *διεσπαρμένους* (Isa 11:12) and *διεσπάρησαν* (Joel 4:2) as middle or passive. In deciding how to read them, we should consider the presence or importance of an external agent. In these cases, the widespread biblical teaching that God was the ultimate agent in Israel's exile leads us to render the forms as passive.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, some verbs in the LXX and GNT are marked for the middle voice because they denote collective events. In these cases, the subject is both agent and patient in the collective action. The middle morphology on these verbs highlights the subject's patient-status (affectedness). In contrast to causative active counterparts, collective motion middle verbs occur in intransitive clauses. In this way, their subject focus is displayed syntactically. In the aorist tense, collective motion middle verbs are marked by *-(θ)η-*.

One final comment is in order from this study of the collective motion middle. When we consider the semantics of this middle voice type, we can detect an overlap between it and other middle categories. For example, there is a relationship between the collective motion and the reciprocal middle types (see below).<sup>22</sup> At times the lines between the collective motion and the direct reflexive type also appears blurred.<sup>23</sup> This is a reminder of the somewhat artificial nature of these middle voice categories. Most importantly, in each case we can detect the core semantics of the middle voice—a marked focus on the verbal subject.

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<sup>22</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 83.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. the example from 1 Sam 14:34 above. In many cases, we could say that the collective subject “gathered themselves together” or “dispersed themselves.”

## The Reciprocal Middle

Reciprocal middle verbs describe events in which at least two entities perform the same action on one another. As Allan describes, these are “actions which naturally have two participants, A and B: A performs the same action with respect to B as B with respect to A.”<sup>24</sup> Actions of this type fall within the range of middle semantics because the subject functions as both agent and patient. The verb focuses on the subject as both performing the action and affected by the same action of another.

Reciprocal middles are normally *media tantum*. Some of the clearest and most common examples can be seen in verbs of fighting (e.g., ἀγωνίζομαι, μάχομαι). Further, as will be shown below, the reciprocal middle can occur in either one- or two-argument clauses that highlight the affectedness of different members in the event.<sup>25</sup> We begin with examples of one-argument reciprocal middle verbs.

### Ἀγωνίζομαι

Ἀγωνίζομαι (“to engage in a contest, fight, struggle”)<sup>26</sup> describes a naturally reciprocal action. To engage in a true battle, two parties are needed. Each party must fight and be fought against. Thus, the subject of ἀγωνίζομαι is highly affected as both agent and patient. Ἀγωνίζομαι occurs only in medio-passive form in the LXX and GNT. Interestingly, in the aorist it is only found as a sigmatic middle. Note the following examples.

#### 2 Maccabees 13:14

δοὺς δὲ τὴν ἐπιτροπὴν τῷ κτίστῃ τοῦ κόσμου παρακαλέσας τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ γενναίως **ἀγωνίσασθαι** μέχρι θανάτου περὶ νόμων, ἱεροῦ, πόλεως, πατρίδος, πολιτείας· περὶ δὲ Μωδεῖν ἐποίησατο τὴν στρατοπεδείαν

And giving the decision to the Creator of the world, exhorting those with him **to fight** nobly unto death for the law, temple, city, homeland, and citizenship, he then made camp

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<sup>24</sup> Rutger J. Allan, “Voice,” in *EAGLL*, vol. 3, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 497.

<sup>25</sup> For comments such as these on reciprocal middle verbs, see also Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 84-87.

<sup>26</sup> BDAG, s.v. “ἀγωνίζομαι.”

near Modein.

### **John 18:36**

ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς· Ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου· εἰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου ἦν ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ, οἱ ὑπηρέται οἱ ἐμοὶ **ἠγωνίζοντο** ἄν, ἵνα μὴ παραδοθῶ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις· νῦν δὲ ἡ βασιλεία ἡ ἐμὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐντεῦθεν

Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my servants **would be fighting**, in order that I might not be handed over to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not from here.”

In 2 Maccabees 13:14, the Jews are exhorted to fight against the Romans for their homeland and, ultimately, their God. In John 18:36, Jesus explains why his own disciples do not fight to keep him from being arrested by the Jews. In both verses, we must gather from context the second party involved in the battle. Nonetheless, a literal, physical battle is envisioned in which the subject both fights and is fought against.

Of course, the battle which ἀγωνίζομαι describes need not be physical. Often in the Bible this verb portrays the spiritual battle of the Christian. Paul describes this “fight of the faith” in 1 Timothy 6:12.<sup>27</sup>

### **1 Timothy 6:12**

**ἀγωνίζου** τὸν καλὸν ἀγῶνα τῆς πίστεως, ἐπιλαβοῦ τῆς αἰωνίου ζωῆς, εἰς ἣν ἐκλήθης καὶ ὁμολόγησας τὴν καλὴν ὁμολογίαν ἐνώπιον πολλῶν μαρτύρων

**Fight** the good fight of the faith, take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and about which you confessed the good confession before many witnesses.

Paul tells Timothy to press on in a real, reciprocal war in which he fights against and is fought by the spiritual forces of evil. Timothy is very much acting in and affected by this war, and the middle marking of ἀγωνίζου conveys this well.

The examples of ἀγωνίζομαι above describe one-argument, intransitive events that focus on the affectedness of one side of the reciprocal action. We find other examples, however, in which both parties are mentioned as subject of a reciprocal middle

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. Luke 13:24; Col 1:29; 4:12; 1 Tim 4:10; 2 Tim 4:7.

verb of fighting. In these cases, both affected entities are given equal prominence.<sup>28</sup> To see this, we turn to the verb μάχομαι.

## Μάχομαι

Μάχομαι (“to fight, quarrel, dispute”)<sup>29</sup> is another naturally reciprocal verb of fighting. It occurs only in medio-passive form, and only as a sigmatic middle in the aorist tense. First, consider the following one-argument uses of μάχομαι in which both sides of the dispute are mentioned as subject.

### 2 Samuel 14:6

καί γε τῇ δούλῃ σου δύο υἱοί, καὶ ἐμαγέσαντο ἀμφοτέροι ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, καὶ οὐκ ἦν ὁ ἐξαιρούμενος ἀνὰ μέσον αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐπαισεν ὁ εἰς τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐθανάτωσεν αὐτόν

And indeed, your servant had two sons, and they both **fought** in the field, and there was no one who removes in their midst, and the one struck his brother and killed him.

### John 6:52

Ἐμάχοντο οὖν πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι λέγοντες· Πῶς δύναται οὗτος ἡμῖν δοῦναι τὴν σάρκα αὐτοῦ φαγεῖν;

Therefore, the Jews **disputed** with one another, saying, “How is this one able to give us his flesh to eat?”

In both examples above, all parties in the reciprocal event are included as subject of an intransitive verb. In 2 Samuel 14:6, two brothers fight to the death. Neither is singled out as more prominent than the other; both (ἀμφοτέροι) are simply engaged in battle. In John 6:52, several Jews engage in a dispute over Jesus’ words. This is an interesting example because John adds the words πρὸς ἀλλήλους to specify that the Jews were arguing among themselves and not with some other group. In these constructions the reciprocal battle is viewed as one holistic event, with both affected sides equally emphasized.

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<sup>28</sup> In English, consider the sentence *The Jews and the Romans fought in the war*. Neither “the Jews” nor “the Romans” are given prominence. Both parties are simply said to be engaged in battle. On the significance of writing the reciprocal action as a one- or two-participant event, see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 85-87.

<sup>29</sup> BDAG, s.v. “μάχομαι.”



There are many other examples of reciprocal middle verbs occurring with two arguments. In these cases, the second argument is normally marked with either the dative case or a prepositional phrase (typically πρὸς + the accusative [cf. John 6:52 above]).

Note the following examples with μάχομαι.

### **Genesis 31:36**

ὠργίσθη δὲ Ἰακωβ καὶ ἐμαγέσατο τῷ Λαβαν· ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ Ἰακωβ εἶπεν τῷ Λαβαν Τί τὸ ἀδίκημά μου καὶ τί τὸ ἀμάρτημά μου, ὅτι κατεδίωξας ὀπίσω μου

And Jacob became angry and quarreled with Laban. And answering, he said to Laban, “What is my unrighteousness, and what is my sin, that you have followed after me?”

### **2 Chronicles 27:5a**

αὐτὸς ἐμαγέσατο πρὸς βασιλέα υἱῶν Ἀμμων καὶ κατίσχυσεν ἐπ’ αὐτόν

He [Jotham] fought with the king of the sons of Ammon and overcame him.

In both verses above, the two contending parties are distinguished by means of the dative case or prepositional phrase. This puts the reader’s focus on one entity (the subject) as the prominent affected participant in the dispute. In turn, it deemphasizes the participant marked by the dative case or prepositional phrase. Therefore, μάχομαι can be used in different syntactical constructions that focus on different members of the battle. In all cases, however, its middle ending highlights the affectedness of its subject in a reciprocal event.<sup>30</sup>

### **Διαλέγομαι**

Διαλέγομαι (“to converse, discuss, argue”) provides another example of the reciprocal middle. This term describes various ways of engaging “in a speech exchange”

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<sup>30</sup> As with so many middle voice verbs, we can find examples of synonymous verbs marked in the active. Πολεμέω (“to wage war, be hostile” [BDAG, s.v. “πολεμέω”]) provides one such example. This word occurs alongside μάχομαι in Jas 4:2a: καὶ ζηλοῦτε, καὶ οὐ δύνασθε ἐπιτυχεῖν· μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμεῖτε (“You are also envious, and you are not able to obtain, so you fight and quarrel”). It may be that πολεμέω inherently connotes a more unilateral act of “warring” or “hostility” toward another (i.e., is less inherently reciprocal), and that this is the reason it does not occur as a *media tantum*. Even if reciprocity is inherent to πολεμέω, we can simply say that this nuance is not explicitly marked for this verb. In this sense, it is less emphasized. The subject focus expressed by means of middle morphology in the case of μάχομαι must be expressed another way in the case of πολεμέω (see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 87 fn. 141).

with another party.<sup>31</sup> As such, it naturally conveys the subject in a reciprocal relationship, speaking and being spoken to. The speech activity both goes out from and comes back onto the subject.

Διαλέγομαι also occurs as a *media tantum* in the LXX and GNT. It is found in clauses with one or two arguments. When occurring in two-argument constructions, the second (deemphasized) participant is marked by the dative case or prepositional phrase (πρός + accusative).

#### **Exodus 6:27**

οὗτοί εἰσιν **οἱ διαλεγόμενοι πρὸς Φαραῶ** βασιλέα Αἰγύπτου καὶ ἐξήγαγον τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ ἐξ Αἰγύπτου· αὐτὸς Ααρων καὶ Μωϋσῆς

These are the ones who **disputed with Pharaoh** king of Egypt and led the sons of Israel out from Egypt, Aaron himself and Moses.

#### **Acts 17:17**

**διελέγετο** μὲν οὖν ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ **τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις** καὶ τοῖς σεβομένοις καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ κατὰ πᾶσαν ἡμέραν **πρὸς τοὺς παρατυγγάνοντας**

Therefore, **he was reasoning** in the synagogue **with the Jews** and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day **with those who happened to be present**.

Exodus 6:27 recalls Moses and Aaron's dispute with Pharaoh over the Israelites' freedom. Φαραῶ is marked off as a secondary participant by being placed in the prepositional phrase with πρὸς. The primary focus in this verse is on the activity and affectedness of Moses and Aaron in the dispute. The middle form διαλεγόμενοι marks the back-and-forth nature of this dispute and can be classified as a reciprocal middle.

Διαλέγομαι often describes Paul's ministry in Acts.<sup>32</sup> Acts 17:17 shows him reasoning about the truth of Christ with Jews, Greek proselytes, and anyone else present in the marketplace. Again, the reciprocal middle διελέγετο conveys Paul in real dialogue with his listeners, speaking and being spoken to. This verse is also interesting because in it we see both ways of marking off the second participant in the discussion. The Jews and

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<sup>31</sup> BDAG, s.v. “διαλέγομαι.” Allan suggests that the preposition δια- “contributes a sense of dividedness and mutuality” in comparison with the active simplex form λέγω (Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 86 fn. 138).

<sup>32</sup> See, for example, Acts 17:2, 17; 18:4, 19; 19:8, 9; 20:7; 24:12, 25.

proselytes are marked off with the dative case, while “those who happened to be present” (τοὺς παρατυγχάνοντα) are marked off by πρὸς + accusative. There does not appear to be much semantic distinction between these two options. Perhaps the variation is for stylistic purposes.

As we consider reciprocal middle uses of διαλέγομαι, we encounter another interesting variation in the aorist tense. This verb occurs in both sigmatic and -(θ)η- aorist forms. Consider the following examples.

**2 Maccabees 11:20**

ὑπὲρ δὲ τούτων καὶ τῶν κατὰ μέρος ἐντέταλμαι τούτοις τε καὶ τοῖς παρ’ ἐμοῦ διαλεγθῆναι ὑμῖν

And concerning these things and the details, I have commanded these and the ones beside me to discuss with you.

**Acts 17:2**

κατὰ δὲ τὸ εἰωθὸς τῷ Παύλῳ εἰσῆλθεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐπὶ σάββατα τρία διελέξατο αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν

And according to his custom, Paul went in to them and on three Sabbaths he reasoned with them according to the Scriptures.

**Mark 9:34**

οἱ δὲ ἐσιώπων, πρὸς ἀλλήλους γὰρ διελέγησαν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ τίς μείζων

But they were silent, because they had argued with one another on the way who was the greatest.

I will comment more on this variation below. For now, notice that each of these aorist uses of διαλέγομαι carries a reciprocal middle sense. Acts 17:2 communicates this through the sigmatic form διελέξατο, as Paul continued to reason with others about Jesus. Second Maccabees 11:20 and Mark 9:34, however, communicate this through -(θ)η- forms. In both of these verses, people are actively involved in discussion and, therefore, the forms should not be read as passive. Here we find both sigmatic and -(θ)η- forms of διαλέγομαι used for the (reciprocal) middle voice.

## Ἀσπάζομαι

Ἀσπάζομαι (“to greet, welcome”<sup>33</sup>) is another *media tantum* that may best be classified as a reciprocal middle. Typically, a successful “greeting” is a reciprocal act. Two parties must interact, and ideally there is a mutual extension of fellowship (a mutual “hello”) between them. If this analysis is correct, then ἀσπάζομαι would provide an example of a reciprocal middle verb in transitive syntax with an accusative direct object.<sup>34</sup>

The reciprocal nature of ἀσπάζομαι can be seen in the frequent use of the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλους with this verb, as in the examples below.<sup>35</sup>

### Exodus 18:17

ἐξῆλθεν δὲ Μωϋσῆς εἰς συνάντησιν τῷ γαμβρῷ αὐτοῦ καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐφίλησεν αὐτόν, καὶ ἠσπάσαντο ἀλλήλους· καὶ εἰσήγαγεν αὐτόν εἰς τὴν σκηνήν

And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and he knelt before him and kissed him, and they greeted one another. And he brought him into the tent.

### 1 Peter 5:14

Ἀσπάσασθε ἀλλήλους ἐν φιλήματι ἀγάπης

Greet one another with a kiss of love.

In Exodus 18:17, Moses and his father-in-law mutually extend a greeting to one another. In 1 Peter 5:14, Peter calls his readers to reciprocal, loving greetings. In these ways, the subject of ἀσπάζομαι both greets and is greeted, is both agent and patient-beneficiary. The middle morphology marks this focus on the subject’s affectedness in the action, and the reciprocal pronoun ἀλλήλους clarifies this even further.<sup>36</sup>

This understanding of the semantics inherent in ἀσπάζομαι helps us to explain the middle morphology on this verb in cases where the accusative object is not ἀλλήλους.

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<sup>33</sup> BDAG, s.v. “ἀσπάζομαι.”

<sup>34</sup> Perhaps the accusative direct object with ἀσπάζομαι conveys the more unilateral nature of the action. The subject is highlighted as the giving side and the accusative object as the receiving side of the greeting. Still, inherent in the idea of a “successful” greeting would be a reciprocal greeting, reception, or welcome, from the direct object.

<sup>35</sup> In addition to these examples, see 1 Macc 7:29; 11:16; Tob 5:10; Rom 16:16; 2 Cor 13:12.

<sup>36</sup> Note that in both of these examples ἀσπάζομαι occurs as a sigmatic aorist middle. In the LXX and GNT, ἀσπάζομαι always occurs in this sigmatic form in the aorist tense.

This occurs with great frequency when the New Testament writers extend greetings through their letters, as in Romans 16:23.

### **Romans 16:23**

ἀσπάζεταιται ὑμᾶς Γάϊος ὁ ξένος μου καὶ ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας. ἀσπάζεταιται ὑμᾶς Ἔραστος ὁ οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως καὶ Κούαρτος ὁ ἀδελφός

Gaius, the host of me and the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, greets you, and Quartus the brother.

These uses of middle voice ἀσπάζομαι may appear more unilateral, lacking a reciprocal (and therefore middle) sense. But we must keep in mind the lexical semantics of this word. Ἀσπάζομαι is an inherently middle verb. Its middle morphology marks that its basic meaning normally involves some kind of reciprocal action—even if that reciprocal action is not obvious in specific texts like this one.<sup>37</sup>

### **Verbs Not Naturally Reciprocal**

Thus far we have only discussed *naturally* reciprocal verbs. The middle ending on these *media tantum* verbs makes explicit a meaning that is inherent in the lexeme itself. But verbs that are not naturally reciprocal can also be given a reciprocal meaning, and this can happen in two ways. First, a writer can combine an active verb with the reciprocal pronoun. We see many examples of this across the LXX and GNT. Second, a writer can place middle morphology on a normally active verb, creating a reciprocal middle. This strategy is far less common. Consider the following examples with παρακαλέω.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:18**

ὥστε παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις

Therefore, encourage one another with these words.

### **2 Corinthians 13:11**

Λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί, χαίρετε, καταρτίξεσθε, παρακαλεῖσθε, τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε, εἰρηνεύετε, καὶ ὁ θεὸς τῆς ἀγάπης καὶ εἰρήνης ἔσται μεθ' ὑμῶν

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<sup>37</sup> We can also understand conceptually that, even across a letter, a greeting ideally receives a warm reception and the thought of a greeting extended back to the writer.

Finally, brothers, rejoice, mend your ways,<sup>38</sup> **encourage one another**, think the same thing, be at peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Παρακαλέω is not an inherently reciprocal verb. One can unilaterally encourage, comfort, or exhort another.<sup>39</sup> In 1 Thessalonians 4:18, however, Paul gives this word a reciprocal idea through the addition of ἀλλήλους as he calls upon the Thessalonians to encourage one another with the hope that their deceased loved ones will be one day be raised again. This is one way to place a reciprocal idea on this normally active verb.

In 2 Corinthians 13:11, we find the medio-passive form παρακαλεῖσθε. This term is difficult to translate, but it is possible that here Paul has used a middle ending to give the term a reciprocal idea—that the Corinthians are to “encourage one another.”<sup>40</sup> If this is the case, then Paul has created a reciprocal middle from a normally active verb through the addition of middle morphology. In cases like this, the subject-focused nuance of the middle voice shines brightly.

## Conclusion

In sum, middle morphology in the LXX and GNT can also communicate reciprocal actions. In these events, the subject functions as agent and patient as he both gives and receives the same action. Events like these align well with the core semantics of the middle voice—marked focus on the subject’s involvement in, or affectedness by, the verbal action.

In the aorist tense, we found reciprocal middle verbs normally occurring as

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<sup>38</sup> The medio-passive form καταρτίζεσθε should probably be rendered as middle (so Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, vol. 40, WBC [Waco, TX: Word, 1986], 498-99). The middle here has a reflexive sense (BDAG, s.v. “καταρτίζω” 1.a: “Mend your ways”).

<sup>39</sup> For such unilateral examples, see Acts 2:40; 2 Cor 7:6; Col 4:8.

<sup>40</sup> See Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 499 (ESV: “comfort one another”). BDAG opts for a passive translation (BDAG, s.v. “παρακαλέω,” 4) (NASB: “Be comforted”). Evidence for a reciprocal translation may be found in the “one another” flavor of the following verbs, where Paul exhorts the Corinthians to unity of mind and peaceable relationships.

*sigmatic* aorist middles. This is different from the pattern we have seen in the other middle types studied so far, whose aorist forms were normally marked by  $-(\theta)\eta-$ . This is likely due to the fact that the subjects of reciprocal actions are more highly agentive than subjects in the previous middle types. Because  $-(\theta)\eta-$  aorists arose diachronically from a morpheme that communicated stative or passive actions, it is not surprising to find this morpheme on middle verbs whose subject is more like a patient.<sup>41</sup> Where the subject of middle verbs is more highly agentive, it is also not surprising to find *sigmatic* aorist forms.

