THE MIDDLE VOICE IN

THE NEW TESTAMENT

by

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The middle voice in Greek has no exact parallel in the English language. Scholars disagree about both its essential significance and its various usages as dictated per context. The notion of voice interchange, i.e., usage of a middle voice with an active meaning apart from the issue of deponency, is the primary controversy. Translational and interpretive problems apart from voice interchange are treated as secondary. Historical argumentation, clarification of the notion of voice in general, and a removal of misconceptions regarding the names of the voices are the foundation upon which ensuing argumentation rests.

The historical development of the middle voice as well as usage invalidate the concept that the middle voice is middle in meaning between the active and passive voices. The middle voice is older than the passive and has fluctuated in meaning with significant passage of time. Regarding meaning of the middle voice, the suggestions of transitiveness and general reflexivity are deemed as inadequate or misleading. Although the concepts of special advantage and subject participation in the results may at times be involved, these ideas are not inherent to the middle itself. In fact, an examination of the true middles in the NT fails to reveal a prescriptive definition applicable to every occurrence. Instead, a basic notion of the middle voice as an intensification in some manner or degree of the relationship between the subject and the action expressed by the verb serves as a valid general guideline. The absence or presence, degree, and manner of this intensification is determined by the historical development of the verb, the verbal idea itself, and the particular context.

Voice interchange without semantic distinction is an infrequent phenomenon in the NT. An examination of parallel synoptic passages reveals that Mark apparently employs the middle in certain cases simply as a stylistic variation. However, no broad spectrum principle is available, for in James 4:2, 3 a semantic distinction is recognized, whereas in 1 John 5:14, 15 none is apparent. Each particular case of voice interchange should be evaluated on its own merits. In addition, a taxonomical approach is ultimately unsatisfactory.

Several warnings are appropriate regarding the middle voice. First, not every nuance of the middle can be expressed by English translation. Second, usage apparently varied among different authors and in different localities. Finally, unwarranted dogmatism and insistence on classical distinctions should be avoided. Instead, a safe guideline is to interpret the intensification of each true middle in terms of its context, verbal idea, and historical development.

Accepted by the Faculty of Grace Theological Seminary
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AJP   American Journal of Philology

BAGD   Bauer, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, Greek-English Lexicon of the NT, rev. F. Danker

BG   M. Zerwick, Biblical Greek

BGHG   R. W. Funk, A Beginning-Intermediate Grammar of Hellenistic Greek

DNTT   C. Brown, Dictionary of New Testament Theology

GASS   J. Thompson, A Greek Grammar, Accidence and Syntax for Schools and Colleges

GLHR   A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research

GNTG   W. F. Howard, J. H. Moulton, and N. Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek

GOECL   F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, rev. R. Funk

HGG   A. Jannaris, An Historical Greek Grammar

ICC   International Critical Commentary

IJAL   International Journal of American Linguistics

LPGL   G. W. H. Lampe, Patristic Greek Lexicon

LSJ   H. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. Jones, A Greek English Lexicon

NICNT   New International Commentary on the New Testament

NTG   E. Jay, New Testament Greek, An Introductory Grammar

MGNT   H. Dana and J. Mantey, A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament

TDNT   G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament

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INTRODUCTION

Any thorough attempt to interpret and translate Romans 3:9 causes the exegete to ponder over the voice of προεχόμεθα. Is the verb middle or passive, or is it middle in form yet active in meaning though not deponent? Similarly, the aorist middle participle ἀπεκδυσάμενος presents exegetical difficulties (Col 2:15). Is the participle merely deponent or is it a true middle with the sense of having divested himself of something.[1] The resultant theological significance is considerably affected by the sense which is selected.[2]

As in the above cases, numerous exegetical questions partially hinge upon the voice of the verb. In the case of the middle voice, the difficulty is increased since that phenomenon is a refinement of the Greek language that has no parallel in English. In common with other languages of Indo-European origin, Greek expresses by inflection what some modern languages, notably English, express by auxiliaries. Further-more, grammarians differ in their understanding of the essential significance of the middle voice. Thus, in order to remove some of these obstacles, three basic problems are dealt with.

The first difficult problem concerns the elucidation of a basic concept regarding the middle voice. After an analysis of various

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[1] <u>BAGD</u>, p. 83. They list ἀπεκδύομαι as deponent.
[2] Homer A. Kent, Jr., <u>Treasures of Wisdom, Studies in Colossians and Philemon</u> (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), pp. 88-89. If the verb is not deponent, then it does not properly describe the taking of power away from evil angels.

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viewpoints, a functional definition describing a basic concept of the middle is set forth. Second, and perhaps the most controversial, are the problematic areas of usage. Is the middle voice used with an active meaning even though the verb is not deponent? More generally, is the semantical distinction among the voices blurred in the NT? In addition, the effectiveness of taxonomical approaches to usage are questioned. Third, what are general guidelines regarding translation and interpretation of the middle voice?

Historical argumentation concerning development of the voices combined with a clarification of the meaning of voice in general lays the foundation for treating these problems.