At the same time, we did find reciprocal middles marked by  $-(\theta)\eta-$  in the case of *διαλέγομαι*. These forms displayed no semantic difference from their *sigmatic* middle counterparts. This again displays the changing state of Greek during the Hellenistic period, as use of the  $-(\theta)\eta-$  aorist was spreading across the spectrum of middle types and taking the place of the *sigmatic* middle. We see a snapshot of this process in the case of *διαλέγομαι* and the reciprocal middle category.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> See pp. 63-66 of this work for discussion of the diachronic development of  $-(\theta)\eta-$  aorists.

<sup>42</sup> These observations are built off of Allan's discussion of the distribution of *sigmatic* and  $-(\theta)\eta-$  aorists in the Homeric and Classical Periods (Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 148-77, and especially his chart on p. 156 [see also pp. 79-81 of this work]).

## CHAPTER 5

### MIDDLE VOICE IN THE LXX AND GNT (PART 3): THE DIRECT REFLEXIVE, PERCEPTION, AND MENTAL ACTIVITY MIDDLE TYPES

In the previous two chapters, we have begun to see the range of “subject-focused” nuances the middle voice communicated in Hellenistic Greek. In this chapter, we will test the literature of the Septuagint and Greek New Testament for three more of Rutger J. Allan’s middle voice types: the direct reflexive, perception, and mental activity middles. We will also continue to observe trends in middle voice morphology and syntax. We begin with the direct reflexive middle.

#### **The Direct Reflexive Middle**

The direct reflexive middle describes actions in which a human agent “volitionally performs an action on him or herself.”<sup>1</sup> In this way, as with the reciprocal middle, the subject functions as both agent and patient. The “subject focus” of the middle voice is perhaps seen most clearly with this middle type, as the effect of the verbal action spins entirely back onto the subject.

Most direct reflexive middles have active counterparts. In other words, while these are verbal actions that the subject may *naturally* perform on himself, that direction of the action is not necessary. The subject may also perform these actions on someone else (in which case the verb is marked for the active voice). Hellenistic Greek continued to have two strategies for communicating direct reflexivity. First, the writer might use the reflexive pronoun (ἑαυτοῦ). Second, he might add a middle ending to the verb. When a

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<sup>1</sup> Rutger J. Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek: A Study in Polysemy*, Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology 11 (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2003), 88.



verb communicates a naturally reflexive event, use of the middle ending is common.<sup>2</sup> Nearly all aorist direct reflexive middles in the LXX and GNT occur in the sigmatic form. The direct reflexive middle is found on several different categories of verbs. We begin with examples of verbs of grooming.

### Verbs of Grooming

Verbs of grooming describe actions of washing, adorning, and other cosmetic care. One of the most commonly cited verbs in this category is λούω (“to wash”). In the active, λούω describes the subject washing someone else, as in Leviticus 8:6.

#### Leviticus 8:6

καὶ προσήνεγκεν Μωυσῆς τὸν Ααρων καὶ τοὺς υἱοὺς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔλουσεν αὐτοὺς ὕδατι  
And Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and **washed** them in water.

In Leviticus 8:6, Moses ceremonially washes Aaron and his sons in order to consecrate them for the priesthood. The active voice is used because this washing happens to an object other than the subject.

The direction of this verbal action is different, however, in the following middle voice examples.

#### Leviticus 11:40

καὶ ὁ αἶρων ἀπὸ θνησιμαίων αὐτῶν πλυνεῖ τὰ ἱμάτια καὶ λούσεται ὕδατι καὶ ἀκάθαρτος ἔσται ἕως ἑσπέρας

And the one who takes up their carcasses shall wash his garments and **wash himself** in water and be unclean until evening.

#### Isaiah 1:16

λούσασθε, καθαροὶ γένεσθε, ἀφέλετε τὰς πονηρίας ἀπὸ τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν ἀπέναντι τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν μου, παύσασθε ἀπὸ τῶν πονηριῶν ὑμῶν

**Wash yourselves**, become clean, remove the evils from your souls before my eyes, cease from your evils.

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<sup>2</sup> For these comments on direct reflexive middles, see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 88-90. For the examples given below, use of the reflexive pronoun was infrequent. The middle ending was by far the more dominant strategy for communicating reflexivity. The same trend is evident for classical Greek (see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 90 fn. 150).

The two verses above give examples of λούω in the middle voice and functioning as a direct reflexive. In Isaiah 1:16, Isaiah calls the Israelites to cleanse themselves from their evil deeds. Leviticus 11:40 is helpful because it shows λούω in the middle alongside another verb of grooming (πλύνω) in the active. The active πλυνεῖ is used for the subject washing something outside of himself, namely his garments, while the middle λούσεται is used for the subject washing his own person.

Another verb meaning “to wash” that gives examples of the direct reflexive middle is νίπτω. Whether in the active or middle voice, νίπτω is typically transitive, followed by an accusative direct object denoting the particular body part washed. In the active, this body part belongs to someone other than the subject, while in the middle it belongs to the subject himself.

**Genesis 43:24**

καὶ ἤνεγκεν ὕδωρ νίψαι τοὺς πόδας αὐτῶν καὶ ἔδωκεν χορτάσματα τοῖς ὄνοις αὐτῶν  
And he brought water to wash their feet and he gave their donkeys food.

**Genesis 43:31**

καὶ νιψάμενος τὸ πρόσωπον ἐξεληθὼν ἐνεκρατεύσατο καὶ εἶπεν Παράθετε ἄρτους  
And washing his face, going out, he controlled himself and said, “Serve bread.”

**Matthew 6:17**

σὺ δὲ νηστεύων ἄλειψαί σου τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν σου νίψαι  
But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face.

Genesis 43:24 and 31 provide back-to-back uses of νίπτω, first in the active and then in the middle voice. The active use describes a man washing Joseph’s brothers’ feet, while the middle describes Joseph washing his own face. Matthew 6:17 provides one more example of this direct reflexive middle usage, as Jesus calls his disciples to wash their own faces so as not to show off the appearance of their fasts. Once again, each middle verb spins the effect of the action back onto the subject. Note also that these direct reflexive middles use the sigmatic aorist form.

Finally, we can note two examples from the grooming verb κοσμέω (“to adorn”). Here we find both strategies for giving a direct reflexive sense.

### **Ezekiel 23:40**

καὶ ὅτι τοῖς ἀνδράσιν τοῖς ἐρχομένοις μακρόθεν, οἷς ἀγγέλους ἐξαπεστέλλοσαν πρὸς αὐτούς, καὶ ἅμα τῷ ἔρχεσθαι αὐτοὺς εὐθὺς ἐλούου καὶ ἐστιβίζου τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου καὶ **ἐκόσμου** κόσμῳ

And it was that for the men who would come from afar, to whom they would send out messengers to them, even at once when they came, immediately you would wash yourself and paint your eyes and **adorn yourself** with adornment.<sup>3</sup>

### **1 Timothy 2:9**

ὡσαύτως καὶ γυναῖκας ἐν καταστολῇ κοσμίῳ μετὰ αἰδοῦς καὶ σωφροσύνης **κοσμεῖν ἑαυτάς**, μὴ ἐν πλέγμασιν καὶ χρυσίῳ ἢ μαργαρίταις ἢ ἱματισμῷ πολυτελεῖ

Likewise also women should **adorn themselves** in respectable apparel, with modesty and self-control, not in braided hair and pearls and expensive clothing.

In Ezekiel 23:40, God chastises the people of Israel for their idolatries, as they “adorned themselves” for the nations around them. This direct reflexive sense is accomplished through the middle ending on ἐκόσμου. In 1 Timothy 2:9, Paul calls women to “adorn themselves” with godliness. This time, the reflexive sense is accomplished through an active verb with the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτάς. The meaning in both cases is essentially the same. These are two viable options to communicate that the subject performs the grooming act on him or herself.<sup>4</sup>

### **Verbs of Clothing**

Verbs of clothing include verbs that speak literally of clothing someone, as well as a host of verbs that pertain more generally to “putting off” and “putting on.” As with verbs of grooming, these are verbs that naturally lend themselves to a direct reflexive idea since it is common to clothe or put something on oneself. There are many such verbs that function as direct reflexive middles in the LXX and GNT. These include ζωννύω (“to gird”), στολίζω, (“to clothe”), ἐκδύω (“to take off”), ἐνδύω (“to put on,

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<sup>3</sup> Notice the string of direct reflexive middles in this verse: ἐλούου . . . ἐστιβίζου . . . ἐκόσμου.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the use of the reflexive pronoun emphasizes, or sharpens, the reflexive idea by using an entirely separate term to convey it. For other direct reflexive middle verbs of grooming, see the use of βαπτίζω in 2 Kgs 5:14 and Mark 7:4, and κείρω in Job 1:20; Acts 18:18; 1 Cor 11:6.

clothe”), περιτίθημι (“to put on”), and περιβάλλω (“to put on”).<sup>5</sup> In this section, we will explore just one of these verbs: ἐνδύω.<sup>6</sup>

In the active voice, ἐνδύω pertains to putting something on a person other than the verbal subject, as in 1 Samuel 17:38.

### **1 Samuel 17:38**

καὶ **ἐνέδυσεν** Σαουλ τὸν Δαυὶδ μανδύαν καὶ περικεφαλαίαν χαλκῆν περὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ

And Saul **put on** David a wool cloak and a bronze helmet around his head.

In the middle voice, however, ἐνδύω pertains to putting something on oneself.

### **Ephesians 6:11**

**ἐνδύσασθε** τὴν πανοπλίαν τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὸ δύνασθαι ὑμᾶς στήναι πρὸς τὰς μεθοδείας τοῦ διαβόλου

**Put on** (yourselves) the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

### **Sirach 6:31**

στολὴν δόξης **ἐνδύσῃ** αὐτὴν καὶ στέφανον ἀγαλλιήματος περιθήσεις σεαυτῷ

You will **put her on** (yourself) as a robe of glory and will put her on yourself as a crown of joy.

In Ephesians 6:11, Paul calls Christians to put the whole armor of God on themselves in order to stand strong in spiritual warfare. In Sirach 6:31, the reader will be blessed if he clothes himself with wise counsel. The direct reflexive reading of ἐνδύσῃ in this latter verse is confirmed by the second half of the verse, where it parallels an active verb of “putting on” with the reflexive pronoun (περιθήσεις σεαυτῷ). Therefore, the middle ending on ἐνδύω in these verses communicates direct reflexivity. The verbal action goes out from and spins back onto the subject as he performs the action upon himself.

Ἐνδύω also gives a helpful view into the semantics of the middle voice

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<sup>5</sup> For verses that list several of these examples together, see Lev 16:4; Isa 59:17; Jdt 10:3.

<sup>6</sup> Of the 140 occurrences of ἐνδύω in the LXX and GNT, 89 are medio-passive. All aorist middle occurrences are sigmatic (52x). Further, reflexivity for this verb is never conveyed through the active form + reflexive pronoun. All of this points to the naturally reflexive nature of the verb.

through its syntax. In the active voice, this verb normally occurs with two objects in the accusative, while in the middle voice, it normally occurs with just one. We can see this if we reconsider the examples given above. In 1 Samuel 17:38, Saul put on David (Δαυιδ) a wool cloak (μανδύαν). Here, ἐνδύω in the active voice takes a double accusative object. In Ephesians 6:11, we are called to put on the armor (τὴν πανοπλίαν) of God. Here, ἐνδύω in the middle voice takes a single accusative object. Consider two more examples, side-by-side.

**Matthew 27:31**

καὶ ὅτε ἐνέπαιξαν αὐτῷ, ἐξέδυσαν αὐτὸν τὴν γλαμύδα καὶ ἐνέδυσαν αὐτὸν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπήγαγον αὐτὸν εἰς τὸ σταυρῶσαι

And when they had mocked him, they took off him the robe and **put on him his garments** and led him away to crucify him.

**Acts 12:21**

τακτῆ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ ὁ Ἡρώδης ἐνδυσάμενος ἐσθῆτα βασιλικὴν καὶ καθίσας ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος ἐδημηγόρει πρὸς αὐτούς

And on the appointed day, Herod, **having put on the** royal **robe**, and sitting on the throne, made a public speech to them.

In Matthew 27:31, the Roman soldiers finish mocking Jesus and place his own clothes back on him. This verse gives a typical active use of ἐνδύω, and it calls for two arguments in the accusative. The first, αὐτὸν, describes *whom* they clothed (Jesus). The second, τὰ ἱμάτια, describes *how* they clothed him (with his own clothes). In Acts 12:21, Herod dresses himself to give a public speech. This verse gives a typical middle voice use of ἐνδύω, which now only calls for one argument in the accusative—ἐσθῆτα (βασιλικὴν) describes *how* Herod dressed (with a royal robe). This sole accusative corresponds to the second (adverbial) accusative in the active clause. The following table displays the sentence structure of ἐνδύω in the active and middle voices:

Table 7. Sentence structure of active vs. middle ἐνδύω

Voice	Form	Argument	Argument
Active	ἐνδύω	Accusative 1	Accusative 2
Middle	ἐνδύομαι <sup>(= Acc 1)</sup>		Accusative 2

How are we to explain this alternation in syntax? Two observations can be made. First, this formally displays a lowered transitivity in the middle voice clause as it requires one less accusative object. The middle verb is still syntactically transitive, but inasmuch as it is reflexive, it is lower in transitivity than the active clause.<sup>7</sup>

Second, in the case of middle voice ἐνδύω, we should understand that the object that would have filled the slot “Accusative 1” is present through its middle voice morphology. In direct reflexivity, this object (i.e., *who* is clothed) is now coreferential with the subject itself. If it were expressed as an accusative, it would be with the reflexive pronoun ἐαυτόν. But this pronoun is unnecessary because it has already been expressed through the “subject-focused” middle voice ending on the verb. Therefore, in this altered, single-accusative sentence structure, we see the semantics of the middle voice at work. The first object, now coreferential with the subject, is embedded into the verbal ending. The middle ending refers back to the involvement or affectedness of the subject.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> On the lowered transitivity of reflexives, see also Paul J. Hopper and Sandra J. Thompson, “Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse,” in *Language* 56:2 (1980), 277-78.

<sup>8</sup> In the perfect tense, ἐνδύω carries a stative sense in both active and middle voice forms (cp. 2 Sam 6:14; 2 Chr 18:9; Rev 1:13. Note also the perfect active of ἐνδύω alongside the perfect middle of ζωννύω in Ezek 9:11). Further, some pluperfect active uses of ἐνδύω align closely with direct reflexive middle uses described above (cf. Lev 16:23 and Job 29:14). Some of this can be explained similarly to the perfect tense use of ἀπόλλυμι and πείθω mentioned above (see pp. 99-100 [ἀπολλύμι] and 112-13 [πείθω]) and again points to the semantic overlap between the perfect tense and middle voice. Diachronically, morphologically, and semantically we have seen a relationship between these two verbal categories. The perfect tense describes the state of the verbal subject, and the middle voice describes the subject’s involvement in the verbal action. These are both aspects of “subject focus.” The middle ending is somewhat redundant on the perfect middle forms of ἐνδύω because the subject-focused nuance of the middle (here, stativity) is already communicated by the stativity of the perfect.

## Κόπτω

Κόπτω is frequently used in the LXX and GNT to denote “mourning.” Yet the concrete meaning of this term when used in the middle voice is “to beat one’s breast as an act of mourning.” This is another naturally reflexive act, as the subject hits himself in grief. When used in the active voice, κόπτω has an entirely different nuance, meaning “to cut off” (e.g., branches from a tree).<sup>9</sup>

### 2 Samuel 5:20a

καὶ ἦλθεν Δαυιδ ἐκ τῶν ἐπάνω διακοπῶν καὶ **ἔκοψεν** τοὺς ἀλλοφύλους ἐκεῖ

And David came from the upper breaches and **cut down** (smote) the Philistines there.

### Matthew 21:8

ὁ δὲ πλεῖστος ὄχλος ἔστρωσαν ἑαυτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, ἄλλοι δὲ **ἔκοπτον** κλάδους ἀπὸ τῶν δένδρων καὶ ἐστρώννουν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ

And most of the crowd spread their garments on the road, and others **were cutting** branches from the trees and spreading them in the road.

In the two examples above, active voice κόπτω means “to cut down.” In 2 Samuel 5:20, David cuts down (defeats) his enemies. In Matthew 21:8, the crowd cuts down branches in honor of Jesus. Both uses of κόπτω occur in prototypical transitive clauses, as the subject performs the action on another object.

### Genesis 23:2

καὶ ἀπέθανεν Σαρρα ἐν πόλει Αρβοκ, ἣ ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ κοιλῶματι (αὕτη ἐστὶν Χεβρων) ἐν γῆ Χανααν. ἦλθεν δὲ Αβρααμ **κόψασθαι** Σαρραν καὶ πενθήσαι

And Sarah died in the city of Arba, which is in the lowland (this is Hebron) in the land of Canaan. And Abraham went **to mourn** over Sarah and to grieve.

### Luke 8:52

ἐκλαιον δὲ πάντες καὶ **ἐκόπτοντο** αὐτήν. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· Μὴ κλαίετε, οὐ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν ἀλλὰ καθεύδει

And they were all weeping and **mourning** over her. But he said, do not weep, for she has not died, but is sleeping.

The middle voice examples of κόπτω above are semantically distinct from their active counterparts. Both verses describe the subject weeping. In Genesis 23:2, Abraham weeps over the death his wife Sarah. In Luke 8:52, many people weep over a

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<sup>9</sup> For these two senses of κόπτω, see BDAG, s.v. “κόπτω.”

young girl whom they believe to be dead.<sup>10</sup> Literally, κόπτω denotes that these people beat themselves on the chest. The middle morphology communicates this direct reflexivity, as the subject both performs and receives the effect of his action.

These direct reflexive uses of κόπτω show the importance of understanding a verb's concrete meaning. Without this, one might have explained κόπτω's middle semantics according to the mental process type, or questioned its voice function altogether when seeing it alongside other verbs of mourning in the active voice (cf. πενθῆσαι and ἔκλαιον in the examples above). But by understanding κόπτω's concrete middle meaning as "to beat oneself," we were able to explain it as a direct reflexive middle. Thus, understanding a verb's concrete or basic meaning is an important factor when explaining the semantics of a middle-marked verb.<sup>11</sup>

### **Other Oppositional Direct Reflexive Middles**

There are many other verbs in the LXX and GNT that receive middle marking to communicate direct reflexivity. I will present a few more examples of such verbs below. Each of these verbs can also occur in the active voice to communicate that the subject performs the action on someone else. In the middle voice, however, the subject performs this action on himself.

#### **Matthew 6:17**

σὺ δὲ νηστεύων ἄλειψαί σου τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν σου νίψαι

<sup>10</sup> The accusatives that follow these middle verbs (Σαρραν, αὐτήν) are adverbial (they wept "over" someone [cp. the parallel uses with ἐπί prepositional phrase in 2 Sam 1:12; Rev 1:12; 18:9]). At the same time, the use of these accusative "objects" shows again that the middle verb is not entirely intransitive.

<sup>11</sup> It is interesting that τύπτω, also sometimes meaning "to beat oneself as an act of mourning," is never marked in the middle voice in the LXX or GNT (but see *Jos. Ant.* 7:252 [τυπτόμενος τὰ στήθνα, "beating his chest"]). This verb occurs in the active voice twice in the NT with στήθος as direct object, as in Luke 18:13: ἔτυπτε τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ ("he beat his breast" = "mourned" [cf. Luke 23:48]). The active voice marking on τύπτω is perhaps because this verb is used less frequently than κόπτω to describe this reflexive act of mourning. Normally, τύπτω describes the highly transitive, agentive act of "striking" someone or something else (see BDAG and LSJ, s.v. "τύπτω"). Therefore, active marking was more common, and there was not a familiar middle-marked expression that the writer utilized. When used in an active construction such as τύπτω τὸ στήθος, reflexivity is still conceptually present, but not morphologically marked.



But when you fast, **anoint** your head and wash your face.

In Matthew 6:17, Jesus calls his disciples to anoint themselves (ἀλειψαί) when they fast. Note that this example occurs alongside a direct reflexive middle of νίπτω, which has been cited previously. Also, as with the other examples seen so far, this and all other aorist middles of ἀλείφω occur in the sigmatic form.

### **Joshua 3:5**

καὶ εἶπεν Ἰησοῦς τῷ λαῷ **Ἀγνίσασθε** εἰς αὔριον, ὅτι αὔριον ποιήσει ἐν ὑμῖν κύριος θαυμαστά

And Joshua said to the people, “**Purify yourselves** for tomorrow, because tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”

### **John 11:55**

Ἦν δὲ ἐγγὺς τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβησαν πολλοὶ εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα ἐκ τῆς χώρας πρὸ τοῦ πάσχα ἵνα **ἀγνίσωσιν ἑαυτοῦς**

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up to Jerusalem from the country before the Passover in order to **purify themselves**.

In Joshua 3:5, the middle imperative ἀγνίσασθε indicates that Joshua called the Israelites to purify themselves. In John 11:55, this same reflexive sense is accomplished through the active verb with the reflexive pronoun. There, the Jews purify themselves (ἀγνίσωσιν ἑαυτοῦς) in preparation for the Passover. Again, note that the middle example is sigmatic aorist.<sup>12</sup>

### **Isaiah 2:10**

καὶ νῦν εἰσελθετε εἰς τὰς πέτρας καὶ **κρύπτεσθε** εἰς τὴν γῆν ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ φόβου κυρίου καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δόξης τῆς ἰσχύος αὐτοῦ, ὅταν ἀναστῆ θραῦσαι τὴν γῆν

And now, enter into the rocks and **hide yourself** in the ground from the face of the fear of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he rises to break the earth.

### **Revelation 6:15**

καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς καὶ οἱ μεγιστᾶνες καὶ οἱ χιλιάρχοι καὶ οἱ πλούσιοι καὶ οἱ ἰσχυροὶ καὶ πᾶς δοῦλος καὶ ἐλεύθερος **ἔκρυψαν ἑαυτοῦς** εἰς τὰ σπήλαια καὶ εἰς τὰς πέτρας τῶν ὀρέων

And the kings of the earth and the great ones and the commanders and the rich and the

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<sup>12</sup> There are two -(θ)η- aorists in the NT which might be rendered as direct reflexive middles. In Acts 21:24 and 26, Paul either “purifies himself” or “is purified” (ἀγνίσθητι, ἀγνισθεῖς) according to the law. It is probably best to render these forms as passive. Paul “underwent” a process of purification (see John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, NAC [Nashville: B&H Academic, 1992], 448-50). If these -(θ)η- forms communicate direct reflexivity, however, then they further attest to the increasing use of -(θ)η- aorist forms for the middle voice in Hellenistic Greek.

strong and every slave and free **hid themselves** in the caves and the rocks of the mountains.

In Isaiah 2:10, the middle voice of κρύπτω has a reflexive sense and indicates that people are to hide themselves from the coming wrath of God. In a similar context, Revelation 6:15 communicates this same reflexive idea through the active voice of κρύπτω with the reflexive pronoun. Mention of κρύπτω is particularly important because of its morphology in the aorist tense. Until now, each direct reflexive verb studied has used sigmatic aorist middle forms. Κρύπτω, however, appears to mark direct reflexive middles with -(θ)η-. Consider the following examples.

### **Genesis 3:8**

Καὶ ἤκουσαν τὴν φωνὴν κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ περιπατοῦντος ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τὸ δειλινόν, καὶ **ἐκρύβησαν** ὃ τε Ἀδὰμ καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ προσώπου κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ παραδείσου

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the evening, and Adam and his wife **hid themselves** from the face of the Lord God in the midst of the tree of the garden.

### **1 Samuel 19:2**

καὶ ἀπήγγειλεν Ἰωναθὰν τῷ Δαυὶδ λέγων Σαουλ ζητεῖ θανατῶσαί σε· φύλαξαι οὖν αὔριον πρωὶ καὶ **κρύβηθι** καὶ κάθισον κρυβῆ

And Jonathan told David, saying, “Saul is seeking to kill you. Therefore, be on your guard tomorrow in the morning and **hide yourself** and sit in hiding.”

In Genesis 3:8, ἐκρύβησαν describes a volitional act on the part of Adam and Eve. They hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. In 1 Samuel 19:2, the imperative mood increases the likelihood that κρύβηθι should be rendered as middle. Jonathan exhorts David to hide himself from Saul. BDAG describes forms like these as “passive used in an active sense.”<sup>13</sup> But this explanation is unnecessary. These are middle voice verbs used in a direct reflexive sense—a sense that aligns well with middle voice semantics. In this case, we see in the verb κρύπτω the continued spread of the -(θ)η-aorist, now reaching to the direct reflexive middle type.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> BDAG, s.v. “κρύπτω,” 1a.

<sup>14</sup> For more examples of this phenomenon, see Gen 3:10; Judg 9:5; 1 Sam 13:6; John 8:50; 12:36.

## **Media Tantum Direct Reflexive Middles**

Every direct reflexive middle verb above has had an active, non-reflexive counterpart. There are, however, some direct reflexive *media tantum*. As a first example, we can consider ἐγκρατεύομαι (“to control oneself, abstain”).<sup>15</sup>

### **1 Corinthians 9:25**

πᾶς δὲ ὁ ἀγωνιζόμενος πάντα ἐγκρατεύεται, ἐκεῖνοι μὲν οὖν ἵνα φθαρτὸν στέφανον λάβωσιν, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄφθαρτον

Every athlete **exercises self-control** in all things. Therefore, they (do so) in order that they might receive a perishable crown, but we (to receive) an imperishable one.

In 1 Corinthians 9:25, Paul uses a sports analogy for the Christian life, pointing out the need for athletes to control or discipline themselves for success. Self-control is an inherently reflexive idea, and so it is not surprising to find the middle form ἐγκρατεύεται (or to find ἐγκρατεύομαι as a middle-only verb). The middle morphology highlights what is inherent in the lexeme itself—an action focused on the affectedness of the verbal subject.

Second, we can consider the *media tantum* verb ἀπολογέομαι. This is another inherently middle verb, and is often directly reflexive, meaning “to defend oneself.”<sup>16</sup> It has this direct reflexive sense in the following two examples from Luke.

### **Luke 12:11**

ὅταν δὲ εἰσφέρωσιν ὑμᾶς ἐπὶ τὰς συναγωγὰς καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας, μὴ μεριμνήσητε πῶς ἢ τί ἀπολογήσθε ἢ τί εἴπητε

But when they bring you before the synagogues and rulers and authorities, do not worry how or what you might **defend yourself**, or what you might say.

### **Luke 21:14**

θετέ οὖν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν μὴ προμελετᾶν ἀπολογηθῆναι

Therefore, put it in your heart not to prepare beforehand **to defend yourself**.

In both texts above, Jesus exhorts his disciples not to worry about how to defend themselves before their enemies because the Holy Spirit will help them in that

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<sup>15</sup> BDAG, s.v. “ἐγκρατεύομαι.” BDAG labels this verb a deponent, but this is unnecessary. As I will explain below, the verb receives middle endings because it is inherently middle in meaning.

<sup>16</sup> It can also be used of a defense made on behalf of another (see LSJ, s.v. “ἀπολογέομαι”). In light of this, alternatively we could place ἀπολογέομαι in the speech act middle category (see below).

time. These verses also provide intriguing examples of ἀπολογέομαι because of their alternation between sigmatic and -(θ)η- aorist forms. In Luke 12:11, the direct reflexive sense is communicated through the sigmatic form. In Luke 21:14, this same direct reflexive sense is communicated through the -(θ)η- form. Once again, we see the ability of this latter form to convey a range of middle voice meanings.

## **Conclusion**

In sum, the middle voice in the LXX and GNT communicated direct reflexive actions, where the subject performs an action on himself and is therefore both agent and patient. Such actions align well with the semantics of the middle voice, which focus on the involvement or affectedness of the subject. The direct reflexive middle was at work on a range of verbal types, including verbs of grooming and clothing. In the aorist tense, direct reflexive middle verbs were formed predominantly as sigmatic aorists. Still, examples of direct reflexive middles in -(θ)η- can be found. This attests to the continued spread of this aorist form, and perhaps even an increased spread compared to the Classical Period.<sup>17</sup>

## **The Perception Middle**

Perception middle verbs include middle-marked verbs of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and possibly touching. In each of these verbal categories, the subject is affected (usually mentally) by perceiving an object through one of his senses. The middle voice ending highlights the experience that the subject undergoes through his sensory act. In other words, once again the middle ending points specially to the subject's

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<sup>17</sup> For the Classical Greek Period, Allan notes that “all direct reflexive middle verbs have sigmatic middle aorist forms” (Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 89 fn. 146. See also pp. 154-56).

involvement in or affectedness by the verbal action. The subject of perception middle verbs is both an agent and experiencer.<sup>18</sup>

In the aorist tense, perception middle verbs normally use the sigmatic aorist form. We will see below, however, that this is not always the case. Further, most perception middle verbs are *media tantum*.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, for each of these verbs we can identify synonyms that occur in the active voice. I will discuss this phenomenon at the conclusion to this section. With these things in mind, we now consider several perception middle verbs.

### **Γεύομαι**

Γεύομαι refers to the sense of taste. It indicates that someone has “perception of something either by mouth or by experience.”<sup>20</sup> It is used once in the LXX as a (causative) active (Gen 25:30), and in the middle voice on all other occasions in the LXX and GNT. Its middle ending highlights the subject’s experience in the act of tasting.

The semantics of γεύομαι can be understood when compared with those of ἐσθίω (“to eat”). Ἐσθίω, normally marked in the active voice,<sup>21</sup> denotes the basic act of eating. Its shade of meaning is weighted toward the effect of the action on the direct object, as the subject consumes it. The shade of meaning on γεύομαι, however, is weighted toward the effect of the action on the subject as he experiences (tastes) the object he consumes. Consider the following examples.

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<sup>18</sup> For comments such as these on the perception middle, see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 95.

<sup>19</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 95.

<sup>20</sup> BDAG, s.v. “γεύομαι.”

<sup>21</sup> Ἐσθίω (root \*εδ) has its aorist and future forms from a different root, \*φαγ (ἔφαγον, φάγομαι) (see LSJ, s.v. “φάγειν”; Mounce, *The Morphology of Biblical Greek*, 263, 319). Still, both present and aorist forms normally occur in the active form (in the LXX and GNT, 97% of present forms and 99% of aorist forms are active). The future form (e.g., φάγομαι) only occurs with medio-passive endings. In light of the consistent present and aorist active voice forms, these future medio-passive forms likely do not have to do with the inherent lexical semantics of φαγέιν. Rather, they have to do with the overlap of the semantics of the middle voice and future tense.

## 2 Samuel 19:36a

υἱὸς ὀγδοήκοντα ἐτῶν ἐγὼ εἰμι σήμερον· μὴ γνῶσομαι ἀνὰ μέσον ἀγαθοῦ καὶ κακοῦ; ἢ γεύσεται ὁ δοῦλός σου ἔτι ὁ φάγομαι ἢ πίομαι; ἢ ἀκούσομαι ἔτι φωνὴν ἀδόντων καὶ ἀδουσῶν;

I am a son of eighty years today. I will not know between good and evil, will I? Or will your servant still taste what I eat or drink? Or will I still hear the voice of singing men and singing women?

## John 2:9

ὡς δὲ εἰγεύσατο ὁ ἀρχιτρίκλινος τὸ ὕδωρ οἶνον γεγεννημένον, καὶ οὐκ ᾔδει πόθεν ἐστίν, οἱ δὲ διάκονοι ᾔδεισαν οἱ ἠντληκότες τὸ ὕδωρ, φωνεῖ τὸν νυμφίον ὁ ἀρχιτρίκλινος

And when the head steward tasted the water which had become wine, and he did not know where it was from, but the servants who drew the water knew, the head steward called the bridegroom.

Both uses of γεύομαι above portray the subject's experience in tasting something. In John 2:9, the head steward does not seek out the bridegroom merely because he drank the wine, but because he had tasted how good it was. First Samuel 19:36 is particularly helpful because it shows γεύομαι alongside the future form of ἐσθίω (φάγομαι).<sup>22</sup> In this verse, David's servant Barzillai is describing his old age. He may still be able to perform the simple act of "eating" (φάγομαι) food, but he has lost the ability to "taste" (γεύσεται) the food he eats. Γεύομαι here is distinct from ἐσθίω, emphasizing the subject's experience in the act of eating. In both verses, the middle marking on γεύομαι highlights this subject focus inherent in this lexeme itself.

Γεύομαι can also be used metaphorically to describe other experiences of the subject. These uses are extensions of the concrete meaning of the verb, but they help to display further the affectedness of its subject.

## Psalms 33:9

γεύσασθε καὶ ἴδετε ὅτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος· μακάριος ἀνὴρ, ὃς ἐλπίζει ἐπ' αὐτόν

Taste and see that the Lord is kind; blessed is the man who hopes in him.

## Matthew 16:28

ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι εἰσὶν τινες τῶν ὧδε ἐστώτων οἵτινες οὐ μὴ γεύσονται θανάτου ἕως ἂν ἴδωσιν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ αὐτοῦ

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<sup>22</sup> On the middle marking of the future form φάγομαι, see fn. 21 above.

Truly I say to you that there are some standing here who will not **taste** death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

In Psalm 33:9, David calls people to experience God’s goodness. In Matthew 16:28, Jesus says that some of his disciples will not experience death before they see a unique demonstration of his authority. To describe these experiences, the verses use the imagery of tasting food through the middle verb γεύομαι. Again, the middle morphology points to the deep experience and affectedness of the subject.<sup>23</sup>

### **Ὄσφραίνομαι**

Ὄσφραίνομαι refers to the sense of smell. In this middle-only verb, the subject “catches a scent of,” or “smells” something.<sup>24</sup> The middle ending again highlights the subject’s mental perception and experience in his action.

#### **Genesis 8:21a**

καὶ **ὠσφράνθη** κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας, καὶ εἶπεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς διανοηθεὶς Οὐ προσθήσω ἔτι τοῦ καταράσασθαι τὴν γῆν διὰ τὰ ἔργα τῶν ἀνθρώπων

And the Lord God **smelled** a fragrant aroma, and considering, the Lord God said, “I will not again curse the land on account of the works of men.”

#### **Genesis 27:27**

καὶ ἐγγίσας ἐφίλησεν αὐτόν, καὶ **ὠσφράνθη** τὴν ὀσμὴν τῶν ἱματίων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἠύλογησεν αὐτόν καὶ εἶπεν Ἴδου ὀσμὴ τοῦ υἱοῦ μου ὡς ὀσμὴ ἀγροῦ πλήρους, ὄν

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<sup>23</sup> It is interesting to note the case marking on γεύομαι’s direct objects. This verb can take its direct object in either the accusative or the genitive case, as can be seen in two of the examples above (John 2:9 = accusative; Matt 16:28 = genitive). Indeed, this phenomenon is common with verbs of perception. Verbs of seeing take their object in the accusative. But verbs of hearing, tasting, or smelling can take their object the accusative or the genitive. This variation may present a slightly different portrayal of the event. The genitive object may describe the whole of which the subject partakes (partitive genitive) or the source from which the subject experiences (genitive of source). The accusative object, on the other hand, may simply describe the content of the object experienced (see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 96-97; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, 3rd ed. [New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919], 507-8). Thus, the accusative in John 2:9 above simply denotes that the thing they tasted was wine. A genitive object as in 1 Sam 14:29 (ἐγευσάμην βραχὺ τοῦ μέλιτος τούτου [“I tasted a little of this honey”]), however, denotes either the source from which Jonathan tasted or the larger content of honey from which he tasted a little bit. Still, at least for γεύομαι, the distinction between the genitive and accusative object should not be pressed too far, because we find these two options used in identical contexts (1 Sam 14:29 [literal genitive] = 1 Sam 14:43 [literal accusative]; Heb 6:4 [metaphorical genitive] = Heb 6:5 [metaphorical accusative]) (although whenever γεύομαι has θανάτος as its object, it is in the genitive). Most importantly for our purposes, none of this variation in case marking appears to affect the verb’s voice marking. A middle perception verb can take an accusative or genitive object, as can an active one. In either case, when the middle verb is used, there is a marked focus on the subject’s experience through his perception. On the most general level, this discussion also reminds us that middle voice verbs can be syntactically transitive.

<sup>24</sup> LSJ, s.v. “ὄσφραίνομαι.” Ὄσφραίνομαι does not occur in the GNT.

ἠύλγησεν κύριος

And coming near, he kissed him, and he **smelled** the scent of his garments and blessed him and said, “Behold, the scent of my son is like the scent of a full field, which the Lord has blessed.”

Both examples above indicate the mental affectedness that happens through the sense of smell. In Genesis 8:21, the Lord smells the scent of an offering from Noah. Through this smell, he is pleased (cf. εὐωδίαζ) and moved to mercy, “considering” (διανοηθείς) that he will not send a flood on the earth again. In Genesis 27:27, Isaac is deceived through scent. When he smelled animal skins on Jacob, he was so mentally affected that he concluded Esau was standing before him, and he mistakenly gave his blessing to Jacob. Indeed, the sense of smell always creates mental effects like these, and often elicits responses like these from the smeller. This subject-affectedness is inherent in the verb ὀσφραίνομαι, and its middle morphology marks it explicitly.

We should also take note of the aorist forms of ὀσφραίνομαι. For γεύομαι, every aorist middle occurrence took the sigmatic aorist form. Ὀσφραίνομαι is the exact opposite. As in Genesis 8:21 and 27:27, it forms each of its aorist (and future) middle forms in -(θ)η-. Here, then, are verbs in the same semantic category forming their aorist middles in different ways.

At the most basic level, this again displays the ability of the -(θ)η- form to communicate the middle voice. But it is also interesting to note a distinction in the level of agency, or volition, between the subjects of these verbs. In γεύομαι, the subject often operates with a higher level of agency or volition, since typically he must put something in his mouth to taste it. In ὀσφραίνομαι, the subject often operates with a lower level of agency, or volition, since he is more likely simply to “catch a scent” of something. In this sense, the subject of ὀσφραίνομαι is more passive-like, and better suited to receive the more passive-like -(θ)η- morpheme. Further, this puts a perception middle verb like ὀσφραίνομαι closer to the mental process middle category, which consistently marked its aorists in -(θ)η-. Thus, lower levels of subject agency or volition may be one factor in



determining the aorist forms of ὁσφραίνομαι.<sup>25</sup>

### **Ἐνωτίζομαι**

Ἐνωτίζομαι refers to the sense of hearing. This verb means “to listen carefully to what is said, give ear, pay attention.”<sup>26</sup> These definitions show that Ἐνωτίζομαι indicates much more than simply hearing a sound. The subject takes in and mentally processes, perhaps even heeds, what he hears. In other words, the subject of Ἐνωτίζομαι is again deeply involved in and mentally affected by the verbal activity, and the verb’s middle morphology points this out.

#### **Psalm 54:2**

**Ἐνώτισαι**, ὁ θεός, τὴν προσευχὴν μου καὶ μὴ ὑπερίδῃς τὴν δέησίν μου

**Give ear**, O God, to my prayer, and do not despise my request.

#### **Acts 2:14**

Σταθεὶς δὲ ὁ Πέτρος σὺν τοῖς ἕνδεκα ἐπῆρεν τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπεφθέγγετο αὐτοῖς· Ἄνδρες Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες Ἱερουσαλὴμ πάντες, τοῦτο ὑμῖν γνωστὸν ἔστω καὶ **Ἐνωτίσασθε** τὰ ῥήματά μου

And Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and declared to them, “Men of Judea and all you who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and **give ear** to my words.

The two examples above highlight the middle semantics of Ἐνωτίζομαι. In Psalm 54:2, David calls upon God to listen to his prayer. The request is not, of course, that God would simply hear the sound of David’s words, but that he would listen and respond in salvation. In Acts 2:14, Peter preaches a sermon at Pentecost, calling his listeners to pay close attention to the things he says about Jesus. The people are to be so affected by this form of hearing that Peter’s message “becomes known” (γνωστὸν ἔστω) to them and, ultimately, that they are moved to repentance. In both verses, Ἐνωτίζομαι occurs in a transitive clause as the act of hearing is directed from the subject to an object

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<sup>25</sup> For more on this, see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 97-98.

<sup>26</sup> BDAG, s.v. “Ἐνωτίζομαι.”

heard.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, the middle ending indicates that the force of the action also proceeds back to the subject as he pays close attention to what he hears.<sup>28</sup>

## **Θεάομαι**

Θεάομαι refers to the sense of sight. Once again, the definition given by BDAG is telling: “to have an intent look at something, to take something in with the eyes, with the implication that one is especially impressed, *see, look at, behold*.”<sup>29</sup> This definition indicates that the subject of θεάομαι is intensely involved in the act of sight. He takes in deeply the thing he sees, often marvels over it, and is mentally affected.

### **John 1:14**

Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

### **John 4:35b**

ἰδοὺ λέγω ὑμῖν, ἐπάρατε τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὑμῶν καὶ θεάσασθε τὰς χώρας ὅτι λευκαὶ εἰσιν πρὸς θερισμόν

Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and behold the fields, that they are white for harvest.