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND OF THE MIDDLE VOICE

In order to avoid semantic confusion, it is advantageous to
clarify the meaning and concept of voice as it applies to language in
general. For often the voices are treated categorically, without the
basic notion of voice having been first clarified. Also, a brief history
of the voices in Greek combined with a discussion of the terminology
relating to the voices is the necessary background for the elimination
of certain erroneous conceptions.[1]

Meaning of Voice

The grammatical category of voice as used by linguists and
grammarians to comprehend and analyze a specific verbal feature con-
tained in some languages has enjoyed considerable popularity over the
last few years.[2] It is thus not surprising that voice as a grammatical
category has been variously defined.[3] Yet, if a descriptive definition

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[1] Certain older grammarians are imbued with the notion that the
middle voice has a middle signification between the active and passive
voices. See, for example, Richard Valpy, The Elements of Greek Grammar
(New York: W. E. Dean, 1837), p. 82; Charles Anthon, A Grammar of the
Greek Language (New York: Harper and Bros., 1855), p. 124. They appear
to follow the precedent set by Claude Lancelot, A New Method of Learning
the Greek Tongue, 2 vols. trans. Thomas Nugent (London: J. Nourse, 1746;
reprinted; Menston, England: Scolar Press, 1972), p. 236.
    [2] Jan Svartvik, On Voice in the English Verb (Hague: Mouton and
Co., 1966), p. 1. This popularity in English is largely due to the
advent of transformational grammatical theory.
    [3] Robert J. Di Pietro, Language Structures in Contrast (Rowley:
Newbury House Publishers, 1971), pp. 75-77. A uniform descriptive

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of voice is to be useful in analyzing a language, it should be suffi-

ciently general so that it does not either impose semantic restrictions

or add nuances that are not inherent in a language.[1] As pertaining to

Greek, many grammarians discuss the problems of voice without clarifying

the concept of voice itself or finding any single cohesive principle

for the category.[2] When the notion of voice itself is clarified it is

usually defined descriptively in terms of the relationship between the

subject of a sentence and the verbal action of its predicate.[3] Simply

defined, voice is the relationship between the subject of a sentence and

the action expressed by the verb.[4] The various voices indicate a range

of possible relationships between subject and predicate. Yet, strictly

definition of voice applicable to all languages is difficult to obtain.
For example, see Alice Werner, Introductory Sketch of the Bantu
Languages (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1919), pp.
146-55. At least eleven different derived forms of the verb have been
found which may be described as voices.

[1] Archibald T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in
the Light of Historical Research (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), pp.
31-40 (hereafter cited as GLHR). He appropriately warns that the seat
of authority in language is not the books about language, but it is the
people who use the language.

[2] Frank E. B. Leddusire, "A Comparative Study of Middle Voice in
Koine Greek and Reflexive Verbs in Old Russian through Case Grammar
Description" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1972),
p. 26.

[3] For an exception, see Fred W. Householder, Kostas Kazazis, and
Andreas Koutsoudas, "Reference Grammar of Literary Dhimotiki", IJAL 30
(April 1964):102. They define voice as that which refers to the direc-
tion of the action expressed by the verb. Although this directional
concept may differentiate the active and passive voices, it appears to
be inadequate for the middle.

[4] Eric G. Jay, New Testament Greek, an Introductory Grammar,
(London: SPCK, 1958), p. 14 (thereafter cited as NTG); Robert W. Funk,
A Beginning-Intermediate Grammar of Hellenistic Greek, 2d corrected ed.
vol. 2 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1973), p. 395 (hereafter cited as
BGHG). This definition does not appear to impose upon the Greek voices
meanings that they do not contain.

speaking, voice is the property of the verbal-idea rather than of the subject.[1]

Distinctions

If a definition of voice is chosen as the relationship between the subject and the action expressed by its verb, then for the sake of clarity and consistency, the voices should be defined in terms of that relationship.[2] The active voice represents the subject as performing the action of the verb. The passive voice represents the subject as acted upon, and does not act.[3] However, the middle voice denotes that the subject is in some special manner involved or interested in the action of the verb.[4] Stated slightly differently, in the middle voice there is an intensification in some manner between the subject and the action expressed by the verb.[5] The following examples of λούω illustrate

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[1] Harvey E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, <u>A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament</u> (New York: Macmillan Co., 1955), pp. 154-55 (here-after cited as MGNT); Johann M. Stahl, <u>Kritischhistorische Syntax des griechischen Verbums der classichen Zeit</u> (Heidelberg: Carl Winter's Universitatbuchhandlung, 1907), p. 42.

[2] For consistency and clarity, see Herbert W. Smyth, <u>Greek Grammar</u>, rev. Gordon M. Messing (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 389-94; Basil L. Gildersleeve, <u>Syntax of Classical Greek</u>, pt. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 61-70.

[3] John Thompson, <u>A Greek Grammar, Accidence and Syntax for Schools and Colleges</u> (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1903), p. 310 (hereafter cited as GASS).

[4] Gildersleeve, <u>Greek Syntax</u>, 1:64.

[5] A list of definitions of numerous authors was compiled. These definitions of the voices could be divided as to the central theme. It appears that the clearest definitions consistently define the voices in terms of the <u>relationship</u> of subject and action. They virtually all agree that there is a difference between the relationship in the active voice and that of the middle. The relationship in the middle is more intense.

the differences between active, middle and passive voice functions, respectively.[1]

1. ἡ ἀδελφὴ <u>ἔλουσεν</u> τὸ τέκνον. The sister bathed the child.

2. ἡ ἀδελφὴ <u>ἐλούσατο</u>. The sister bathed (herself).[2]

3. τὸ τέκνον <u>ἐλούθη</u> ὑπὸ τῆς ἀδελφῆς. The child was bathed by the sister.