In John 1:14, John says that we have seen the glory of Jesus Christ. His use of θεάομαι indicates that this is no dull or ordinary sight. Rather, this is an amazing thing to see, and those who truly see experience a sense of wonder as they behold “the only begotten from the Father” who is “full of grace and truth.” In John 4:35, Jesus calls his disciples to an intense kind of sight. They are to “see” beyond what meets the eye. They are to look closely and “take into their minds” the reality that many people need him. The

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<sup>27</sup> In the two examples given, the direct object is in the accusative. For the object in the genitive, see Pss 38:18; 48:2. The genitive can be understood as denoting the source of the hearing.

<sup>28</sup> All aorist forms of ἐνωτιζομαι are sigmatic middles. In the future tense, however, we find an alternation between sigmatic and -(θ)η- forms (cp. Ps 134:17 [-θησ-] and Isa 42:23 [-σ-]). There is no semantic difference between these two future forms. Both communicate the middle voice and highlight the subject focus inherent in the semantics of the verb. Therefore, once again we see the spread of the -(θ)η- form and its ability to communicate the middle voice.

<sup>29</sup> BDAG, s.v. “θεάομαι,” 1.

use of ἰδοῦ and the call to “lift up your eyes” add to the picture of an intense experience of looking, and the middle form θεάομαι communicates well the experience and affectedness of the beholder.

Θεάομαι can have the extended meaning “to visit,” as in Romans 15:24.

### **Romans 15:24**

ὡς ἂν πορεύωμαι εἰς τὴν Σπανίαν, ἐλπίζω γὰρ διαπορευόμενος **θεάσασθαι** ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑφ’ ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι ἐκεῖ ἔὰν ὑμῶν πρῶτον ἀπὸ μέρους ἐμπλησθῶ

. . . as I am going into Spain, for I hope, passing through, **to see** you and to be sent on my way there by you, if first I have enjoyed your company for a while.

In Romans 15:24, Paul is not saying that he simply wants to look at the church at Rome. Rather, he wants to visit them and spend time with them. This extended use of θεάομαι gives another view into the deep involvement and experience of its subject. Here, the subject so “looks at” people that he enjoys their company and takes stock of how they are doing.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, in each use of θεάομαι above, the middle voice ending calls attention to the mental affectedness inherent in the semantics of the verb. Note also that in each example θεάομαι occurs in the sigmatic aorist middle form.

### **Ἐπισκέπτομαι**

Finally, ἐπισκέπτομαι provides one other perception middle verb that refers to the sense of sight.<sup>31</sup> This verb also denotes a “looking upon” something wherein the subject is deeply focused and mentally affected. The subject takes careful consideration of something for the purpose of examination, judgment, or help.<sup>32</sup> Once again, the verb’s middle morphology marks this inherent subject focus. Below are several nuances of the subject-focused meaning of ἐπισκέπτομαι.

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<sup>30</sup> For another use of θεάομαι with this sense, see 2 Chr 22:6.

<sup>31</sup> The simplex form σκέπτομαι can also be classified as a perception middle, and the semantics of these two forms obviously overlap. I have chosen to focus on the compound form because it is used with much greater frequency in the LXX and GNT (175x vs. only 4x for σκέπτομαι).

<sup>32</sup> BDAG notes the following uses: 1. to make a careful inspection, *look at, examine, inspect*; 2. to go to see a person with helpful intent, *visit*; 3. to exercise oversight on behalf of, *look after, make an appearance to help* (BDAG, s.v. “ἐπισκέπτομαι”).

## 2 Samuel 24:12

καὶ εἶπεν ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς Ἰωαβ ἄρχοντα τῆς ἰσχύος τὸν μετ' αὐτοῦ Διέλθε δὴ πάσας φυλὰς Ἰσραὴλ ἀπὸ Δαν καὶ ἕως Βηρσαβεε καὶ ἐπίσκεψαι τὸν λαόν, καὶ γνώσομαι τὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ λαοῦ

And the king said to Joab, the ruler of the army, who was with him, “Go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and examine the people, that I might know the number of the people.

In 2 Samuel 24:12, David asks Joab to number the people of Israel. To do this, Joab must look upon the people carefully (ἐπίσκεψαι) in order to count them. Here, the subject of ἐπισκέπτομαι must make a careful mental examination.<sup>33</sup>

## Lamentations 4:22

Ἐξέλιπεν ἡ ἀνομία σου, θύγατερ Σιων· οὐ προσθήσει ἔτι ἀποικίσαι σε. ἐπεσκέψατο ἀνομίας σου, θύγατερ Εδωμ· ἀπεκάλυψεν ἐπὶ τὰ ἀσεβήματά σου

Your lawlessness has gone from you, Daughter of Zion, he will not again exile you. He has visited your lawlessness, Daughter of Edom; he has uncovered your ungodly deeds.

In Lamentations 4:22, God says that he will judge Edom. He has looked upon her lawlessness, taken note of it, and in response he will “visit” her with judgment. In this context, the subject of ἐπισκέπτομαι makes careful consideration and moves to judgement based on what he sees.

## Psalms 105:4

μνήσθητι ἡμῶν, κύριε, ἐν τῇ εὐδοκίᾳ τοῦ λαοῦ σου, ἐπίσκεψαι ἡμᾶς ἐν τῷ σωτηρίῳ σου  
Remember us, O Lord, in the good pleasure of your people, visit us in your salvation.

In Psalm 105:4, the Psalmist calls upon God to “visit” his people with salvation. Literally, he asks the Lord to look upon his people with care and favor (τῇ εὐδοκίᾳ), and to act in accordance with those affections. Here, the subject looks with careful consideration and, in response, moves in to help.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Επισκέπτομαι has this nuance many times in the book of Numbers, where God calls Moses to “register” or “enroll” the people (see, for example, Num 1:3 and 3:40). Note also Acts 6:3, where the Apostles call the church to “look carefully upon” for the purpose of “choosing” men among them to serve as a kind of deacon (ἐπισκέψασθε δέ, ἀδελφοί, ἄνδρας ἐξ ὑμῶν [“choose, brothers, men from among you”]).

<sup>34</sup> See also Ps 8:5, where the Psalmist marvels at God’s consideration and care for humans (“what is man . . . that you care for [ἐπισκέπτῃ] him?”), and Luke 1:68, where Zechariah exults that God has “visited” (ἐπεσκέψατο) his people to redeem them through Jesus.

### Acts 15:36

Μετὰ δέ τινας ἡμέρας εἶπεν πρὸς Βαρναβᾶν Παῦλος· Ἐπιστρέψαντες δὴ ἐπισκευώμεθα τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς κατὰ πόλιν πᾶσαν ἐν αἷς κατηγγείλαμεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου, πῶς ἔχουσιν

And after some days, Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, to see how they are.”

In Acts 15:36, Paul wants to visit Christians to whom he had proclaimed the gospel. Specifically, he wants to “look upon” these people in order to see how they are doing (πῶς ἔχουσιν). This use of ἐπισκέπτομαι implies not a bland “looking at” something, but a deep thoughtfulness on the part of the subject. Ultimately, in each example above, the middle endings on ἐπισκέπτομαι highlight that the verbal subject is in some way deeply engaged in his act of sight.<sup>35</sup>

### Active Synonyms

There are many other verbs of perception that are normally marked in the active voice. Indeed, some of the verbs cited above have active voice synonyms that are used with great frequency. One can think, for example, of ἀκούω (“to hear”), ὁράω (“to see”), βλέπω (“to see”), θεωρέω (“to behold”), and σκοπέω (“to look for, behold”).

Sometimes the meaning of these verbs is nearly identical to the meaning of the middle-marked verbs cited above. For example, ἀκούω and ἐνωτίζομαι are frequently used with similar meaning in parallel lines in the LXX, as in Psalm 48:2.

### Psalm 48:2

Ἀκούσατε ταῦτα, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη,  
ἐνωτίσασθε, πάντες οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν οἰκουμένην

Hear these things, all nations,  
Give ear, all inhabitants of the earth.

In this verse, the psalmist calls all people to listen to his words of wisdom. There is no clear distinction in meaning between active voice ἀκούω and middle voice

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<sup>35</sup> Note again that in each example ἐπισκέπτομαι occurs as a sigmatic aorist middle.

ἐνωτίζομαι. In both instances, the subject is called to invest himself deeply in the act of hearing.<sup>36</sup>

Again, βλέπω is frequently used in the call to “watch out for” something, as in Mark 13:33.

**Mark 13:33**

**βλέπετε** ἀγρυπνεῖτε, οὐκ οἴδατε γὰρ πότε ὁ καιρὸς ἐστίν

**Watch out**, stay awake, for you do not know when the time is.

Here, Jesus calls his disciples to pay close attention to themselves as they wait for his return. The subject of this active voice verb of perception is no less involved or affected than in the middle voice verbs of sight above.<sup>37</sup> How then should we explain the voice marking on synonymous active-middle pairs such as these?

First, there is often a general distinction in emphasis between active and middle voice verbs of perception. The primary shade of meaning for the active verb describes the sensory action more basically. The primary shade of meaning for the middle verb, on the other hand, more heavily emphasizes the involvement or affectedness of the subject. Thus, the dominant meaning of ἀκούω is the simple “to hear,” while the dominant meaning of ἐνωτίζομαι is “to pay close attention.” The dominant meaning of ὁράω and βλέπω is “to see,” while the dominant meaning of θεάομαι is “to behold with wonder.” Of course, because these verbs refer to the same sense (hearing or sight, respectively), they will sometimes overlap in meaning. But there remains a distinction in

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<sup>36</sup> Ενωτίζομαι is used alongside ἀκούω twenty times in the LXX. This number grows if we consider its occurrence alongside the compound εισακούω, as in Ps 38:18. Ἀκούω shows discrepancy in voice marking within its own principal parts. In the future voice, it can be marked in either the middle or active voice, with no apparent distinction in meaning (see, for example, Josh 1:17). These future middle forms can be explained in light of the semantic overlap between the future tense and middle voice. Future middles of ἀκούω are explicitly marked for subject focus, while future actives simply are not.

<sup>37</sup> 1 Cor 1:26 provides another clearly “subject-focused” use of βλέπω (“consider [βλέπετε] your calling, brothers). Here Paul calls the Corinthian church to “look closely at” (i.e., “think deeply about”) their status when God called them to salvation. BDAG also notes uses of ὁράω that are similar to uses of middle voice verbs of sight, including “to visit, experience, perceive, and pay attention” (BDAG, s.v. “ὁράω”). They also claim that this verb can be used as a “passive in the active sense” to mean “become visible, appear,” as in Luke 23:34 (aorist -[θ]η- form). This use, however, is better described as a spontaneous process middle.

emphasis in their most basic meaning. In this sense, the middle member of the pair is more semantically nuanced (or “colorful”), and we can detect an opposition between default (e.g., ἀκούω) and subject-focused (e.g., ἐνωτίζομαι) synonyms.<sup>38</sup>

This explanation does not work, however, for verbs like σκοπέω and θεωρέω. These verbs are very much like their middle voice synonyms. They have a colorful, subject-focused nuance at the core of their semantics, with their subject paying close attention to the object in sight.<sup>39</sup> In cases like this, we must remember again that active voice verbs can also denote an inherently subject-focused act, but that these semantics are simply not emphasized morphologically through the middle voice ending. Thus, in an opposition such as active σκοπέω versus middle (ἐπι)σκέπτομαι, the former verb is simply unmarked for subject focus, while the latter verb is marked for it.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, we find several middle voice verbs in the LXX and GNT that fall into the “perception middle” category. Normally these verbs are *media tantum*, and their middle morphology highlights the experience or affectedness of the subject as he perceives something through one of his senses. While perception middle verbs are typically marked as sigmatic middles in the aorist tense, we also find the -(θ)η- form spreading into this middle type. Finally, there are several major verbs of perception formed in the active voice. These active verbs either have a lower emphasis on the subject’s involvement in the verbal action, or they are simply unmarked for the subject-

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<sup>38</sup> That there are distinct nuances of meaning in these terms can be seen when they are used side-by-side in prose, as in 1 John 1:1: ὁ ἐώρακάμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὁ ἐθεασάμεθα καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν, περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς (“what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and our hands have touched, concerning the word of life”). John first refers to something “seen” in the basic sense (ἐώρακάμεν), then to something “looked at,” possibly “marveled at” (ἐθεασάμεθα).

<sup>39</sup> Σκοπέω and σκέπτομαι are lexically related. LSJ notes that Classical writers initially used σκοπέω in the present and perfect, but σκέπτομαι in other tenses. Not surprisingly, there is much semantic overlap between these two words (see LSJ, s.v. “σκοπέω”).

focused emphasis they have.<sup>40</sup>

### The Mental Activity Middle

The middle voice morphology, semantics, syntax of mental activity verbs are similar to those of the perception verbs described in the previous section. In the mental activity middle, the verbal subject volitionally performs a mental activity such as thinking, reasoning, considering, or planning. The verb's middle morphology points attention to the subject's involvement in this mental act. In some way, the subject is deeply involved in or affected by his act of thinking. In terms of the transitivity of mental activity middle verbs, we can think of the force of the action proceeding in two directions. First, it proceeds out from the subject onto the idea (direct object) conceived in his mind. Second, it proceeds back from the idea onto the subject, as he is affected by it. Therefore, the subject of mental activity middle verbs is both agent and experiencer, and even sometimes beneficiary. Mental activity middle verbs are normally *media tantum* and use the sigmatic aorist middle form.<sup>41</sup> As a first example of a verb in this category, we consider λογίζομαι.

### Λογίζομαι

Λογίζομαι is a common mental activity middle verb in the LXX and GNT (used 155 times). It is also sometimes classified as deponent.<sup>42</sup> Yet, a quick glance at its

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<sup>40</sup> It is possible to place ἅπτω in either the perception middle or indirect reflexive middle category. In the middle voice, this verb means “to touch, take hold of” (in the active voice it has an entirely different meaning, “to light, kindle”) (BDAG, s.v. “ἅπτω”). Inasmuch as “touch” is another one of the senses, and the subject of the verb can be described as an experiencer through this sense of touch, the verb is a perception middle. Inasmuch as the subject can be described as beneficiary by “taking hold of” something, the verb can be described as an indirect reflexive middle. ἅπτω is used in the middle voice in the LXX and GNT to describe the subject clinging to something, harming something, healing or being healed by something, and becoming impure by something. In all cases, the middle morphology on the verb points to the involvement or affectedness of the subject through the act of touch.

<sup>41</sup> For comments such as these on the mental activity middle, see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 101-103.

<sup>42</sup> See BDAG, s.v. “λογίζομαι”; BDF, 164 (§311).



lexical semantics shows that λογίζομαι denotes actions in which the subject is deeply involved in the act of thinking. BDAG lists the following glosses: “1. to determine by mathematical process, *reckon, calculate*; 2. to give careful thought to a matter, *think (about), consider, ponder, let one’s mind dwell on*; 3. to hold a view about something, *think, believe, be of the opinion*.”<sup>43</sup> The middle endings on λογίζομαι highlight its focus on the subject’s mental activity and affectedness.

### **1 Samuel 1:13**

καὶ αὐτὴ ἐλάλει ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς, καὶ τὰ χεῖλη αὐτῆς ἐκινεῖτο, καὶ φωνὴ αὐτῆς οὐκ ἠκούετο· καὶ ἐλογίσαστο αὐτὴν Ἡλὶ εἰς μεθύουσας

And she was speaking in her heart, and her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard, and Eli considered her to be drunk.

### **Romans 6:11**

οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς λογίξεσθε ἑαυτοὺς εἶναι νεκροὺς μὲν τῇ ἁμαρτία ζῶντας δὲ τῷ θεῷ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ

So also, consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

In 1 Samuel 1:13, the use of ἐλογίσαστο indicates that Eli mentally processed Hannah’s fervent but silent praying and drew the conclusion that she was drunk. Not only was Eli deeply involved in this mental calculation, but it affected his perception of her and the way he spoke to her afterwards (cf. 1 Sam 1:14). In Romans 6:11, Paul calls Christians to think deeply about (λογίξεσθε) who they are in Christ. They are to consider themselves as dead to sin and alive to God.<sup>44</sup> Again, this way of thinking will have a deep effect on them in their fight against sin (cf. Rom 6:12-14). In both of these verses, the subject of λογίζομαι is an agent and experiencer in the act of thinking, and the middle ending calls attention to these subject-focused semantics.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> BDAG, s.v. “λογίζομαι.”

<sup>44</sup> The use of λογίζομαι also has a reflexive sense in this context (“consider yourselves”). Notice, however, that this sense is not inherent in the word’s lexical semantics or middle form. Therefore, to communicate reflexivity Paul adds the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοὺς. In itself, the middle semantics of λογίζομαι are of the mental activity type.

<sup>45</sup> All aorist middle uses of λογίζομαι are sigmatic. The verb occurs in the aorist -(θ)η- form 32 times in the LXX and GNT, and each occurrence communicates the passive voice. Alongside λογίζομαι, we can also consider the compound form διαλογίζομαι as another mental activity middle. Διαλογίζομαι has semantics similar to λογίζομαι, but on some occasions it can also mean “discuss, argue” (cf. Mark 8:16;

## Βουλεύω

As a second mental activity middle verb, we can consider βουλεύω. Βουλεύω is primarily used in the middle voice in the LXX and GNT.<sup>46</sup> In the middle, it indicates that the subject decides on a course of action to take or receives advice on which course of action to take.<sup>47</sup> In both cases, the subject is mentally involved or affected in the planning process.

### 2 Kings 6:8

Καὶ βασιλεὺς Συρίας ἦν πολεμῶν ἐν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ **ἐβουλεύσατο** πρὸς τοὺς παῖδας αὐτοῦ λέγων Εἰς τὸν τόπον τόνδε τινὰ ελμῶνι παρεμβάλω

And the king of Syria was warring with Israel, and he **took counsel** with his servants, saying, “In such and such a place I will camp.”

### Luke 14:31

ἢ τίς βασιλεὺς πορευόμενος ἐτέρῳ βασιλεῖ συμβαλεῖν εἰς πόλεμον οὐχὶ καθίσας πρῶτον **βουλεύσεται** εἰ δυνατὸς ἐστὶν ἐν δέκα χιλιάσιν ὑπαντῆσαι τῷ μετὰ εἴκοσι χιλιάδων ἐρχομένῳ ἐπ’ αὐτόν;

Or what king, going to meet another king for war, will not first sit down and **deliberate** whether he is able with ten thousand to meet the one coming against him with twenty thousand?

In 2 Kings 6:8, the king of Syria consults with his servants. He receives their advice and makes plans with them as to the best place to camp in his war with Israel. In Luke 14:31, Jesus describes how, before going to battle, a king will think carefully about whether he is strong enough to win. In both cases, the middle voice of βουλεύω indicates that the subject is deeply involved and affected in mental activity as he plans his course of action. In 2 Kings 6:8, the subject is also the beneficiary of advice.

On occasion, the middle form of βουλεύω can denote that the subject gives advice to someone else (cf. 2 Sam 16:23; 2 Chr 16:29). This meaning is less frequent. It

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9:33). On the one hand, this shows the potential overlap between the mental activity and speech act middle categories. On the other hand, this shows the importance of understanding the meaning of the simplex form of a verb. In light of the meaning of λογίζομαι, we can see that διαλογίζομαι highlights the mental aspect of arguing, as the subjects consider their viewpoints back and forth.

<sup>46</sup> Just two of its ninety-one occurrences are in the active voice (Gen 28:3; Sir 44:3). There is no discernable difference between these active and middle uses.

<sup>47</sup> BDAG and LSJ list the glosses, “to deliberate, resolve, decide, take counsel” (BDAG and LSJ, s.v. “βουλεύω”).

is, however, the common meaning of the compound form, συμβουλεύω, when used in the active voice. In the middle voice, συμβουλεύω has meanings similar to middle forms of βουλεύω. In the active voice, it denotes that the subject gives advice, as in Exodus 18:19:

**Exodus 18:19a**

νῦν οὖν ἄκουσόν μου, καὶ συμβουλεύσω σοι, καὶ ἔσται ὁ θεὸς μετὰ σοῦ

Therefore, now listen to me, and I will advise you, and God will be with you.

In Exodus 18:19, Jethro advises (συμβουλεύσω) his son-in-law, Moses, to appoint other men to help him lead the people of Israel. This active voice use of συμβουλεύω focuses on the effect of the verbal action on the direct object, who receives advice. This is distinct from the subject-focused middle voice uses listed above.<sup>48</sup>

Therefore, we can conclude that active voice forms of συμβουλεύω are object-focused, while the primary use of middle voice forms of συμβουλεύω and βουλεύω are subject-focused. The middle forms of these verbs focus on events in the subject’s mind—deliberating, taking counsel, making plans. The middle ending formally marks the subject’s involvement or affectedness in his mental activity.<sup>49</sup>

**Ἐνθυμέομαι**

Third, we should consider ἐνθυμέομαι because of its aorist middle formations.

Ἐνθυμέομαι is semantically similar to λογίζομαι, meaning “to process information by

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<sup>48</sup> Instances of middle voice βουλεύω meaning “to advise” may also involve lowered transitivity and higher focus on the subject’s involvement in the action. In each of these cases, the verbal object is simply the counsel given (e.g., αὕτη ἡ βουλή, ἣν ἐβουλεύσατο Ἀχιτοφελ, “this counsel, which Ahithophel counseled”), never the person counseled. Therefore, the focus is less on the effect of the action on the object counseled and more on the subject who “acts as a counselor.” This is distinct from the majority of active voice uses of συμβουλεύω, which name and have an increased focus on the person counseled (e.g., συνεβούλευσεν Ἀχιτοφελ τῷ Ἀβεσσαλωμ, “Ahithophel counseled Absalom” [2 Sam 17:15]).

<sup>49</sup> The semantics of βουλεύω are slightly different than the related term βουλόμαι. While this latter term can also have the more volitional meaning “to intend, plan,” its primary meaning is the more patient-like “to want” (see LSJ and BDAG, s.v. “βουλόμαι”). In other words, while βουλόμαι can fall within the mental activity middle domain, it is more frequently used as a mental state middle. Note also that βουλόμαι receives -(θ)η- aorist middle forms, which are common on the mental state middle type. For an example of the distinct shades of meaning of βουλόμαι and βουλεύω, see 1 Macc 16:13 (“he wanted [ἐβουλήθη] to seize the country, and he was plotting [ἐβουλεύετο] with deceit against Simon”).

thinking about it carefully, *reflect (on), consider, think.*”<sup>50</sup> Once again, this verb focuses specially on the subject’s mental activity, and its middle ending points this out. But ἐνθυμέομαι is unique in that, while each verb surveyed so far has formed sigmatic aorist middles, it forms its aorist middle in -(θ)η-.

#### **4 Maccabees 8:21**

καὶ ἐνθυμηθῶμεν ὅτι ἀπειθοῦντες τεθνηξόμεθα

And let us consider that if we disobey, we will die.

#### **Matthew 1:20**

ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἐνθυμηθέντος ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου κατ’ ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ λέγων· Ἰωσήφ υἱὸς Δαυὶδ, μὴ φοβηθῆς παραλαβεῖν Μαρίαν τὴν γυναῖκά σου, τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ πνεύματος ἔστιν ἁγίου

And when he has considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is begotten in her is from the Holy Spirit.”

Both aorist -(θ)η- forms of ἐνθυμέομαι above communicate the middle voice.

In both verses, the subject volitionally considers a certain course of action. In 4 Maccabees 8:21, young men must consider risking their own lives. In Matthew 1:20, Joseph has considered (and planned) divorcing Mary. The -(θ)η- infix highlights this high subject involvement and functions identically to the middle -σα- forms of λογίζομαι seen above. Therefore, while the sigmatic aorist form is more common in this middle voice category, here again we find the spread of the -(θ)η- form, capable of communicating the middle voice on verbs of mental activity.

#### **Μεταμέλομαι**

Sometimes it is possible to classify middle voice verbs according to more than one semantic category. This is often the case with verbs denoting mental activities. Particularly, mental activity verbs may overlap with mental state, perception, speech act, or indirect reflexive middle semantics.

Μεταμέλομαι is a verb that drifts between the mental state and mental activity

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<sup>50</sup> BDAG, s.v. “ἐνθυμέομαι.”

middle meanings. These two categories are distinct in that the subject of mental activity middle verbs is more volitionally involved in the mental act (e.g., “he planned”), while the subject of mental state middle verbs is more passively involved (e.g., “he desired”). At times, μεταμέλομαι carries the mental state meaning, “be sorry, regret,” as in Proverbs 25:8.

### **Proverbs 25:8**

μη πρόσπιπτε εις μάχην ταχέως, ἵνα μη μεταμεληθῆς ἐπ’ ἐσχάτων

Do not fall into a battle quickly, in order that you might not regret it in the end.

In Proverbs 25:8, the reader is called to avoid hasty fights in order that he might not experience regret. In this use of μεταμέλομαι, the subject is more like a patient, as the regret simply wells up in his mind. We can classify this example as a mental state middle. This is distinct from the function of μεταμέλομαι in Psalm 109:4.

### **Psalm 109:4**

ὥμοσεν κύριος καὶ οὐ μεταμεληθήσεται, Σὺ εἶ ἱερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδεκ

The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind. You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.

In Psalm 109:4, the Lord promises the eternal priesthood of the Messiah. He will not go back, or change his mind, on this promise. In this use of μεταμέλομαι, the subject is more volitional, determining a course of action in his mind. We can classify this example as a mental activity middle. Therefore, μεταμέλομαι can be placed in either the mental state or mental activity category, depending on its context. In either case, however, it is most important to see that the middle form highlights the activity and affectedness of the subject.<sup>51</sup>

### **Καταλαμβάνω**

Καταλαμβάνω provides an example of a verb that drifts between the mental

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<sup>51</sup> In cases like these, it is also important to consider the verb’s most basic meaning. Here, the basic meaning of μεταμέλομαι is probably the mental state meaning, “be sorry, regret” (see LSJ, s.v. “μεταμέλομαι”). Note also that μεταμέλομαι marks its aorist and future middles with -(θ)η-.

activity and indirect reflexive categories. In the middle voice, this verb can have the concrete meaning, “to grasp, seize” (indirect reflexive) or the metaphorical meaning, “to understand” (“to grasp with the mind” = mental activity).<sup>52</sup> It has an indirect reflexive sense in 2 Samuel 12:29.

### **2 Samuel 12:29**

καὶ συνήγαγεν Δαυὶδ πάντα τὸν λαὸν καὶ ἐπορεύθη εἰς Ραββαθ καὶ ἐπολέμησεν ἐν αὐτῇ καὶ **κατελάβετο** αὐτήν

And David gathered all the people and went to Rabbah and waged war against it and **seized** it.

In 2 Samuel 12:29, the Israelites capture the city of Rabbah. The middle verb κατελάβετο carries an indirect reflexive sense, indicating that the Israelites benefited from the verbal action by taking the city into their possession. In Acts 10:34, however, the middle form of καταλαμβάνω has an additional “mental activity” nuance.

### **Acts 10:34**

Ἀνοίξας δὲ Πέτρος τὸ στόμα εἶπεν· Ἐπ’ ἀληθείας **καταλαμβάνομαι** ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν προσωπολήμπτης ὁ θεός

And opening his mouth Peter said, “I **understand** in truth that God does not show partiality.”

In Acts 10:34, the middle form καταλαμβάνομαι indicates that Peter “understands” something. His mind “grasps” a truth—the truth that God does not show partiality. Here, the middle voice of καταλαμβάνω has both an indirect reflexive and mental activity sense as Peter is affected mentally and gains understanding. Therefore, middle uses of καταλαμβάνω might be classified according to multiple middle voice semantic categories. Ultimately, in each case the middle ending focuses attention on the subject’s involvement in the verbal action.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Therefore, the rationale for middle marking on this verb is fundamentally because it denotes indirect reflexivity. Καταλαμβάνω is often used in the active voice with meanings similar to its indirect reflexive middle uses. In such cases, the subject’s benefit from the action is simply not highlighted morphologically.

<sup>53</sup> As another example of a verb that “evolves” from one category to another, we can consider ἐπισκέπτομαι, cited as a perception middle above. This verb certainly denotes a literal “looking upon” something (perception middle), but also denotes the more metaphorical “inspecting” or “considering” something (mental activity middle) (see also Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 103 fn. 175).

## Other Middle Voice Verbs of Mental Activity

There are several other verbs that might be placed in the mental activity middle category because they imply, at least in part, a mental action on the part of the subject.

First, we can consider ἐνυπιάζομαι (“to dream”). Note the following example of this verb from Genesis.

### Genesis 37:9

εἶδεν δὲ ἐνύπνιον ἕτερον καὶ διηγήσατο αὐτὸ τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν Ἴδου ἐνυπνιασάμην ἐνύπνιον ἕτερον, ὡς περὶ ὁ ἥλιος καὶ ἡ σελήνη καὶ ἑνδεκά ἀστέρες προσεκύνουν με

And he saw another dream and told it to his father and his brothers and said, “Behold, I have dreamed another dream, as the sun and moon and eleven stars were falling down before me.”

How can we explain the rationale for the middle morphology on ἐνυπιάζομαι?

It is possible to explain this verb as a perception middle because the subject is deeply involved in a kind of sight. Indeed, Genesis 37:9 draws a link between “dreaming” and “seeing” through the phrase εἶδεν ἐνύπνιον (“he saw a dream”).<sup>54</sup> It is also possible to explain this verb as a mental state middle because the sleeping subject is more passively involved in a mental act.<sup>55</sup> It is probably best, however, to explain ἐνυπιάζομαι as a mental activity middle. Though sleeping, the subject’s mind is deeply engaged in and affected by the act of dreaming. The middle ending highlights this mental involvement and affectedness on the part of the subject.

Second, we may locate middle voice verbs of “blaming” or “accusing” partially in the mental activity middle category. This includes verbs such as μεμφόμεαι (“to blame, find fault with”), μωμάομαι (“to blame, find fault with”), and αἰτιάομαι (“to

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Additionally, I have noted the overlap between mental activity and speech act qualities for διαλογίζομαι in fn. 45, and mental activity and mental state qualities for βουλόμαι in fn. 49.

<sup>54</sup> The MT *Vorlage* behind both εἶδεν and ἐνυπνιασάμην in this verse is דלח (“to dream”) (note also Esth 11:12, ὁ ἑωρακὸς τὸ ἐνύπνιον τοῦτο, “the one who has seen this dream”).

<sup>55</sup> *Ενυπιάζομαι* is normally marked with -(θ)η- in the aorist and future tenses, as is the trend with mental state middle verbs. Note, however, that we find the sigmatic aorist middle in Gen 37:9. This form has no semantic difference from the -(θ)η- forms (cp. Gen 37:5). Here again we see the use of the -(θ)η- form for the middle voice.

accuse”). Allan places these verbs in the “speech act” middle category, but also describes their middle marking as implying a “strong emotional—or at least *mental*—involvement on the part of the speaker.”<sup>56</sup> Indeed, there must be mental activity that precedes these forms of speech because the subject must first draw up accusations in his mind. Verbs of accusation can even be seen as an extension of the clear mental activity middle λογίζομαι, which BDAG notes is used in contexts of “counting something against someone.”<sup>57</sup> Ultimately, the middle morphology on these verbs points to the strong involvement of the subject in the action, and one aspect of this involvement may be his mental activity.

Lastly, middle voice verbs of choosing are probably best classified as indirect reflexive middles, since the subject typically performs this action in his own interest. Yet, even with these verbs we can detect shades of the mental activity middle type. The subject of these verbs must perform a high level of mental activity in deciding on the object he chooses. Thus, the nature of “subject focus” on middle verbs such as αἰρέω (“to choose”) or ἐκλέγομαι (“to choose”) overlaps the indirect reflexive and mental activity categories.<sup>58</sup>

## Conclusion

In sum, there are several verbs in the LXX and GNT that are marked with middle morphology because of their subject’s high level of mental activity. The middle ending on these verbs focuses attention on the subject’s involvement of affectedness in his mental act. These “mental activity middle” verbs are most often *media tantum* and receive sigmatic forms in the aorist tense, though we also find -(θ)η- middle forms in this

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<sup>56</sup> Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 107 (italics mine).

<sup>57</sup> BDAG, s.v. “λογίζομαι,” 1.a. That verbs of accusation need not always be speech acts can be seen in the use of αἰτιάομαι in Proverbs 19:3 (τὸν δὲ θεὸν αἰτιάται τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ), where the fool accuses God *in his heart*.

<sup>58</sup> See the discussion on these verbs under the indirect reflexive middle category below.



category. Finally, many middle verbs denoting mental activities may be classified according to more than one middle type. This is a reminder that the most important factor for understanding the Greek middle voice is not the ability to force each verb neatly into a middle category, but simply the ability to appreciate the rich variety of the middle's subject focus.

## CHAPTER 6

### MIDDLE VOICE IN THE LXX AND GNT (PART 4): THE SPEECH ACT AND INDIRECT REFLEXIVE MIDDLE TYPES

This chapter will apply Rutger J. Allan’s final two middle voice types—the speech act and indirect reflexive middle—to middle voice usage in the Septuagint and Greek New Testament. As with the previous chapters, the goal will be to appreciate the special “subject focus” of verbs in these categories. Additionally, we will continue to consider features of Hellenistic Greek middle voice morphology and syntax. We begin with speech act middle verbs.

#### **The Speech Act Middle**

Several middle voice verbs in the LXX and GNT denote speech acts. The rationale for middle marking on this category of verbs can be difficult to explain. Their subjects are highly agentive, and their special focus on the subject’s involvement in the action is often not immediately apparent. For this reason, many of them have been classified as deponent.<sup>1</sup>

Still, the middle ending on these verbs indicates that “the subject is involved in the speech act in a special way.”<sup>2</sup> In many speech act middles, the subject is highly mentally or emotionally involved in his speech. In others, the subject receives some benefit from the speech. Therefore, while the subject of these verbs is clearly an agent, he is also an experiencer and/or beneficiary. Further, as with perception middle verbs,

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<sup>1</sup> BDAG classifies the following speech act verbs as deponent: δέομαι, προσεύχομαι, πονθάνομαι, ὑπισχνέομαι, φθέγγομαι, and ἐντέλλομαι.

<sup>2</sup> Rutger J. Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek: A Study in Polysemy*, Amsterdam Studies in Classical Philology 11 (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 2003), 105.

speech act middle verbs are often very nuanced and descriptive in the kind of speech they portray.<sup>3</sup> In the aorist tense, speech act middle verbs are normally marked as sigmatic aorists. Below, I will offer and explain several examples of this middle type.

### **Speech Verbs of High Emotional or Mental Involvement**

Several speech act middle verbs denote a high level of emotional or mental energy on the part of the speaker. The middle marking on these verbs calls attention to the deep experience that the subject undergoes before or during the act of speaking. Verbs of this class include μαρτύρομαι (“to testify”), ἐμβριμάομαι (“to warn sternly”), ἀρνέομαι (“to deny”), λοιδορέομαι (“to revile”), παρρησιάζομαι (“to speak boldly”), αἰτιάομαι (“to accuse”), and μεμφόμεαι (“to blame”).

As a first example, we can consider μαρτύρομαι and its compound form διαμαρτύρομαι. Both of these terms evoke courtroom imagery, as the subject testifies or calls others to testify to something. BDAG gives the following glosses for μαρτύρομαι: “1. to affirm something with solemnity, *testify, bear witness*; 2. to urge something as a matter of great importance, *affirm, insist, implore*.”<sup>4</sup> The compound form διαμαρτύρομαι appears to intensify this testimony or exhortation.<sup>5</sup> In these situations, the subject often speaks with earnestness, as the following examples demonstrate.

#### **Exodus 19:21**

καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωϋσῆν λέγων Καταβὰς **διαμάρτυραι** τῷ λαῷ, μήποτε ἐγγίσωσιν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν κατανοῆσαι καὶ πέσωσιν ἐξ αὐτῶν πλῆθος

And God spoke to Moses, saying, “Go down and **solemnly testify** to the people, lest they come near to God in order to look and a multitude of them should fall.”

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<sup>3</sup> For these comments on speech act middle verbs, see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 105-7. Because the subject may benefit from the speech act, this middle voice category often overlaps with the indirect reflexive category. I will categorize these verbs here because of their lexical focus on acts of speech.

<sup>4</sup> BDAG, s.v. “μαρτύρομαι.”

<sup>5</sup> BDAG and LSJ, s.v. “διαμαρτύρομαι.”

## 2 Timothy 4:1

**Διαμαρτύρομαι** ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, τοῦ μέλλοντος κρίνειν ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, καὶ τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ

I **solemnly charge** you before God and Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom.

In Exodus 19:21, the Lord gives Moses instructions for the people of Israel. Moses is to go down from Mount Sinai and solemnly warn (διαμάρτυραι) the people not to touch the mountain. The weight of this warning can be seen in the consequence for touching the mountain: anyone who touches it will die (πέσωσιν). In 2 Timothy 4:1, Paul uses διαμαρτύρομαι to communicate a solemn charge to Timothy. With as much passion as Paul can muster, he testifies that Timothy must preach the word of God (cf. 1 Tim 4:2). In both of these verses, διαμαρτύρομαι communicates an intense emotional experience of the subject in his speech act. The middle ending on this verb highlights this special subject focus.<sup>6</sup>

Second, ἐμβριμάομαι refers to another highly emotive speech act. This term means “to warn sternly” or “to rebuke,” and can even refer to the subject being “deeply moved” within himself.<sup>7</sup> At its most concrete level, the term actually refers to an animal snorting, bellowing, or roaring—a sound made when an animal is agitated.<sup>8</sup> In all of this, we can see that ἐμβριμάομαι inherently focuses heavily on the subject’s experience and involvement in his speech act.

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<sup>6</sup> Μαρτύρομαι overlaps in meaning with the active form μαρτυρέω (“to testify”), as can be seen through their use in Acts 23:11: “take courage, for as you have testified (διεμαρτύρω) to the things about me in Jerusalem, so also it is necessary for you to testify (μαρτυρήσαι) in Rome.” On the one hand, the active form is unmarked for the subject-affectedness it communicates. On the other hand, based on the glosses given in BDAG, μαρτυρέω may be the more basic, less emotionally charged term in this synonymous pair.

<sup>7</sup> BDAG, s.v. “ἐμβριμάομαι.” It refers to Jesus being deeply moved *within himself* in John 11:33, 38, but note that John explicitly communicates this reflexivity through τῷ πνεύματι and ἐν ἑαυτῷ.

<sup>8</sup> LSJ, s.v. “ἐμβριμάομαι.” Note the simplex form βριμάομαι (“to snort with anger, to be indignant”) and the noun βριμη, which can refer to “bellowing” or “roaring” (LSJ, s.v. “βριμη”). It is interesting that animal sounds are often marked for the middle voice in Greek (as an example, note ὠρύομαι, “to roar”). These can be considered a variation of speech act middle verbs, as the animals making the sounds are often mentally or emotionally affected in some way (on this see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 112 fn. 196).

**Matthew 9:30**

καὶ ἠνεώχθησαν αὐτῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί. καὶ **ἐνεβριμήθη** αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων· Ὁρᾶτε μηδεὶς γινωσκέτω

And their eyes were opened. And Jesus **sternly warned** them, saying, “See that no one knows.”

**Mark 1:43**

καὶ **ἐμβριμησάμενος** αὐτῷ εὐθὺς ἐξέβαλεν αὐτόν

And **sternly warning** him, he immediately sent him out.

In both examples above, Jesus warns people he has healed that they not spread the word about his miracle-working. The use of ἐμβριμάομαι shows that Jesus gives this warning firmly and passionately. Notice also that these two uses of ἐμβριμάομαι alternate between aorist formations. While Matthew uses the -(θ)η- form, Mark uses the sigmatic form. There is no distinction in meaning. Both communicate the middle voice and highlight the deep emotional involvement of Jesus in his act of speech.

Third, ἀρνέομαι refers to a particularly strong speech act, meaning “to deny, disown, refuse.”<sup>9</sup> In such speech, the subject has often come to settled convictions in his mind and consciously decides to distance himself from something. Note the following example from Matthew.

**Matthew 26:72**

καὶ πάλιν **ἠρνήσατο** μετὰ ὄρκου ὅτι Οὐκ οἶδα τὸν ἄνθρωπον

And he **denied** it again with an oath, saying, “I do not know the man.”

In Matthew 26:72, Peter denies that he knows Jesus. This is clearly a speech act, as indicated by the direct discourse that follows. Peter is consciously and fervently distancing himself from Jesus by his words.<sup>10</sup> The addition of μετὰ ὄρκου (“with an oath”) shows how passionate such speech can get. Therefore, the middle morphology on

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<sup>9</sup> LSJ, s.v. “ἀρνέομαι.” In some contexts, ἀρνέομαι can refer to a denial through the subject’s actions, but even here we can say that the actions are *communicating* the denial (cf. Titus 1:16) or functionally “saying ‘No’” to a particular thing (cf. Luke 9:23; Titus 2:12).