Emphasis

The difference of emphasis between voices has been termed one of theme, salience, or focus of attention.[3] Voice <u>per se</u> does not appear to place an emphasis either on the subject, the verbal action, or their relationship. The subject or verb may be emphasized by contextual factors such as word--order, but this is not the function of voice.[4]

<u>In The Active Voice</u>

After suggesting that the prehistoric distinction between the active and the middle voice involved an accent on the root in the active form and on the personal ending in the middle form, James Moulton

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[1] Eugene Van Ness Goetchius, <u>The Language of the New Testament</u>, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), p. 100. These examples, although not found in the NT, are particularly lucid because they emplo- the same verb in the indicative mood. However, similar examples <u>may</u> be found in the NT using λούω, but some examples are in participial form. For example, see ἔλουσεν in Acts 16:33 for active; λελουμένος in John 13:10 for passive; λουσαμένη in 2 Peter 2:22 for middle.

[2] This use of the middle as reflexive is only one of the possible functions of the middle voice. No single example can be cited to illus- trate the broad spectrum of possibilities.

[3] Herbert H. Clark, <u>Semantics and Comprehension</u> (Hague: Mouton and Co. B.V., 1976), pp. 111-12. For forceful argumentation concerning the emphasis of actives and passives in English, see p. 118.

[4] <u>GLHR</u>, p. 798. His statement that the use of voice is to direct attention to the subject, not to the object, may be misleading. It should be noted that this statement is made regarding transitiveness.

conjectures that <u>originally</u> in the active the action was stressed, in the middle the agent.[1] However, this possible historical distinction does not appear to be the case in NT usage as illustrated by John 14:1. πιστεύετε εἰς τὸν θεόν, καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ πιστεύετε. By means of a chiasm the two verbs are placed in two emphatic positions, stressing the durative action of believing.[2] In the following verse εἶπον is not in an emphatic position, and it is difficult to envision that the active voice of εἶπον emphasizes the act of speaking. It simply indicates that Jesus, the subject, is the performer of the action.

<u>In The Middle Voice</u>

Similarly, the assertion that the <u>middle voice stresses the agent</u> needs to be either qualified or avoided. Dana and Mantey carefully explain this notion with the following considerations.

> While the active voice emphasizes the action, the middle stresses the agent. It, in some way, relates the action more intimately to the subject. Just how the action is thus related is not indicated by the middle voice, but must be detected from the context of the verbal idea.[3]

However, it appears possible to relate the action more intimately to the subject without necessarily stressing the subject, i.e., the agent of the action being the focus of attention rather than the relationship between the subject and the action. For example, καταλαμβάνω in the active voice means to seize or overtake, but in the middle denotes grasping for oneself or with reference to oneself, and thus to comprehend. A mental as opposed to a physical application of καταλαμβάνω

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[1] <u>GNTG</u>, p. 512.
[2] R. C. H. Lenski, <u>The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel</u>, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1943), p. 969.
[3] <u>MGNT</u>, p. 157.

is introduced by the middle in this way, since mental action is especially confined within the sphere of the agent.[1] Hence the subject of this verb in the middle voice indicates both the performer of the action and that to whom or for which the action is performed.[2] If this notion is justifiably considered as stress, it is certainly far less emphatic and of a different nature than the stress of a subject as indicated by a personal pronoun as in the following example. Ἐγὼ δὲ κατελαβόμην μηδὲν ἄξιον αὐτὸν θανάτου πεπραχέναι. "But when I understood that he had committed nothing worthy of death" (Acts 25:25).[3]

Thus, if one wishes to speak of special attention being focused on the subject by the middle voice, it is only in the sense that the subject both performs the action and is that to whom or for which the action is performed.

In The Passive Voice

Similarly, the passive voice simply represents the subject as being acted upon. Any notion of emphasis regarding the subject, verb, or their relationship is due to contextual factors.

History of the Voices

The question regarding the antiquity and development of the voice forms has not been fully established, and the gaps in knowledge are often the areas of much conjecture.[4] Yet there does appear to be

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[1] Wilbert F. Howard, James H. Moulton, and Nigel Turner, A Grammar of New Testament Greek, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1906), p. 158 (hereafter cited as GNTG).

[2] Goetchius, Language of the New Testament, p. 104.

[3] This author is responsible for the translations of Greek statements throughout this thesis.

[4] GNTG, 1:152-53.

sufficient historical information to establish that the middle is prior
to the passive in historical development.

Middle Older Than Passive

Although it is unknown whether the active or the middle voice
was the first to develop, it is generally recognized that primitive
Greek, as in other Indo-Germanic languages, had only two voice forms,
active and middle.[1] The middle form was subsequently more fully devel-
oped into the passive.[2] During the Attic period a complete system of
three voices existed.[3] The ensuing tendency during the Hellenistic per-
iod was to merge the middle and passive forms into a single form with the
passive gaining ascendancy.[4] In modern Greek, there is no middle form.[5]

Fluctuation in Meaning

Although John Thompson asserts that the original sense of the
middle form was reflexive, it appears that this is questionable.[6] Yet

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[1] Karl Brugmann, <u>A Comparative Grammar of the Indo-Germanic Languages</u>, vol. 4, trans. R. Seymour Conway and W. H. D. Rouse (New York: B. Westerman and Co., 1895), p. 515; Satya S. Misra, <u>A Comparative Grammar of Sanskrit, Greek and Hittite</u>, with a Foreward by Sunuti K. Chatterji (Calcutta: World Press Private, 1968), p. 90.