<sup>10</sup> The effort to “distance oneself” from the thing denied shows another angle on the inherent subject-affectedness of this term.

μαρτύρομαι, ἐμβριμάομαι, and ἀρνέομαι highlights the high level of mental and/or emotional involvement on the part of the subject in his act of speech.

### Verbs of Request

Other middle voice verbs of speech refer to requests made by the subject. In these cases, the subject seeks to benefit from the request he makes. Additionally, the subject may be fervently involved in making the request (i.e., an experiencer). The middle morphology highlights that the effect of the verbal action points back to the subject in these ways.

This can be seen clearly in middle forms of ἐπικαλέω, a verb which displays a semantic distinction between its active and middle voice. In the active voice, ἐπικαλέω normally refers to naming someone or something. The subject (x) calls something (y) as something (z), as in Numbers 21:3.

#### Numbers 21:3b

καὶ ἐπεκάλεσαν τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ τόπου ἐκείνου Ἐνάθεμα

And they called the name of that place Anathema.

In Numbers 21:3, the Israelites name the place of some former Canaanite cities “Anathema” (a term for destruction). Here, the subject of active voice ἐπεκάλεσαν functions solely as an agent. The effect of his action proceeds solely to the direct object, which receives a new name. This use of ἐπικαλέω is high in transitivity and calls for two accusative objects (τὸ ὄνομα and Ἐνάθεμα).

When used in the middle voice, however, the subject of ἐπικαλέω invokes or calls upon someone in order to receive something. The middle form of this word can also be used in legal contexts in which the subject “appeals” to an authority.<sup>11</sup> Note the following examples.

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<sup>11</sup> BDAG, s.v. “ἐπικαλέω,” 3.

**Joel 3:5**

καὶ ἔσται πᾶς, ὃς ἂν ἐπικαλέσηται τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου, σωθήσεται

And it will be that everyone, whoever calls upon the name of the Lord, will be saved.

**Acts 28:19**

ἀντιλεγόντων δὲ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἠναγκάσθη ἐπικαλέσασθαι Καίσαρα, οὐχ ὡς τοῦ ἔθνους μου ἔχων τι κατηγορεῖν

And when the Jews objected, I was forced to appeal to Caesar, not that I had any accusation against my nation.

Joel 3:5 refers to those who call upon (ἐπικαλέσηται) the Lord in order to receive salvation. In Acts 28:19, Paul appeals (ἐπικαλέσασθαι) to Caesar for legal help. In both contexts, an agentive subject seeks to benefit from his speech act. The effect of the verbal action proceeds *both* to the person called upon (direct object) and the subject who does the calling. The middle ending on these verbs highlights this subject focus. Further, notice that this change in voice corresponds to a change in transitivity. The middle voice use of ἐπικαλέω is still transitive, but it is lower in transitivity than its active counterpart. This is displayed syntactically in that middle voice ἐπικαλέω receives just one accusative direct object.<sup>12</sup>

Two common *media tantum* verbs of request in the LXX and GNT are προσεύχομαι (“to pray” [cf. the simplex form εὔχομαι])<sup>13</sup> and δεόμαι (“to ask, beg”). The middle endings on προσεύχομαι mark inherent subject-affectedness in this term. In prayer, the subject often seeks to benefit from his request. Further, prayer is an intensely spiritual act involving both the heart and mind, not merely the lips. For these reasons, the subject of προσεύχομαι can be viewed as beneficiary and experiencer.

The semantics of δεόμαι are similar to προσεύχομαι. Δεόμαι, however, has an

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<sup>12</sup> This division between active and middle uses of ἐπικαλέω was less consistent in Classical Greek, where its active voice can also mean “to summon, invoke” (LSJ, s.v. “ἐπικαλέω”). Both the active and middle voice constructions of ἐπικαλέω can be transformed into the passive voice (for transformation of the active, see 1 Sam 23:28; for transformation of the middle, see Exod 29:46). In the aorist tense, ἐπικαλέω consistently marks its middle voice in -σα- and its passive in -(θ)η-.

<sup>13</sup> Εὔχομαι can also be used in contexts meaning “to vow.” In this case, the subject is also affected in that he binds himself to the words of his vow (cf. Eccl 5:3). See below for more on middle voice speech act verbs of promise.

additional layer of subject focus in that it refers lexically to the subject's state of need. Because of this state of need, the subject makes an urgent request.<sup>14</sup> Consider the following examples.

**Psalm 118:58**

**ἔδεήθην** τοῦ προσώπου σου ἐν ὅλῃ καρδίᾳ μου· ἐλέησόν με κατὰ τὸ λόγιόν σου

I **implore** your face with my whole heart. Have mercy on me according to your word.

**Luke 9:38**

καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου ἐβόησεν λέγων· Διδάσκαλε, **δέομαί** σου ἐπιβλέψαι ἐπὶ τὸν υἱόν μου, ὅτι μονογενῆς μοί ἐστιν

And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, saying, “Teacher, I **beg** you to look upon my son, because he is my only child.”

In Psalm 118:58, ἐδεήθην indicates that David earnestly seeks God's face for mercy. The use of ἐν ὅλῃ καρδίᾳ μου (“with my whole heart”) shows how deeply he is involved in this plea. Notice that this aorist middle form is marked with -(θ)η-.<sup>15</sup> In Luke 9:38, a man begs Jesus to heal his only son. The genitive object (σου) can be construed as a genitive of source, as the man asks to receive something from Jesus. In both cases, the middle morphology on δεόμαι highlights the subject's involvement and affectedness in his state of need and in his request.

Finally, πυνθάνομαι provides one more example of a middle voice verb of request. In Homer, πυνθάνομαι meant “to hear, to learn.” This basic meaning eventually developed into the meaning “to inquire, ask” (i.e., “to learn by inquiry”).<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the subject of πυνθάνομαι is affected mentally as he learns and gathers new information. We find this verb meaning both “to learn” and “to inquire” in the New Testament.

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<sup>14</sup> LSJ, s.v. “δεόμαι,” 1: “to be in want or need.” So Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 108-9.

<sup>15</sup> All aorist and future occurrences of δεόμαι are marked in -(θ)η- (51x aorist, 9x future). This morphology may be due to its basic stative meaning “to be in need,” where the subject is more like a patient (Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 108 fn. 191).

<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the rationale for middle marking on πυνθάνομαι may be located primarily in the realm of the subject's perception, mental activity, or mental state. On the semantic development of πυνθάνομαι, see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 107-8. See also BDAG, s.v. “πυνθάνομαι.”



**Matthew 2:4**

καὶ συναγαγὼν πάντας τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ γραμματεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ **ἐπυνθάνετο** παρ' αὐτῶν ποῦ ὁ χριστὸς γεννᾶται

And gathering all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he **inquired** from them where the Christ was to be born.

**Acts 23:34**

ἀναγνούς δὲ καὶ ἐπερωτήσας ἐκ ποίας ἐπαρχείας ἐστὶν καὶ **πυθόμενος** ὅτι ἀπὸ Κιλικίας

And reading [the letter] and asking from what province he was, and **learning** that he was from Cilicia.

In Matthew 2:4, Herod asks questions in order to know where the Messiah was predicted to be born. In Acts 23:34, Felix learns (by asking a question) where Paul was from. In both cases, the middle endings on πυνθάνομαι highlight the subject's affectedness as he received (or sought to receive) information through his words.<sup>17</sup>

**Verbs of Promise**

Ὑπισχνέομαι is a middle voice verb of speech that mean “to promise.” The subject of this verb is heavily affected in that he binds himself to fulfill his words. We can see this more clearly in the concrete meaning of ὑπισχνέομαι, which is “to take upon oneself.”<sup>18</sup>

**2 Maccabees 12:11b**

ἐλαττονωθέντες οἱ νομάδες ἤξιουν δοῦναι τὸν Ἰουδαν δεξιὰς αὐτοῖς **ὑπισχνόμενοι** καὶ βοσκήματα δώσειν καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς ὠφελῆσειν αὐτούς

The nomads, being diminished, asked Judas to give a right hand to them, **promising** both to give sheep and to help them in other ways.

In 2 Maccabees 12:11, after being defeated by Judas's army, some nomads promise to give them animals and other help. The men “put these tasks upon themselves,” obligating themselves to fulfill them. The middle morphology on ὑπισχνέομαι calls attention to the subject-affectedness of this speech act.

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<sup>17</sup> Πυνθάνομαι sometimes takes a genitive object to indicate the source of the information acquired (e.g., Dan 2:15). In these cases, the genitive of source additionally shows that the direction of the action proceeds back toward the subject.

<sup>18</sup> LSJ, s.v. “ὑπισχνέομαι.”

Likewise, ἐπαγγέλλομαι means “to promise.” Both this term and ὑπισχνέομαι also have the secondary meaning “to profess.” Again, both “promising” and “professing” are self-referential speech acts. In the former, the subject makes a claim about something that he will do. In the latter, the subject makes a claim about who he is.<sup>19</sup>

#### **Romans 4:21**

καὶ πληροφορηθεὶς ὅτι ὁ ἐπήγγελλται δυνατὸς ἐστὶν καὶ ποιῆσαι

And being fully assured that what he had **promised**, he was able also to do.

#### **1 Timothy 2:10**

ἀλλ’ ὁ πρέπει γυναιξὶν ἐπαγγελλομέναις θεοσεβειαν, δι’ ἔργων ἀγαθῶν

But [adorn themselves] with what is fitting for women who **profess** godliness, with good works.

In Romans 4:21, Paul refers to God’s promises to Abraham. God bound himself to these words, and Abraham believed that God would do (ποιῆσαι) what he said he would do. In 1 Timothy 2:10, Paul refers to women who “professed” to be godly. These women should act in accordance with the claims they make about themselves. In both of these cases, as with ὑπισχνέομαι, the subject is deeply involved in and affected by his speech act, as the middle morphology indicates.

#### **Φθέγγομαι**

The middle morphology on φθέγγομαι (“to utter, speak”) can be difficult to explain, in part because we find it paralleled with the basic active voice verb of speech λαλέω.<sup>20</sup> Still, it appears that φθέγγομαι focuses specially on either the subject’s act of producing a sound with his mouth or his speaking clearly.<sup>21</sup> For this reason, this verb can

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<sup>19</sup> Ἐπαγγέλλομαι is used only in the middle voice in the LXX and GNT. It occurs in the active form in Classical Greek with the meaning “to tell, proclaim, announce” (LSJ, s.v. “ἐπαγγέλλω”). This active voice meaning does not focus on the affectedness of the subject in his speech act. Rather, the focus is purely on a proclamation that proceeds to the direct object.

<sup>20</sup> See Job 13:7; Ps 93:4; Sir 13:22; Wis 8:2.

<sup>21</sup> BDAG notes that the term literally means “to produce a sound” and then “to call out loudly” (BDAG, s.v. “φθέγγομαι”). So LSJ, s.v. “φθέγγομαι”: “to utter a sound or voice, especially speak loud and clear.” Cp. the nominal form φθέγγμα, “sound of the voice” (including sounds made by animals) (LSJ, s.v. “φθέγγμα”).

also refer to sounds made by animals.

### **Nahum 2:8b**

καὶ αἱ δοῦλαι αὐτῆς ἤγοντο καθὼς περιστερὰ φθεγγόμεναι ἐν καρδίαις αὐτῶν

And its slave women were being led away, uttering sounds (moaning) in their hearts like doves.

### **Jeremiah 9:16**

τάδε λέγει κύριος Καλέσατε τὰς θρηνούσας καὶ ἐλθέτωσαν, καὶ πρὸς τὰς σοφὰς ἀποστείλατε καὶ φθεγξάσθωσαν

Thus says the Lord, “Call the mourning women and let them come, and send for the skilled women and let them utter sounds.”

Nahum 2:8 refers to the mourning of slave women. This mourning is likened to the moaning sound of doves. Here, φθέγγομαι is used to refer to a distinct (animal) sound made by the subject.<sup>22</sup> In Jeremiah 9:16, professional mourning women utter loud sounds of lament (φθεγξάσθωσαν). Again, φθέγγομαι focuses specifically on the subject’s activity in making these sounds. Therefore, though the semantics of this term overlap with basic active verbs of speech, its special nuance focuses on the subject’s involvement in the verbal action, which is highlighted by its middle morphology.

### **Ἐντέλλομαι**

The middle marking on ἐντέλλομαι (“to command”) can be explained semantically in two ways. First, the subject is often deeply invested in the act of commanding because his commands express his will. Second, the subject seeks to benefit through the act of commanding by having his will accomplished.<sup>23</sup> In these ways, the subject of ἐντέλλομαι can be viewed as experiencer and beneficiary.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Note also its association with animals in Hab 2:11; 1 Pet 2:16.

<sup>23</sup> So Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 107.

<sup>24</sup> The subject focus of middle voice ἐντέλλομαι might also be understood in relation to its active and passive transformations. LSJ posits an original causative meaning for active ἐντέλλω. In this case, ἐντέλλομαι may occupy a “middle” place between causative active and passive uses. The causative active would mean “cause to be done (by another)” (with the subject solely an agent and the focus on the affected object). The passive would mean “to be caused to do” (with the subject entirely a patient). The middle ἐντέλλομαι (“to command to be done”) would focus on the subject’s involvement in the act of commanding (with the subject as both agent and experiencer-beneficiary) (see LSJ, s.v. “τέλλω,” II). The middle form ψευδομαι can be explained similarly to ἐντέλλομαι. Semantically, the subject of this verb can

### Deuteronomy 4:13

καὶ ἀνήγγειλεν ὑμῖν τὴν διαθήκην αὐτοῦ, ἣν ἐνετείλατο ὑμῖν ποιεῖν, τὰ δέκα ῥήματα, καὶ ἔγραψεν αὐτὰ ἐπὶ δύο πλάκας λιθίνας

And he announced to you his covenant, which he commanded you to do, the ten words, and he wrote them on two stone tablets.

### John 15:14

ὁμοῖς φίλοι μου ἔστε ἐὰν ποιῆτε ἃ ἐγὼ ἐντέλλομαι ὑμῖν

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

Deuteronomy 4:13 refers to the Lord commanding the Ten Commandments. In John 15, Jesus has commanded his disciples to love one another. In both cases, the act of commanding reflects the subject's personal will. Additionally, the Lord will receive glory when his commandments are obeyed, and Jesus will receive glory when his disciples love one another. These verses show how the subject of ἐντέλλομαι can be deeply invested in and can benefit from his act of commanding. The verb's middle endings call attention to subject-focused semantics such as these.<sup>25</sup>

### Ἀποκρίνομαι

Finally, we should attempt to understand the reason for the middle morphology on ἀποκρίνομαι. To understand the middle semantics of this word, we must first consider the simplex form κρίνω. Active voice κρίνω has the primary meaning “to separate” or “distinguish” (eventually, “to judge”). This term also had a middle form that meant “to expound” or “interpret.”<sup>26</sup> These active and middle voice meanings are related in that one

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be viewed as experiencer and/or beneficiary, because often a great deal of thoughtfulness goes into the act of lying and because the subject often seeks to benefit from this act (to avoid something displeasing or to coerce another to do something desirable). Further, while ψεύδομαι occurs only in the middle voice in the LXX and GNT, it also had a causative active form. The middle falls between this causative active and its passive transformation. The causative active would mean “to deceive someone” (subject as agent), the passive transformation would mean “to be deceived by someone” (subject as patient), and the middle would focus on the subject's involvement in the speech act, meaning “to lie” (subject as both agent and experiencer-beneficiary) (on this see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 110-11; LSJ, s.v. “ψεύδω”).

<sup>25</sup> The active verb κελεύω (“to command”) overlaps greatly in semantics with ἐντέλλομαι. While the subject of κελεύω may still be invested in and benefit from the act of commanding, these semantics are simply not marked morphologically.

<sup>26</sup> LSJ, s.v. “κρίνω.”

must separate things out (i.e., “pick them apart”) in order to interpret them. The middle marking on κρίνομαι highlights the subject’s mental involvement in the act of interpretation.

During the Homeric Period, the middle κρίνομαι also had a compound form, ὑποκρίνομαι, that meant either “to interpret” or “to answer.” The ideas of “interpreting” and “answering” are closely related because one often interprets in response to a question. Finally, during the Attic Period, ἀποκρίνομαι replaced ὑποκρίνομαι in being used for the meaning “to answer.”<sup>27</sup> Therefore, we can see that embedded into the semantics of ἀποκρίνομαι is the subject’s high mental involvement in “interpreting” something in response to a question. The verb’s middle morphology highlights this subject focus, inherent particularly in its simplex form κρίνομαι.<sup>28</sup>

In the LXX and GNT, ἀποκρίνομαι is used of a person’s response to a question, accusation, command, or other situation. In these cases, the subject often gives an explanation for his listeners. One can perceive the sense of “explain oneself” in its use in Mark 14:40.

**Mark 14:40**

καὶ πάλιν ἐλθὼν εὔρεν αὐτοὺς καθεύδοντας, ἦσαν γὰρ αὐτῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ καταβαρυνόμενοι, καὶ οὐκ ᾔδεισαν τί ἀποκριθῶσιν αὐτῷ

And coming again, he found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy, and they did not know what they should answer him.

In Mark 14:40, Jesus is displeased with his disciples because they have fallen asleep after his command to “keep watch” (cf. Mark 14:34). The sense of ἀποκριθῶσιν in this verse is that the disciples did not know how to “explain” or “interpret” themselves to Jesus when he found them in this state. Here the basic semantics of κρίνομαι rise to the

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<sup>27</sup> For this explanation of the development of ἀποκρίνομαι and the relationship between active and middle meanings, see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 109-10; LSJ, s.v. “ὑποκρίνω”; BDAG, s.v. “ὑποκρίνομαι.” The preposition ἀπό perhaps makes ἀποκρίνομαι particularly suited for the meaning “to answer,” since in answering, the subject “interprets back” to someone else.

<sup>28</sup> There was an active form (ἀποκρίνω) in Classical Greek, meaning “to set apart.” The LXX attests one active form in Sus 48 (ἀπεκρίνατε θυγατέρα Ἰσραηλ, “do you set apart [i.e., decide in judgment against] a daughter of Israel?”).

surface. We can detect the high mental involvement of the disciples as they experience a loss for words of explanation before Jesus.

Ἀποκρίνομαι is also an important middle voice verb to consider because of its morphology in the aorist tense. In early Classical Greek, ἀποκρίνομαι predominantly took sigmatic aorist middle forms. The -(θ)η- form eventually began to supplant these sigmatic forms, however, and became more common in the Hellenistic Period.<sup>29</sup> In the LXX and GNT, we find the sigmatic aorist middle of ἀποκρίνομαι just 11 times, but the -(θ)η- middle 418 times. Semantically, these forms carry the same meaning. Consider the shift from one form to the other in Matthew 27.

**Matthew 27:12**

καὶ ἐν τῷ κατηγορεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο  
And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

**Matthew 27:14**

καὶ οὐκ ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ πρὸς οὐδὲ ἐν ῥήμα, ὥστε θαυμάζειν τὸν ἡγεμόνα λίαν  
And he did not answer him with respect to even one word, so that the governor was exceedingly amazed.

In Matthew 27, Jesus stands on trial before Pilate but gives no response to the accusations against him. In verse 12, Matthew uses ἀπεκρίνατο for Jesus' response, but in verse 14 he uses ἀπεκρίθη. There is no distinction in meaning between these two forms. Both mark the middle voice of ἀποκρίνομαι, and in both cases the morphology indicates the subject's high mental involvement in "interpreting" an answer.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, several types of speech act verbs in the LXX and GNT are marked for the middle voice. This middle morphology highlights that the subject is involved in or affected by his speech act in a special way (i.e., as experiencer or beneficiary). At times we must probe deeply into the verb's history or lexical semantics

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<sup>29</sup> LSJ, s.v. "ἀποκρίνω," IV.3.

in order to see this special subject focus. A perusal over the examples above reveals that speech act middle verbs can occur in syntactically transitive or intransitive constructions. Finally, while speech act middle verbs are often marked with -σα- in the aorist tense, we find -(θ)η- aorist middles at work in this class of verbs as well.

### **The Indirect Reflexive Middle**

The final middle voice type to discuss is the indirect reflexive middle. Indirect reflexive middle verbs are often syntactically transitive. They focus specially on the verbal subject in that he benefits or receives something as a result of his action. Therefore, the subject is semantically both agent and beneficiary or recipient.<sup>30</sup> They are marked as sigmatic middles in the aorist tense, while their -(θ)η- aorists consistently communicate the passive voice.

Some indirect reflexive middles are *media tantum*. In this case, the middle ending marks a reflexive idea inherent in the verbal lexeme. Other indirect reflexive middles have active counterparts. In these cases, the middle ending adds a reflexive idea to the verbal semantics. Sometimes this addition significantly alters the verb's meaning. Finally, some difficult *media tantum* may be classified under the indirect reflexive category. To begin, we will consider *media tantum* verbs that more clearly display an indirect reflexive idea.