[2] James H. Moulton, <u>An Introduction to the Study of New Testament Greek</u>, 5th ed., rev. Henry G. Meecham (London: Epworth Press, 1955), p. 41. For a different viewpoint, see <u>GASS</u>, p. 305. Yet he still recog-nizes middle is older than passive.

[3] Anthony N. Jannaris, <u>An Historical Greek Grammar</u> (London: Macmillan and Co., 1897), p. 362 (hereafter cited as HGG)

[4] Friedrich Blass and Albert Debrunner, <u>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</u>, trans. and rev. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 161 (hereafter cited as GOECL). For probable causes of this merger, see <u>HCG</u>, p. 362.

[5] Irene P. Warburton, "On the Verb in Modern Greek" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1966), p. 68.

[6] <u>GNTG</u> 1:156. Although a reflexive meaning ultimately accrued to the middle form, it would be wrong to assume that it was originally

whether or not this is true for certain periods, it is not true of NT usage.[1] The voices do vary in their usage during different stages of the language.[2] Although in the NT the middle forms may still retain a wide field of usage for all the senses found in classical use, there are examples contrary to the general trend.[3] Thus, one should not evaluate usage of the middle voice form in the NT solely by classical standards or consider NT writers as lacking in their understanding of certain grammatical distinctions.[4]

Names of the Voices

The names and earliest descriptions of the verbal category of voice have been traced to Dionysius Thrax.[5] Grammarians have objected to the terminology of the Greek voices as not being clearly descriptive of usage. Active is not distinct for the other voices also express

there. For a discussion of the controversy regarding reflexivity in voice, see Leddusire, "Middle Voice," pp. 36-37.

[1] C. F. D. Moule, <u>An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek</u>, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), p. 24.

[2] <u>GLHR</u>, p. 799.

[3] Maximilian Zerwick, <u>Biblical Greek</u>, adapted from the 4th Latin ed. by Joseph Smith (Rome: Pontificii Instititi Biblica, 1963), pp. 75-76 (hereafter cited as BG).

[4] <u>GLHR</u>, p. 805; Edwin Hatch, <u>Essays in Biblical Greek</u> (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1889), pp. 2-8.

[5] Dionysius Thrax, <u>Grammatici Graeci</u>, vol. 1 (Lipsiae: In Aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1838; reprint ed., Stuttgart: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung Hildescheinz, 1965), pp. 48-49. His term for voice, διαθέσις, includes the three terms ενέργεια μεσότης and πάθος. For further history of the terminology, see F. E. Thompson, <u>A Syntax of Attic Creek</u> (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), pp. 158-59; Basil L. Gildersleeve, "Stahl's Syntax of the Greek Verb," <u>American Journal of Philology</u>, 29 (1908):275.

action.[1] Furthermore, the active does not always express an action,
but may denote a state.[2]   Concerning the middle, it does not stand in
between the active and passive in meaning.[3] But even more objections
are raised against the name of deponent.[4] This term is derived from the
Latin depono meaning to lay aside, since these verbs appear to have laid
aside and lost the active form.[5] Yet certain verbs are found in the
active form only or the middle form only, and thus Moulton would prefer
to apply the name of deponent to both of these classes.[6] Although it
may be recognized that the terms are not clearly descriptive of usage,
the solution does not appear to be the coining of new terms in place of
those which are imbedded in grammars and history. Instead, these terms
should be properly defined in terms of their usage.

[1] GLHR, p. 331.
[2] Friedrich Blass, Grammar of New Testament Greek, 2d ed. rev.
and enl., trans. Henry Thackeray (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905), pp.
180-81. However, linking verbs are best understood apart from the active
or passive idea. For example, see BGHG, 2:398-99.
[3] GLHR, p. 331.
[4] Certain grammarians even attempt to make deponents a different
category from middles. For example, see George B. Winer, A Grammar
Idiom of the New Testament, 7th ed. enl. and imp. Gottlieb Lunemann
(Andover: Warren F. Draper, 1869), p. 258. He proposes that from
middle verbs are to be carefully distinguished deponents. To eliminate
the confusion regarding deponents, sometimes a non-deponent is called a
true middle. For example, see BGHG 2:398. Others use the term
defective rather than deponent.
[5] NTG, p. 85. But in some cases these verbs never had an active
form. A deponent is more accurately define as a verb which has an
active meaning, but only middle (or middle and passive) forms.
[6] GNTG, 1:153.

Summary

The grammatical category of voice indicates how the subject is related to the action expressed by the verb. The active voice represents the subject as performing the action of the verb. It simply represents the subject as acting without necessarily stressing the action. The passive voice simply represents the subject as being acted upon. The middle voice indicates an intensification in some manner between the subject and the action expressed by the verb, i.e., the subject is in some special manner involved or interested in the action of the verb. Although certain grammarians assume that the middle voice stresses the agent of the action, this is valid only in the sense that the subject both performs the action and is that to whom or for which the action is performed. An examination of the history of the voices invalidates the erroneous concept that the middle voice is middle in meaning between the active and passive, for the middle form is older than the passive form. Also from the historical survey it is seen that the voices have varied in their usage during different stages of the language. Thus classical standards, by themselves, are not a proper criterion for evaluating NT usage. Finally, it is recognized that the names of the voices are not clearly descriptive of their function, and one should not be misled by the names. Instead, the terms should be properly defined as regarding their usage.