#### **Δέχομαι**

Δέχομαι (“to receive”) is a verb with clear indirect reflexive semantics. Its subject is affected as he takes an object into his possession. The effect of the verbal action simultaneously proceeds out from the subject to the object received and back onto the subject as he gains the object. The middle endings highlight this latter, subject-focused direction of the action.

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<sup>30</sup> See Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 112.

### 1 Maccabees 15:20

ἔδοξεν δὲ ἡμῖν δέξασθαι τὴν ἀσπίδα παρ' αὐτῶν

And it seemed good to us to receive the shield from them.

### Acts 11:1

Ἦκουσαν δὲ οἱ ἀπόστολοι καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ οἱ ὄντες κατὰ τὴν Ἰουδαίαν ὅτι καὶ τὰ ἔθνη ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ

And the Apostles and the brothers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

In 1 Maccabees 15:20, the Greeks willingly accept a golden shield as a gift from the Jews. In Acts 11:1, the Gentiles willingly accept (believe) the word of God. Both uses of middle-voice δέχομαι are transitive, with an accusative direct object, and in both cases the (agentive) subject is affected as he receives the direct object. These “indirect reflexive” semantics are lexically inherent in δέχομαι.<sup>31</sup>

### Κτάομαι

Κτάομαι (“to acquire”) is another lexically indirect reflexive verb. Its subject is a recipient and beneficiary as he gains possession of the direct object.<sup>32</sup> Its middle endings highlight this inherent subject-affectedness.

### 2 Samuel 24:24b

καὶ ἐκτήσατο Δαυὶδ τὸν ἄλωνα καὶ τοὺς βόας ἐν ἀργυρίῳ σίκλων πενήκοντα

And David acquired the threshing floor and the oxen with fifty shekels of silver.

In 2 Samuel 24:24, David purchases a threshing floor and oxen. He is both highly agentive and affected as he adds the threshing floor and oxen (direct objects) into his possessions. The middle ending on ἐκτήσατο calls attention to these indirect reflexive semantics.

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<sup>31</sup> Note the sigmatic aorist forms in these verses. All -(θ)η- forms of δέχομαι in the LXX and GNT (6x [future tense]) are to be read as passive. The active verb λαμβάνω (“to take, receive”) is closely synonymous with *media tantum* δέχομαι. It is interesting that λαμβάνω receives rare middle forms, with object in the genitive, meaning “to take hold of, take possession of” (LSJ, s.v. “λαμβάνω,” II.B) (cf. 2 Macc 12:35: λαβόμενος τῆς γλαμύδος, “taking hold of the cloak”). These middle forms can perhaps be distinguished from a more “basic” active sense, “to take.” Even so, we must say that there are still subject-focused semantics in active λαμβάνω, but that they are unmarked morphologically as they are in δέχομαι.

<sup>32</sup> Note LSJ, s.v. “κτάομαι,” 1: “to procure for oneself.”



### **Genesis 47:20**

καὶ ἐκτίσαστο Ἰωσηφ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν τῶν Αἰγυπτίων τῷ Φαραῶ· ἀπέδοντο γὰρ οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι τὴν γῆν αὐτῶν τῷ Φαραῶ, ἐπεκράτησεν γὰρ αὐτῶν ὁ λιμός· καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ γῆ Φαραῶ

And Joseph **acquired** all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. For the Egyptians sold their land to Pharaoh, because the famine prevailed over them. And the land became Pharaoh's.

Genesis 47:20 is similar to 2 Samuel 24:24. Joseph (the subject) volitionally gains the land (the direct object) into his possession as he purchases it. In this way, he is both agent and beneficiary in the verbal action. This example of κτάομαι is interesting, however, because Joseph is not the most explicit beneficiary from the verbal action. The most explicit beneficiary is Pharaoh, marked as the dative indirect object (τῷ Φαραῶ). Indeed, the verse ends by telling us that “the land became Pharaoh's.”

This “external beneficiary” use of κτάομαι can be explained in two ways. First, in the most basic sense of “acquiring,” the subject adds something to his own possession. This is the fundamental reason for the middle marking on κτάομαι, regardless of its context. Second, contextually we see that there can be multiple levels of beneficiaries for an indirect reflexive middle verb like κτάομαι. Here, Joseph is the immediate beneficiary as he purchases the land. Pharaoh, however, is the ultimate beneficiary, as made explicit by the additional dative indirect object.<sup>33</sup>

### **Ἐκλέγομαι**

Ἐκλέγομαι (“to choose”) has inherent indirect reflexive semantics because one typically seeks to benefit from the act of choosing. This benefit can come through choosing according to preferences, in ways that will accomplish objectives, or with the

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<sup>33</sup> This “multiple beneficiary” syntax is common for indirect reflexive middle verbs (see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 115).

result that the chosen object comes into one's possession. Again, the middle morphology highlights the subject-focused nature of the verb.<sup>34</sup>

### **1 Corinthians 1:27**

ἀλλὰ τὰ μωρὰ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, ἵνα κατασχῆναι τοὺς σοφοὺς, καὶ τὰ ἀσθενῆ τοῦ κόσμου ἐξελέξατο ὁ θεός, ἵνα κατασχῆναι τὰ ἰσχυρὰ

But God has chosen the foolish things of the world in order that he might shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world in order that he might shame the strong.

In 1 Corinthians 1:27, God is agent in his act of choosing in that he volitionally makes a choice about who will be his people. At the same time, he is beneficiary of this choice in that he satisfies his desires and accomplishes his purpose of shaming the wise and strong. The self-referential act of choosing can be clarified and made more explicit through the addition of the reflexive pronoun, as in Genesis 13:11.

### **Genesis 13:11**

καὶ ἐξελέξατο ἑαυτῷ Λωτ πᾶσαν τὴν περίχωρον τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, καὶ ἀπῆρεν Λωτ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν, καὶ διεχωρίσθησαν ἕκαστος ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ

And Lot chose for himself all the surrounding region of the Jordan, and Lot left from the east, and they separated, each from his brother.

In Genesis 13:11, Lot chooses where he wants to live. His choice not only satisfies his desire, but also results in the land becoming his possession. The addition of ἑαυτῷ clarifies and emphasizes the self-referential nature of his choice, which is also coded grammatically through the middle ending on ἐξελέξατο.

### **Ἰλάσκομαι**

Ἰλάσκομαι is best explained as indirect reflexive middle. This term can be difficult to analyze because it occurs in a variety of constructions with personal and impersonal subjects. Still, its most basic meaning is “to appease” or “propitiate.” In these

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<sup>34</sup> Note also προχειρίζω, which occurs only in the middle in the LXX and GNT (“to choose for oneself, select, appoint [BDAG, s.v. “προχειρίζω”]). In the mental activity section, I noted that verbs of choosing also inherently imply the subject's deep mental involvement.

cases, the subject seeks his own benefit by removing the wrath of another against him.

This can be seen in the following examples using the compound form ἐξιλάσκομαι.<sup>35</sup>

### **Genesis 32:21b**

εἶπεν γάρ **Ἐξιλάσομαι** τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἐν τοῖς δώροις τοῖς προπορευομένοις αὐτοῦ, καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ὄψομαι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ· ἴσως γὰρ προσδέξεται τὸ πρόσωπόν μου

For he said, “I will **appease** his face by the gifts going before him, and after this I will see his face, for perhaps he will receive my face.”

### **Leviticus 4:20**

καὶ ποιήσει τὸν μόσχον ὃν τρόπον ἐποίησεν τὸν μόσχον τὸν τῆς ἁμαρτίας, οὕτως ποιηθήσεται· καὶ **ἐξιλάσεται** περὶ αὐτῶν ὁ ἱερεὺς, καὶ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτοῖς ἡ ἁμαρτία

And he will do with the calf just as he did with the calf for sin, thus he will do. And the priest will **make atonement** for them, and their sin will be forgiven for them.

In Genesis 32:21, Jacob sends gifts in order to appease Esau’s anger toward him. The goal of this action is clearly self-beneficial as Jacob wants Esau to “receive his face” peacefully. In Leviticus 4:20, the people of Israel offer sacrifices (through the priest) for atonement. Again, this action benefits the one offering the sacrifice—it is “for them” (περὶ αὐτῶν) for their forgiveness.<sup>36</sup>

The self-beneficial nature of ἰλάσκομαι can also be seen by analyzing its quasi-passive transformation in Luke 18:13.

### **Luke 18:13**

ὁ δὲ τελῶνης μακρόθεν ἐστὼς οὐκ ἤθελεν οὐδὲ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπάραι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, ἀλλ’ ἔτυπτε τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ λέγων· Ὁ θεός, **ἰλάσθητί** μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ

But the tax collector, standing far off, was not even willing to lift his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “O God, **be merciful** to me, the sinner.”

In Luke 18:13, a tax collector pleads with God to be merciful toward him. In this verse, God is the subject of ἰλάσθητί, and he stands in a state of appeasement, or mercy. This is a quasi-passive transformation of indirect reflexive middle examples like the one in

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<sup>35</sup> The compound ἐξιλάσκομαι is similar in meaning to the simplex form (see the relevant entries in LSJ). The compound form is helpful to consider because it occurs with much greater frequency in the LXX and GNT (105x for the compound form vs. 12x for the simplex form).

<sup>36</sup> The immediate subject of ἐξιλάσεται in Lev 4:20 is the priest, but this is because of the biblical-theological need for a priestly mediator in offering sacrifices. Ultimately, the owner of the animal is the one offering the sacrifice and seeking appeasement for himself.

Genesis 32:21 above. Notice that the dative of advantage in the passive clause (μοι) marks what would be the subject of the middle clause. This shows that the subject of ἰλάσκομαι in its basic sense is a beneficiary. Additionally, notice that the use of ἰλάσθητι in Luke 18:13 lies somewhere between the passive and mental state middle types. It is not surprising, then, to find it marked with -(θ)η-, as is typical for these semantic categories.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, we find pure passive constructions of ἰλάσκομαι, as in Deuteronomy 21:8: καὶ ἐξιλασθήσεται αὐτοῖς τὸ αἷμα (“And the blood will be atoned for them”). In this case an impersonal subject (τὸ αἷμα) is propitiated, or atoned for, through sacrifice. In this passive construction ἰλάσκομαι is, of course, marked with -(θ)η-.

In sum, though we find ἰλάσκομαι used in multiple constructions, each of them is subject-focused. Sometimes the term denotes that sin has been propitiated (-[θ]η-form). Sometimes the term denotes that God has been appeased or is in a state of mercy (-[θ]η- form). Other times, the term denotes that the subject seeks to appease someone else (sigmatic middle form). This last case describes the most basic meaning of ἰλάσκομαι and is an indirect reflexive middle.

## **Χράομαι**

BDAG describes χράομαι as “a common multivalent term.”<sup>38</sup> Indeed, the entries in BDAG and LSJ list an array of meanings that this verb can communicate. Yet these meanings are related and, when used in the middle voice, are all specially focused on the subject’s involvement in the verbal action. Specifically, I will discuss three major uses of χράομαι in the middle voice. Each of these should be described as an indirect reflexive middle because the subject benefits from the verbal action in some way.

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<sup>37</sup> Although, interestingly, ἰλάσκομαι with this quasi-passive meaning is marked with sigmatic future forms (e.g., 2 Kgs 5:18).

<sup>38</sup> BDAG, s.v. “χράομαι.”

First, one of the basic meanings of *χράομαι* in the middle voice is “to use.”<sup>39</sup> In these cases, the subject is beneficiary because one typically “uses” something according to his preferences or for his benefit. We find this basic meaning in 1 Timothy 5:23.

### **1 Timothy 5:23**

μηκέτι ὑδροπότει, ἀλλὰ οἶνω ὀλίγω χρῶ διὰ τὸν στόμαχον καὶ τὰς πυκνάς σου ἀσθενείας  
No longer drink water, but use a little wine on account of your stomach and your frequent sicknesses.

In 1 Timothy 5:23, Paul encourages Timothy to “use” wine to benefit his stomach. The middle morphology on *χρῶ* calls attention to the self-beneficial activity inherent to this sense of *χράομαι*. These indirect reflexive semantics are present in each occurrence of *χράομαι* meaning “to use.”<sup>40</sup>

Second, middle voice *χράομαι* could be opposed to active *χράω*, which meant “to give an oracle.” In these cases, the middle member of the pair meant “to consult an oracle.”<sup>41</sup> The active member of this pair is significantly higher in transitivity, as the subject delivers a message to the direct object. The middle member, however, is focused on the subject’s benefit as he seeks to receive an oracle. This opposition is not attested in the LXX or GNT.

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<sup>39</sup> LSJ also lists “to desire” as a primary meaning for middle voice *χράομαι* (LSJ, s.v. “*χράω*” CI). This would be a mental state middle meaning.

<sup>40</sup> Two extensions of *χράομαι*’s meaning “to use” are “to act in a certain way” and “to treat someone in a certain way” (see BDAG, s.v. “*χράομαι*,” 2, 3). When one acts in a certain way, he is “using” a certain quality. This can be seen in 2 Cor 3:12: *πολλῆ παρρησία χρώμεθα* (“we use great boldness” = “we act very boldly”). When one treats a person a certain way, he either “uses” them well or poorly. This can be seen in Gen 12:16: *καὶ τῷ Ἀβραμ εὖ ἐχρήσαντο δι’ αὐτήν* (“And they treated [used] Abraham well on account of her”). At first glance, these extended meanings do not appear subject-focused at all. Yet when we understand that behind them is the basic meaning “to use,” we can see that the middle morphology that attends them is meaningful.

<sup>41</sup> In this set of meanings, there was also a passive transformation meaning “to be declared by an oracle” (see LSJ, s.v. “*χράω*,” A). These meanings may be related to the basic meaning “to use” because when one consults an oracle, he seeks to “use” a god to receive a message.

Third, in another active-middle opposition, active voice *χράω* means “to furnish, lend,” while middle voice *χράομαι* means “to borrow.”<sup>42</sup> Again, the active member of this pair is higher in transitivity and focused on the effect on the direct object. The middle member of this pair is focused on the effect on the subject, who receives and benefits from something in his act of borrowing. This opposition is attested in the LXX, though with a passive transformation of the middle meaning.

**Exodus 12:36**

καὶ κύριος ἔδωκεν τὴν χάριν τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ ἐναντίον τῶν Αἰγυπτίων, καὶ ἔχρησαν αὐτοῖς· καὶ ἐσκύλευσαν τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους

And the Lord gave favor to his people before the Egyptians, and they furnished them. And they plundered the Egyptians.

**2 Kings 6:5**

καὶ ἰδοὺ ὁ εἷς καταβάλλων τὴν δοκόν, καὶ τὸ σιδήριον ἐξέπεσεν εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ· καὶ ἐβόησεν ὁ Ω, κύριε, καὶ αὐτὸ κεχρημένον

And behold, one was striking down the beam, and the axe head fell into the water, and he cried out, “O master, it was borrowed!”

In Exodus 12:36, the active voice *ἔχρησαν* indicates that the Egyptians gave their possessions to the Israelites. Here, the subject functions solely as an agent as his action affects a recipient-object. In 2 Kings 6:5, the passive voice *κεχρημένον* (“it was borrowed”) reflects a transformation of the middle meaning “to borrow.” In this context, the middle verb would indicate that the subject functions as agent and recipient-beneficiary as he received the axe head into his possession for a time.

In sum, middle voice *χράομαι* is best described as an indirect reflexive middle. While this term carries many different nuances, in the middle voice its subject is normally a beneficiary. This can be seen in its basic meaning “to use,” as well as in its two major active-middle oppositions.

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<sup>42</sup> The present tense form used for this sense was actually *κίχρημι* (see LSJ, s.v. “*χράω*,” B). Again, these meanings may be related to the basic meaning “to use,” because when one borrows, he merely “uses” for a time something that belongs to another.

## Μερίζω

Thus far we have primarily considered *media tantum* indirect reflexive middle verbs, though with χράομαι we saw examples of opposition to active forms. Yet there are several other indirect reflexive middle verbs that are opposed to active counterparts. These verbs are typically not lexically subject-focused but require the middle ending (or reflexive pronoun with the active verb) to communicate special focus on the subject. Specifically, the addition of the middle ending puts special focus on the subject as beneficiary in the verbal action.

This can be seen in active-middle oppositions of μερίζω and its compound form διαμερίζω (“to divide, distribute”). Active forms of these verbs denote that the subject divides objects to people other than himself. Middle forms denote that the subject receives a share in the object divided.<sup>43</sup> Consider the opposition in 2 Maccabees 8:28.

### 2 Maccabees 8:28

μετὰ δὲ τὸ σάββατον τοῖς ἠκισμένοις καὶ ταῖς χήραις καὶ ὀρφανοῖς μερίσαντες ἀπὸ τῶν σκύλων τὰ λοιπὰ αὐτοὶ καὶ τὰ παιδιά διεμερίσαντο

Now after the Sabbath, **dividing** some of the spoils to those who had been tortured and to the widows and orphans, they **divided** the rest among themselves and their children.

In 2 Maccabees 8:28, Judas and his men divide the spoils of war. The active μερίσαντες communicates that they distributed these spoils to people other than themselves. Here the effect of the action proceeds solely to an external (indirect) object. The middle διεμερίσαντο, however, communicates that they also distributed spoils among themselves. In this middle use, the effect of the action proceeds back to the beneficiary subject.

The dative reflexive pronoun can be used with the middle form of μερίζω to clarify and emphasize that the subject is beneficiary in the action, but this is not necessary

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<sup>43</sup> Additionally, the verbs can be used in passive constructions where the impersonal subject is divided (cf. Num 26:53: τούτοις μερισθήσεται ἡ γῆ [“to these the land shall be divided”]). In the aorist and future, -(θ)η- forms always communicate the passive voice, while sigmatic forms communicate the middle voice.

because the middle ending is sufficient.<sup>44</sup> Consider Psalm 21, quoted in Matthew 27.

**Psalm 21:19**

**διεμερίσαντο** τὰ ἱμάτιά μου **ἑαυτοῖς** καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἱματισμόν μου ἔβαλον κλῆρον

They **divided** my garments **among themselves** and for my clothing they cast lots.

**Matthew 27:35**

σταυρώσαντες δὲ αὐτὸν **διεμερίσαντο** τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ βάλλοντες κλῆρον

And crucifying him, they **divided** his garments [among themselves], casting lots.

Psalm 21:19 foreshadows the Roman soldiers dividing Jesus' garments among themselves. The Psalm uses the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοῖς to clarify that the soldiers themselves benefited from this distribution. Matthew's citation omits the pronoun, showing that indirect reflexivity is sufficiently communicated by the middle verb διεμερίσαντο.

Finally, Luke 12:13 provides an indirect reflexive middle use of μερίζω with an additional external beneficiary.

**Luke 12:13**

Εἶπεν δὲ τις ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου αὐτῷ· Διδάσκαλε, εἰπέ τῷ ἀδελφῷ μου **μερίσασθαι** μετ' ἐμοῦ τὴν κληρονομίαν

But someone from the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother **to divide** the inheritance with me."

Here, the focus is on the benefit that an external object (μετ' ἐμοῦ) receives from the division of an inheritance. Still, the middle form is used because the subject will retain a portion of this inheritance for himself. Therefore, we find that middle forms of μερίζω emphasize the subject's benefit in the act of distribution.

**Δανείζω**

Δανείζω provides another example of a verb with clear opposition in meaning between its middle and active forms. In the active voice, δανείζω means "to lend." In the middle voice, it means "to borrow."

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<sup>44</sup> The reflexive pronoun is necessary to communicate indirect reflexivity with the active verb, as in Luke 22:17.



### Deuteronomy 15:6

ὅτι κύριος ὁ θεός σου εὐλόγησέν σε, ὃν τρόπον ἐλάλησέν σοι, καὶ **δανιεῖς** ἔθνεσιν πολλοῖς, σὺ δὲ οὐ **δανιῇ**, καὶ ἄρξεις σὺ ἐθνῶν πολλῶν, σοῦ δὲ οὐκ ἄρξουσιν

Because the Lord your God will bless, in the way he has spoken to you, and you will **lend** to many nations, but you will not **borrow**, and you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you.

This is similar to one of the oppositions seen above between active *χράω* and middle *χράομαι*. The active *δανιεῖς* indicates that an exchange happens from the subject to the indirect object. With the middle *δανιῇ*, on the other hand, the subject is the recipient-beneficiary of the exchange.<sup>45</sup>

### Αἰρέω

Middle voice forms of *αἰρέω* also have an indirect reflexive meaning that contrasts with active voice forms. In the active voice, *αἰρέω* means “to take.” In the middle voice, *αἰρέω* focuses more directly on the subject taking something to himself. Thus, the middle form extends to the meaning “to choose.” *Αἰρέω* only occurs in the middle voice in the LXX and GNT.