CHAPTER II

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MIDDLE VOICE

Up to this point it has been briefly assumed, but not proven,
that the middle voice denotes that the subject is in some special manner
involved or interested in the action of the verb. Stated slightly dif-
ferently, in the middle voice there is an intensification in some manner
or degree between the subject and the action expressed by the verb.[1]
However, this assumption needs to be both clarified as well as qualified.
For it is correctly maintained that it is scarcely possible to formulate
a single definition of its basal function which could be applied to all
its actual occurrences.[2] For such a definition, when applied to
particular cases, is subject to limitation or even contradiction.[3] An
inductive approach to the study of true middles appears to confirm this,
for no single principle has been found which captures the meaning of
every true middle.[4] Moulton even asserts that it is useless to exercise

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[1] For the difficulty involved in selecting a theoretical frame-
work for the study of voice problems, see Leddusire, "Middle Voice,"
p. 8. He rejects the traditional descriptive approach and adopts gener-
ative transformational grammar in the tradition of Noam Chomsky as the
only adequate basis. However, traditional grammar, which defines parts
of speech by their meaning and function, is fully capable of providing a
functional basis for the formulation of a workable definition.
    [2] MGNT, p. 157.
    [3] Blass, Grammar of New Testament Greek, p. 186.
    [4] A printout of all the middles in the NT was obtained from
project GRAMCORD. The printout of the middles was in two separate lists,
being separated on the basis of deponency. The majority of the
middles in the NT are deponent.

one's ingenuity in interpreting every middle, for the development in
some cases never progressed beyond the rudimentary stage.[1]
Thus, this assumption of intensification by the middle will be
first clarified and qualified by surveying different viewpoints among
grammarians. Second, examples and data that do not fall under this
general guideline will be examined.

Viewpoints

Although some grammars do have a general functional definition
of the middle voice, the following viewpoints of mediality are either
inadequate, misleading, or too vague to provide a clear operational
framework.

Reflexive

The term "reflexive," as found among different grammarians, was
rarely limited to a directly reflexive sense, i.e., the action is
directly referred back to the subject. The notions of reciprocity,
indirectness, and self-interest are sometimes included.[2] Because of this
broad semantic extension, this is a difficult concept to analyze as
regarding its involvement in any basic notion of mediality.

Proponents

Jelf clearly maintains the reflexive position.

The essential sense which runs throughout the middle reflexive
verb is Self--the action of the verb has immediate reference to
self. This is the proper generic notion of all middle verbs, and

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[1] GNTG 1:158. His statement regards the category of dynamic mid-
dles. Yet this does not mean that a general function does not belong to
the middle voice. Usage over time may fix a different idiomatic meaning
to a middle, and thus it does not reflect the general function.
[2] HGG, p. 360.

the particular sense of each middle verb must be-determined by dis-
covering the relation in which that notion of self stands to the
notion of the verb.[1]

Curtius and Sonnenschein also maintain that the basic notion of
the middle is primarily, but not exclusively, reflexive.[2] Evidence for
this position is not lacking among the middles of the NT.[3]

Opponents

Jay denies a reflexive usage of the middle in the NT in the
direct sense. "The beginner is apt to jump to the conclusion that the
Greek Middle Voice is reflexive. This is not so. It denotes that the
subject performs the action for himself, but not to himself."[4] However,
the following two examples of directly reflexive usage invalidate his
assertions.[5]

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[1] William E, Jelf, <u>A Grammar of the Greek Language</u>, 2d ed. 2
vols. (Oxford: James Wright, 1851), p. 14. Yet he maintains that
reflexivity is distinct from reciprocity and divides middles into two
categories: reflexive and reciprocal. For a similar position, see
Raphael Kuhner, <u>Grammar of the Greek Language, for the Use of High
Schools and Colleges</u>, trans. Bela B. Edwards and Samuel H. Taylor
(Andover: Allen, Morrill and Wardwell, 1844), p. 330.

[2] Georg Curtius, <u>The Greek Verb: Its Structure and Development</u>,
trans. Augustus S. Wilkins and Edwin B. England (London: John Murray,
1880), p. 55. He uses the term "reflexive" in the broadest sense of the
term, not simply the direct passing of the action back onto the subject.
Also see Basil F. C. Atkinson, <u>The Greek Language</u> (London: Faber and
Faber, 1931), p. 136; Edward A. Sonnenschein, <u>A Greek Grammar</u> (London:
Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1914), p. 274.

[3] For specific examples see pp. 47-48.

[4] NTG, p. 14.

[5] For a different view of ἀπήξατο, see CNTG 1:155; Moule, <u>An
Idiom Book of the New Testament Greek</u>, p. 24. But the suggestion of the
English intransitive <u>choke</u> is not warranted by the details of the
parallel account in Acts 1:18. Secondly, it has been observed that the
only middle for self-murder is ἀπήξατο which seems to have been the most
natural form of self-murder. Gildersleeve, <u>Syntax of Classical Greek</u>,
1:64.

1. καὶ ἀπελθὼν <u>ἀπήγξατο</u> "And after he departed, he hung himself"
   (Matt 27:5)

2. ὅτι ψῦχος ἦν, καὶ <u>ἐθερμαίνοντο</u> ἦν δὲ καὶ ὁ **Πέτρος** μετ᾽ αὐτῶν ἑστὼς
   <u>θερμαινόμενος</u> "Because it was cold and <u>they were warming themselves</u>;
   And Peter also was with them standing and <u>warming himself</u>" (John
   18:18).

As regarding reflexivity in the broader sense, Leddusire has
concluded that although Koine mediality can include underlying reflexive
constructions, the notion of reflexivity should not be considered the
primary motivation for voice.[1]

<u>Evaluation</u>

Although Robertson observes that reflexive is a better.designa-
tion of the middle than the tern: "middle" if direct reflexive is not
meant, the reflexive notion does not appear to be sufficient in relating
a basic concept regarding the middle voice for several reasons.[2] The
sense of indirect reflexivity is very vague and differs from author to
author.[3] It is unclear as regarding its termination point, for when
does a middle cease to be indirectly reflexive. Second, it is very
imprecise regarding the function of voice. The notion of emphasis,
either subject, verbal-action, or an interaction, is not specified.[4]

Middle in Meaning

The position maintained by Anthon, Valpy, and Lancelot that the
middle voice form is middle in meaning is modified by Wenham.

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[1] Leddusire, "Middle Voice," p. 56.
[2] Ibid., p. 331.
[3] For example, see Gildersleeve, <u>Greek Syntax</u> 1:64. In some of
its uses, the middle corresponds to the English reflexive, but the
signification is much wider and shades off from what is practically a
direct reflexive until it ceases to present any translatable difference
from the active.
[4] For discussion of this problem see the section on emphasis, p. 6.

Though some forms of the Middle are the same as the Passive, the Middle is in meaning much closer to the Active than the Passive. In fact, the meaning of Active and Middle are often indistinguishable. It is better to think of the Middle as a sort-of-Active than as a sort-of-Passive.[1]

This modification, although not as directly erroneous as Anthon's position, is still inadequate. Sometimes the middle may appear to be closer to a passive idea than an active notion.[2] Common ground between the middle and passive is to be observed in the examples of which a translation submit to or let oneself be is often suggested for the middle. For example, ἀδικεῖσθε is present middle or passive in form (1 Cor 6:7). BAGD, apparently taking this verb as a middle, offers the translation let oneself be wronged.[3] Zerwick understands this verb to be passive and translates suffer an injustice.[4] The context appears to place the responsibility on the subject of ἀδικεῖσθε, and hence the middle is appropriate. They ought to have submitted to injustice, to have ignored their rights, to have allowed themselves to be defrauded.[5] In this case, the subject not only performs an action, i.e., letting or permitting oneself, but also by implication is acted upon, i.e., is wronged. Although this is not the same as the passive be wronged in every case,

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[1] John H. Wenham, The Elements of New Testament Greek (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 22-23. For the views of Anthon, Valpy, and Lancelot, which were discounted via historical argumentation, see p. 3.

[2] GNTG, 1:162.

[3] BAGD, p. 17. The verb, when taken as passive, is translated as be wronged, be unjustly treated (Acts 7:24; 1 Cor 6:7).

[4] Mary Grosvenor and Max Zerwick, A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament, vol. 2 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), p. 508.

[5] James L. Boyer, For A World Like Ours, Studies in 1 Corinthians (Winona Lake, BMH Books, 1971), p. 70.

for one can be wronged by force without being a cooperative participant, Moulton correctly notes that the dividing line between middle and passive in such cases is a fine one at best.[1]

Special advantage

The attempt to precisely describe and define the relationship of the subject to the verbal-action in the middle voice may lead one into error. Although the agent of the action <u>may</u> be stressed, this does not mean that the action described is necessarily of special advantage or significance to the subject as proposed by Jay.[2] He hung himself, ἀπήξατο, was certainly not of special advantage or significance to Judas (Matt 27:5).

Similarly, it is difficult to envision that special advantage or significance for the subject is being emphasized by αἰωνίαν λύτρωσιν εὑράμενος "having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12). Instead, he found the way. Jesus is represented as having secured eternal redemption by himself.[3]

Participating in the Results

Dana and Mantey comment that the middle voice is that use of the verb which describes the subject as participating in the results of the action.[4] However, they carefully expand this concept by adding that the middle, in some way, relates the action more intimately to the

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[1] <u>GNTG</u> 1:162. Also περιτέμνησθε in Gal 5:2.
[2] <u>NTG</u>, p. 14.
[3] <u>GLHR</u>, p. 809. For a different rendering of this middle see James Moffatt, <u>A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews</u>, ICC (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1924), p. 121.
[4] MGNT, p. 157.

subject. The precise manner in which the action is thus related to the subject is not indicated by the middle voice.[1] Similarly, Gideon and Vaughan observe that the middle voice at times may call special attention to the subject as in some way participating in the results of the action.[2] Subject participation is clearly not always the case, since the middle may represent the agent as voluntarily yielding himself to the results of the action, or seeking to secure the results of the action in his own interest.[3] For example, the woman does not appear to be participating in the <u>results</u> of the command κειράσθω, "For if a woman will not wear a veil, <u>let her</u> also <u>have</u> her hair <u>cut off</u>" (1 Cor 11:6).

Thus, while subject participating in the results may at times be involved, this is not a fundamental concept regarding the middle.[4]

Transitive - Intransitive

Transitivity has been associated with voice as early as Jelf.[5] The issue of transitivity obscures the notion of voice, and makes the discovery of any general notion of voice more difficult.[6] To state the difference between active and middle as merely that of transitive and

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[1] Ibid., p. 157.

[2] Virtus E. Gideon and Curtis Vaughan, <u>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament</u> (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979), pp. 91-92. More generally it (the middle voice) represents the subject as acting in relation to himself--either on himself, for himself, or by himself.

[3] <u>MGNT</u>, p. 160. The example in 1 Cor 11:6 was chosen because the foam is middle aorist imperative, and thus the problem in other examples concerning identity of a middle-passive form is avoided.