### Deuteronomy 26:17

τὸν θεὸν **εἴλω** σήμερον εἶναί σου θεὸν καὶ πορεύεσθαι ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ φυλάσσεσθαι τὰ δικαιώματα καὶ τὰ κρίματα αὐτοῦ καὶ ὑπακούειν τῆς φωνῆς αὐτοῦ

Today you have **chosen** God to be your God and to walk in his ways and to keep his statutes and judgments and to obey his voice.

In Deuteronomy 26:17, the Israelites choose to serve God. Literally, they “take God to themselves” to be their God. The middle verb *εἴλω* formally marks the subject’s personal affectedness and benefit in the act of “taking” (“choosing”) the direct object.

Though we do not find active forms of *αἰρέω* in the LXX and GNT, we do find many active forms of the compound verb *ἀναιρέω*. This latter verb also shows semantic

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<sup>45</sup> For another clear instance of this opposition between active and middle forms of *δανείζω*, see LXX Ps 36:21, 26. Allan labels examples like these as “perspective-changing middles” because the alternation in subject results in a different perspective on the direction of the verbal action. Such verbs lexically involve a “transfer of object from one person to another” (Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 117-18).

distinction between its active and middle forms. In the active voice, ἀναίρέω pertains to “picking up” or “taking away” an object. As an extended meaning, active voice ἀναίρέω frequently means “to kill” or “destroy,” as in Exodus 2:15.

#### **Exodus 2:15a**

ἤκουσεν δὲ Φαραῶ τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο καὶ ἐζήτει ἀνελεῖν Μωσῆν

And Pharaoh heard about this matter and was seeking to kill Moses.

In Exodus 2:15, Pharaoh hears that Moses has killed an Egyptian. As a result, Pharaoh seeks to kill Moses. Pharaoh does not want to “take Moses up” into his possession. Rather, he wants to “take Moses away” (i.e., remove) him from the earth.

In contrast to this active voice use, middle voice ἀναίρέω again focuses more directly on the subject’s “taking something up” for himself (i.e., for his benefit or into his possession). This is particularly clear in Acts 7:21, where the middle form pertains to “adopting” a child.

#### **Acts 7:21**

ἐκτεθέντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀνείλατο αὐτὸν ἡ θυγάτηρ Φαραῶ καὶ ἀνεθρέψατο αὐτὸν ἑαυτῇ εἰς υἱόν

And when [Moses] was exposed, the daughter of Pharaoh adopted him and nourished him as a son for herself.

In Acts 7:21, the middle form ἀνείλατο indicates that Pharaoh’s daughter adopted Moses. Literally, she “took Moses up” into her possession. The middle morphology on ἀνείλατο communicates indirect reflexivity and the benefit that accrued to Pharaoh’s daughter through her action.

#### **Ἀποδίδωμι**

Finally, ἀποδίδωμι has an indirect reflexive meaning in the middle voice that contrasts with a more “basic” meaning in the active voice. In the active voice, ἀποδίδωμι means “to give back” (sometimes applied to “paying back” what is owed). This active voice function describes a unilateral transaction in which the subject gives an object to

someone else. In the middle voice, however, ἀποδίδωμι frequently means “to sell.”<sup>46</sup> This middle voice function describes a two-way transaction in which the effect of the action proceeds both out from and back towards the subject, who receives something from the sale. Thus, in this indirect reflexive use of ἀποδίδωμι, the subject is both agent and beneficiary.

**Luke 9:42b**

ἐπετίμησεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἀκαθάρτῳ, καὶ ἰάσατο τὸν παῖδα καὶ ἀπέδωκεν αὐτὸν τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ

But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child and **gave** him **back** to his father.

**Genesis 37:28b**

καὶ ἐξείλκυσαν καὶ ἀνεβίβασαν τὸν Ἰωσηφ ἐκ τοῦ λάκκου καὶ ἀπέδοντο τὸν Ἰωσηφ τοῖς Ἰσμηλίταις εἴκοσι χρυσῶν, καὶ κατήγαγον τὸν Ἰωσηφ εἰς Αἴγυπτον

And they drew out and brought up Joseph from the pit and **sold** Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of gold, and they brought Joseph down into Egypt.

Luke 9:42 provides a prototypical active use of ἀποδίδωμι. Jesus (the subject [ὁ Ἰησοῦς]) gave back a child (the accusative direct object [αὐτὸν]) to his father (the dative indirect object [τῷ πατρὶ]). The direction of the verbal action proceeds solely out from the subject to the direct and indirect object, and the indirect object is the sole beneficiary.

In Genesis 37:28, the middle verb ἀπέδοντο indicates that Joseph’s brothers “sold” him to the Ishmaelites. Here the effect of the verbal action proceeds in two directions. Notice that there is still an accusative direct object (τὸν Ἰωσηφ) and a dative indirect object (τοῖς Ἰσμηλίταις). Joseph is affected and the Ishmaelites are beneficiaries. But the middle morphology on ἀπέδοντο shows that Joseph’s brothers are also beneficiaries in their act of “giving.” Specifically, the benefit of their sale is marked by the genitive χρυσῶν. This is an indirect reflexive use of ἀποδίδωμι that marks the effect

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<sup>46</sup> BDAG describes the middle meaning fundamentally as “to make an exchange” (BDAG, s.v. “ἀποδίδωμι,” 5). LSJ notes that in middle voice ἀποδίδωμι, the subject gives something away “of his own will” (LSJ, s.v. “ἀποδίδωμι,” III).

of the verbal action on the subject.<sup>47</sup>

## Ἐργάζομαι

There are other *media tantum* whose middle morphology is difficult to explain but which may best be described as indirect reflexive middles. One such verb is ἐργάζομαι (“to work, do, accomplish”). Two lexical factors may occasion the middle morphology on ἐργάζομαι. First, the subject is inherently deeply involved and invested in the act of work. Second, the subject typically seeks to benefit in some way from his work. Consider how these two factors are present contextually in Ephesians 4:28.

### Ephesians 4:28

ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω, μᾶλλον δὲ κοπιάτω ἐργαζόμενος ταῖς ἰδίαις χερσὶν τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἵνα ἔχη μεταδιδόναι τῷ χρείαν ἔχοντι

Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, working with his own hands what is good, in order that he might have something to share with the one in need.

In Ephesians 4:28, Paul calls Christians who were formerly thieves to hard work (ἐργαζόμενος). They are to work “with their own hands” (i.e., they will be deeply involved in their work) and so that they “have something to share” (i.e., they will benefit, or gain, from their work). These contextual factors are reminders of the high level of involvement and benefit experienced by the subject of ἐργάζομαι. Its middle endings may make these lexical factors explicit.<sup>48</sup>

## Βιάζω

Βιάζω occurs only in medio-passive form in the LXX and GNT and, when denoting the middle voice, indicates that the subject “uses force” or “overpowers”

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<sup>47</sup> For another example of a verb with active vs. (indirect reflexive) middle opposition, see βόσκω. In the active voice, the subject of βόσκω “feeds” or “tends to” animals (transitive construction [cf. Gen 37:12; Matt 8:33]). In the middle voice, the subject of βόσκω is the animal that “feeds” or “grazes” (intransitive construction [cf. Gen 41:2; Matt 8:30]). Interestingly, the middle voice of βόσκω can be marked with -(θ)η- in the aorist tense (cf. Isa 5:17; 11:6).

<sup>48</sup> Ἐργάζομαι is likely distinct from ποιέω (“to do”) in that ποιέω is the more basic term in this synonymous pair. In other words, ἐργάζομαι has a more nuanced focus on “work” (cp. the cognate noun ἔργον, “work”). As another contextual indication of the high level of subject involvement in “work,” consider God’s call to *rest* from ἐργάζομαι in Exod 34:21.

another with force.<sup>49</sup> Its middle endings can again be explained semantically in at least two ways. First, one is inherently deeply involved and affected in the use of his own force (strength).<sup>50</sup> In this sense, the subject of βιάζομαι is an experiencer. Second, in verbs of violence or forceful action against another, one typically seeks to impose his will. In this sense, the subject of βιάζομαι is a beneficiary and the verb can be described as an indirect reflexive middle.<sup>51</sup>

### **Genesis 33:11**

λαβὲ τὰς εὐλογίας μου, ἃς ἤνεγκά σοι, ὅτι ἠλέησέν με ὁ θεὸς καὶ ἔστιν μοι πάντα. καὶ **ἐβιάσατο** αὐτόν, καὶ ἔλαβεν

Take my blessing, which I have brought to you, because God has been merciful to me and is with me in all things. And he **overpowered** him, and he took it.

In Genesis 33:11, ἐβιάσατο indicates that Jacob forcefully urged Esau to receive his gifts. Jacob is deeply emotionally invested in this action.<sup>52</sup> Further, through this action Jacob benefited by accomplishing his desire, as Esau took the gifts. The middle ending on βιάζομαι marks these kinds of subject-affectedness which are inherent in the verb's lexical semantics.

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<sup>49</sup> The term was used mostly in the middle voice in Classical Greek as well (see LSJ, s.v. “βιάζω,” II).

<sup>50</sup> The cognate noun βία means “bodily strength, force” (LSJ, s.v. “βία”).

<sup>51</sup> So Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 113 fn. 199. Similar explanations can be given for the middle voice of αικίζομαι and λυμαίνομαι (“to maltreat”). Interestingly, wherever λυμαίνομαι in the LXX has a Hebrew *Vorlage*, it translates a verb from the intensive *Piel* stem.

<sup>52</sup> In this case, the subject uses his force through his words. For an example of βιάζομαι in which the subject uses physical force, see 2 Macc 14:41. The classic NT examples of βιάζομαι in Matt 11:12 and Luke 16:16 are interesting. In Matt 11:12, βιάζεται likely has passive function. Here Jesus describes the kingdom as undergoing forceful or violent opposition from hostile powers (note Matt 11:12b which describes forceful or violent people [βιασταί] “seizing” the kingdom, and note the context describing John the Baptist’s imprisonment) (for this view see R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007], 429-31). In Luke 16:16, a decision between middle or passive function for βιάζεται is difficult. If βιάζεται is rendered as passive, this would indicate that everyone (πᾶς) is forcefully urged to enter the kingdom. This would be a passive transformation similar to the sense of βιάζομαι seen in the Gen 33:11 example above (cf. also the use of παραβιάζομαι in Luke 24:29) (for this view see Darrell Bock, *Luke*, vol. 2, BECNT [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 1353-54). If βιάζεται in Luke 16:16 is middle, the verse would refer either to “all” who forcibly strive to enter “into” or forcibly stive “against” (εἰς) the kingdom (the former middle sense is preferred by Stein in Robert Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, NAC [Nashville: B&H Academic, 1992], 419). In either case, the middle verb would communicate the intense exertion on the part of a subject seeking to accomplish his desire. For more on the use of βιάζομαι in Matt 11:12 and Luke 16:16, see Gottlob Schrenk, “βιάζομαι, βιαστής,” in *TDNT*, vol. 1, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 609-13; Georg Braumann, “βία,” in *NIDNTT*, vol. 3, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 711-12.

## ῥύομαι

Finally, while it can be difficult to understand the middle marking on a highly transitive verb like ῥύομαι (“to deliver”), the subject of this verb can also be seen as experiencer and beneficiary. On the one hand, the subject of ῥύομαι must be deeply invested (emotionally or physically) in the act delivering someone out of harm (i.e., an experiencer). On the other hand, because the subject is favorably disposed toward the object, he will often be satisfied by his act of deliverance. The delivered object may even enter the subject’s possession. In these latter two cases, the subject is beneficiary.<sup>53</sup> Ultimately, the middle endings on ῥύομαι call attention to the subject’s special involvement in the verbal action.

### Esther 4:8b

ἐπικάλεσαι τὸν κύριον καὶ λάλησον τῷ βασιλεῖ περὶ ἡμῶν καὶ **ῥύσαι** ἡμᾶς ἐκ θανάτου  
Call upon the Lord and speak to the king for us and **deliver** us from death!

### Psalms 17:20a

καὶ ἐξήγαγέν με εἰς πλατυσμόν, **ῥύσεταιί** με, ὅτι ἠθέλησέν με  
And he led me out into a wide space. He **will deliver** me, because he desired me.

Esther 4:8 provides a context that shows the subject’s intense involvement in the act of deliverance. As Esther seeks to deliver (ῥύσαι) the Israelites from death, she is to pray and take the courageous action of approaching the king on their behalf. Psalm 17:20 provides a context that shows the subject’s favorable inclination toward the one he delivers. David is confident that God will deliver (ῥύσεται) him because he knows that God “desires” (MT “delights in” [ῥῆσῃ]) him. These are simply contextual factors that show the experience and benefit of the subject of ῥύομαι. Its middle morphology may highlight this lexical subject focus.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> For similar comments, see Allan, *The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek*, 113 fn. 199, fn. 200.

<sup>54</sup> The middle morphology on ἰάομαι (“to heal”) can be described similarly to ῥύομαι. In the act of healing, the subject is favorably inclined towards the object and typically desires its healing. Further, medically speaking, seeking someone’s healing is an act that often requires much thought and activity on the part of the subject. 1 Kgs 18:32 indicates the intense activity required in the act of “healing” (ἰάσατο τὸ θυσιαστήριον [“he ‘repaired’ the altar”]). Λυτρόω (“to redeem”) is another word used in the middle voice

## Conclusion

In conclusion, many middle voice verbs in the LXX and GNT denote indirect reflexive actions. The subject of these verbs receives something or benefits from the action in some way. Some indirect reflexive middle verbs are *media tantum*, in which case the middle ending highlights a lexically inherent subject focus. Other indirect reflexive middle verbs have an active counterpart. In these cases, the middle ending adds a reflexive idea that sometimes significantly alters the verb's meaning. The subject of indirect reflexive middle verbs is often highly agentive, and these verbs often occur in transitive syntax. In the aorist tense, they take sigmatic middle forms.

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to refer to salvation in the LXX and GNT (e.g., Exod 6:6). This is clearly an indirect reflexive middle, since its basic meaning is “to purchase someone/something out of bondage.”

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

This dissertation has sought to show that the middle voice in the Septuagint and Greek New Testament expresses a broad variety of semantically related ideas, all of which revolve around the notion of *subject focus*. It has sought to show this in two ways. First, it has provided a diachronic sketch of middle voice features in related ancient languages. This sketch revealed common middle voice traits among these languages and displayed the subject-focused semantics that the Greek middle voice forms inherited. It also revealed important information for understanding Greek  $-(\theta)\eta$ - verbs. Second, the dissertation applied Rutger J. Allan's eleven middle voice usage types in Classical Greek to the Hellenistic Greek of the LXX and GNT. This application showed each of Allan's types to be fully operational in the Greek of this Period and literature.

#### **Implications for LXX and GNT Middle Voice Studies**

Implications from this study can be drawn for the three grammatical categories repeatedly discussed in this work: semantics, morphology, and syntax. First, the subject-focused semantics of the Greek middle voice remained a rich, vibrant feature of the Hellenistic Greek verbal system. The LXX and GNT writers utilized middle-marked verbs to communicate a range of subject-focused ideas. Therefore, students of this literature should be challenged to consider the subject-focused rationale for every middle-marked verb they encounter. Consideration should be given to such factors as etymology, concrete meaning, and relationship to active counterparts. Humility is called for when the exact subject-focused rationale evades us. In this way, this dissertation argues against the concept of deponency in Hellenistic Greek and stands with those scholars who have



recently called for deeper appreciation of the beauty of the Greek middle voice.

Second, the morphological implications of this dissertation apply mainly to aorist and future  $-(\theta)\eta$ -forms. Because the  $-(\theta)\eta$ - morpheme developed from PIE stative or change-of-state *eh<sub>1</sub>*, it is not surprising to find it used on Greek middle voice (subject-focused) verbs. The use of  $-(\theta)\eta$ - morphology on verbs functioning for the middle voice appears to have increased in Hellenistic Greek from Classical Greek. Still, the picture is not much different from the one Allan painted for the Classical Period. LXX and GNT readers can still expect to find  $-(\theta)\eta$ - morphology on middle voice verbs in which the subject is lower in agency, and  $-\sigma\alpha$ - morphology on middle voice verbs in which the subject is higher in agency. Ultimately, however, they should not be surprised to find  $-(\theta)\eta$ - on any verb functioning for the middle voice. Because of this, it would be beneficial for Hellenistic Greek grammars and teachers to describe  $-(\theta)\eta$ - forms as “medio-passive” instead of simply “passive.”

Third, Greek readers should not simply expect a middle voice verb to be a syntactically intransitive verb. At the same time, the category of transitivity can still provide another helpful way of describing the meaning of the middle voice. Specifically, the notion of reduced semantic transitivity aids in visualizing the subject focus of the middle. The middle voice always marks a departure from the prototypical transitive event. To some degree, it always directs, or focuses, the effect of its action on the verbal subject. Understanding this feature of the middle’s semantic transitivity can, in turn, help Greek students appreciate why middle-marked verbs frequently occur in syntactically intransitive constructions—especially in relation to a transitive active counterpart.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

It is hoped that this dissertation has provided a general framework for reading middle-marked verbs in the LXX and GNT. Much research, however, remains to be done to uncover the significance of the Greek middle. Specifically, middle voice studies could

be conducted in three areas.

First, more research can be done on the relationship between the middle voice and the future tense in Greek. Many verbs in the LXX and GNT mark only their future tense forms for the middle voice. While there have been general suggestions as to the relationship between this tense and voice, a more in-depth analysis and explanation of this trend is needed.

Second, deeper study could be done on active-middle synonymous pairs in the LXX and GNT. Some words marked consistently in the middle voice have synonyms marked consistently in the active voice. I have commented on this briefly at various points in this dissertation. Still, in-depth lexical studies could be conducted for some of these word pairs, with suggestions as to the implications for exegesis of the LXX and GNT.

Third, one could conduct a study of the translation technique of LXX middle-marked verbs from their Hebrew *Vorlage*. From which Hebrew roots and stems are such words translated? Conversely, how are the more subject-focused Hebrew stems (i.e., the *Hithpael* or *Niphal* stems) translated into Greek? Such studies could provide additional useful angles for appreciating the form and function of the Greek middle voice in this literature.

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## ABSTRACT

### THE MIDDLE VOICE IN THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

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The Hellenistic Greek verbal system was capable of communicating three voices: active, middle, and passive. Of these, the middle voice has long proven the most difficult for English speakers to understand. Questions exist regarding the Hellenistic Greek middle voice forms (morphology) and function (semantics). Morphologically, these questions focus on the function of the  $-(\theta)\eta-$  forms of the aorist and future tenses. Semantically, these questions focus on the range of meaning the Greek middle voice communicated and the legitimacy of the concept of deponency in Greek. Answers to these questions have obvious bearing on the study of the Septuagint and Greek New Testament.

This dissertation addresses these questions. It argues that the middle voice in the Septuagint and Greek New Testament expresses a broad variety of semantically related ideas, all of which revolve around the notion of *subject focus*. The dissertation advances this argument in two ways. First, it describes the historical origins of the Greek voice system through a diachronic study of related Indo-European languages. Second, it applies the eleven middle voice semantic types described by Rutger J. Allan in his study of Classical Greek to the literature of the Septuagint and Greek New Testament.

Specifically, chapter 1 of the dissertation provides an overview of recent Greek middle voice studies, showing where advances can be made within the field. Chapter 2 describes a diachronic sketch of ancient Indo-European middle voice phenomena. The

chapter describes middle voice morphology, semantics, and syntax in Proto-Indo-European, Hittite, Sanskrit, Classical Greek, and Hellenistic Greek. Evidence from the chapter sheds light on the semantic core and range of semantic applications of the Greek middle voice. Further, evidence from this chapter sheds light on the medio-passive function of Greek  $-(\theta)\eta-$  aorist and future verbs. Chapters 3-6 apply each of Rutger J. Allan's eleven Classical Greek middle voice types to the literature of the Septuagint and Greek New Testament. Chapter 3 discusses the passive, spontaneous process, and mental process middle types. Chapter 4 discusses the body motion, collective motion, and reciprocal middle types. Chapter 5 discusses the direct reflexive, perception, and mental activity middle types. Chapter 6 discusses the speech act and indirect reflexive middle types. These chapters provide an abundance of verses from the Septuagint and Greek New Testament showing each of these middle voice uses to be fully operational in this literature. Finally, chapter 7 draws conclusions from this study and suggests areas for future research on the Greek middle voice.

## VITA

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