[4] Even this particular nuance is not an <u>inherent</u> feature of the middle. The precise relationship of the subject with reference to himself is not indicated by the middle itself.

[5] Jelf, <u>A Grammar of the Greek Language</u>, pp. 10-15.

[6] Leddusire, "Middle Voice," pp. 26-30. His analysis of this problem is particularly lucid.

intransitive is incorrect.[1] Voice per se does not deal with the question of transitive or intransitive action.[2] Robertson rejected transitivity as being essential to voice.[3] His forceful argument consists of four observations. First, any one or all of the voice forms may be in association with transitive verbs. Second, an inherently intransitive verb like γίνομαι can appear in any voice form without its intransitivity being lost.[4] Third, a verb may be both transitive and intransitive in the same voice. Fourth, transitivity varies in different languages because it relates to the restrictions of a particular verb.[5] However, both transitivity and voice are properties of the verb.[6] But transitivity is discerned by the relation of the verb to an object, and is determined by the nature of the verbal idea. Voice, also a property of the verbal idea, indicates how the subject is related to the action.[7]

Summary

A survey and analysis of selected viewpoints among grammarians has yielded the following results. Although direct reflexivity does

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[1] Atkinson, The Greek Language, p. 136.

[2] Smyth, Greek Grammar, p. 393.

[3] GLHR, pp. 330-31. These arguments are clearly summarized and presented with examples by Leddusire, "Middle Voice," pp. 28-30. He adds a fifth argument that intransitive middle or reflexive verbs may in fact represent an underlying verb with an object. This would mean that they are only overtly intransitive, while in underlying grammar they serve a transitive-like function.

[4] ἐγένετο middle deponent, τὸ γέγονος active, γενηθεήτω passive.

[5] GLHR, p. 330.

[6] There are exceptions. Some verbs do vary according to form. Thus, ἵστημι, a regularly transitive or causative verb, has an intransitive sense in the perfect and second aorist. For discussion, see Samuel Green, Handbook of the Greek New Testament (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1880), p. 292.

[7] MGNT, pp. 154-55.

occur among NT middle forms in a few cases, the reflexive notion does not appear to be sufficient in relating a basic concept of the middle. The suggestion of indirect reflexivity is too general and vague, and the usage of this term differs among various authors. Also indirect reflexivity is very imprecise regarding the function of voice, for the notion of emphasis is not specified. Subject participation in the results of the action at times may occur as a usage of the middle, but this is not a universal concept inherent in the middle voice itself. The precise manner in which the action is related to the subject is not indicated by the middle voice. Likewise, transitivity is not a concept essential to voice. Voice does not deal with the question of transitive or intransitive action. Also the middle voice is not middle in meaning between active and passive. Nor is the suggestion that the middle voice is in meaning much closer to the active than the passive particularly helpful, for sometimes the middle may appear to be closer to a passive idea than an active notion.

Fundamental Concept

The suggestion, however, that the middle voice denotes the subject in some special manner involved or interested in the action of the verb does appear to be a valid principle.[2] It serves as a general guideline when applied to true middles.[3] Yet even this general notion

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[1] MGNT, pp. 154-55.

[2] Gildersleeve, Greek Syntax, 1:64. For a brief summary of opinions that attempt to represent a similar notion, see MGNT, p. 157.

[3] Again, it is important to note the basis upon which this suggestion is considered valid. Since an inductive approach to the study of the middles of the NT has failed to reveal a basic principle that is applicable to every middle, the best functional definition by a grammarian that appears to be valid in the majority of cases was selected.

does not cover every middle, and thus needs to be qualified by the following considerations.[1]

<p align="center">History of the Verb</p>

A survey of the history of a verb from its earliest traceable origin down to the time of the usage under consideration may indicate that there is no exegetical significance of the middle voice in terms of this general guideline. For a historical survey of the verb may reveal an idiomatic usage of the middle that has become established over time, a possible deponent usage not necessarily indicated by a lexicon, or a distinct semantic shift of meaning from active to middle.

Idiomatic Expressions

The verb ποιέω in its middle form followed by a verbal noun in classical Greek formed a periphrasis for the simple corresponding verb.[2] Although βεβαία ποιεῖσθαι is rendered by Lenski as continuous making sure and firm for ourselves in 2 Peter 2:2, the expression may simply have the same sense as the verb βεβαιόω.[3] Another idiom listed by Robertson is a future middle form of a verb which has a passive meaning.[4] On the basis of the future middle form being used in

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[1] For a more extensive treatment of these issues, see chapter three, "Usage of the Middle Voice."

[2] Smyth, Greek Grammar, p. 391. See pp. 22-23.

[3] R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter, the three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966), p. 277. However, see BAGD, p. 683. On the basis of historical precedent, they state that the middle of ποιέω serves mostly as a periphrasis of the simple verbal idea.

[4] GLHR, p. 819. Considering the rather large list of verbs that once used the middle future as passive in sense, the idiom is rare in the NT.

passive sense by Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophen, Plato and
Demosthenes, as well as having been identified as occurring in the LXX,
he suggests the possibility that περιβαλεῖται in Rev 3:5 and ἀποκόψονται
in Gal 5:12 <u>may</u> be examples of this idiom.[1]

<u>Deponency</u>

Also a survey of the historical evolution of a verb may indicate
a prior history of deponent usage.[2] For even if a verb occurs in both
an active form and a middle form in the same tense among literature
written within the same time period, this still may not be an indication
of a true middle, i.e., non-deponent middle. For example, in classical
Greek of the Attic period the future form of ἀκούω is regularly deponent
as ἀκούσομαι.[3] However, in the NT the verb is usually cited as active
in its second principal part as ἀκούσω.[4] The verb only occurs eight
times in the future tense in the NT with four forms being active and
four forms being middle.[5] Since there is no obvious nuance intended by

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[1] Ibid., p. 819. For strong argumentation against this idiom in
Gal 5:12, see John Eadie, <u>A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle
of Paul to the Galatians</u> (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1869; reprint
ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), p. 397. The example is
cited, however, to simply illustrate the importance of considering the
historical evolution of a verb as one of the factors to be considered
when evaluating the possible exegetical signifiance of a middle form.

[2] See pp. 49-50 for further discussion.

[3] Joint Association of Classical Teachers Greek Course, <u>Reading
Greek: Grammar, Vocabulary and Exercises</u> (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1978), p. 284.

[4] <u>MGNT</u>, p. 255; J. Gresham Machen, <u>New Testament Greek for
Beginners</u>, (Toronto: Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 255. However, both forms
for the future are listed in <u>GNTG</u> 2:227.

[5] Alfred A. Geden and William F. Moulton, eds., <u>A Concordance to
the Greek Testament</u>, rev. Harold K. Moulton (Edinburgh: T. and T.
Clark, 1978), pp. 34-38.

the future middle ἀκούσομαι in its contexts, the historical precedent of deponency in classical Greek contributes to the decision that these middle futures in the NT are deponent.[1]

<u>Distinct semantic shift</u>

Occasionally the middle form of a verb expresses a distinct semantic change as compared to the active form and is best translated as an active voice with a different meaning.[2] These distinct differences, such as ἄρχω (I rule) but ἄρχομαι (I begin) usually pose no problem as they have well-known lexical meanings. However, similar shifts occur for verbs that are not as well known. For example, the imperfect ἀπελύοντο in Acts 28:25 apparently simply means <u>were going away, departing</u>.[3]

<div align="center">Form and Tense</div>

The Koine Greek verbal system consists of two forms, the finite and the non-finite. Finite forms are sub-categorized by moods, wheres non-finite forms are subdivided as infinitival, participial, and verbal-adjectival in -τεος.[4] Of the non-finite forms, the infinitive

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[1] <u>GLHR</u>, p. 333. He cites at least 15 verbs which had the future in the middle form as deponent in classical Greek but have an active future form in the NT. In the case of ἀκούω, apparently this transition is not complete. Also note ζήσω and ζήσομαι in <u>NTG</u>, p. 319.

[2] <u>GLHR</u>, p. 804. His attempts to trace the middle meaning of verbs of this type to an original reflexive sense are not always possible. For example, γαμέω (I marry, used of the bridegroom) but γαμέομαι (I marry, used of the bride). Similarly γράφω (I enrol) but γράφομαι (I indict).

[3] <u>BAGD</u>, p. 96. A sufficient number of passages are cited with a parallel meaning. Although it is not difficult to envision how this sense could have been developed in the middle as compared to one of the active meanings, <u>to send away</u>.

[4] Leddusire, "Middle Voice," p. 42.

apparently did not originally possess voice functions.[1] Robertson postulates that gradually by analogy the infinitive forms came to be associated with the voices in the moods.[2] Gildersleeve warns against always assuming voice significance in an infinitive.

> The infinitive being a verbal noun is not so strictly bound by the voices as the finite form. The infinitive as a complement to adjectives and the so-called epexegetic infinitive often coincide with the English idiom in which good to eat is good for food.[3]

In this regard Robertson appears correct in asserting that there is no special voice significance in φαγεῖν in the phrase καὶ εἶπεν δοθῆναι αὐτῇ φαγεῖν "and he said that something to eat be given to her" (Mark 5:43). For the infinitive φαγεῖν, being a verbal-noun, serves as the accusative of general reference of δοθῆναι.[4] However, his remark that after the infinitive is fully developed its voice appears exactly as in the moods is not particularly lucid. How does one determine in the NT if an infinitive is "fully-developed" or in primitive form?[5] Regarding voice in a participle it appears correct to understand that all the nuances of the voices appear in the participle, and the voices in the participle parallel usage in the finite verb itself.[6]

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[1] GNTG, 1:203.

[2] GLHR, p. 1079.

[3] Gildersleeve, Greek Syntax, 1:63.

[4] GLHR, pp. 1079-80.

[5] Few grammarians deal with this issue. But see Leddusire "Middle Voice," p. 42. He cogently argues that the voice idea is reduced in infinitive forms, perhaps because of the derived nature of the infinitive phrase, the usual deletion of the subject of the infinitive phrase, and the absence of person indicators.

[6] GLHR, p. 1110-11. This assertion is supported by the evidence that voice appears in the earliest Greek participles as well as Sanskrit. Also the examples cited by Robertson give ample proof of active, middle, and passive voice distinctions in participles in the NT. Furthermore, no participles have been encountered which do not admit a possible voice distinction, nor has any grammarian been found to suggest otherwise.

Concerning voice in a finite form a change of mood does not appear to cause a fluctuation in the significance of the voice.[1] However, a change in tense <u>may</u> affect the significance of a middle form on the basis of deponency. A verb which is not deponent in one principal part <u>may</u> be deponent in another part.[2]

Summary

Although no single principle was discovered from an inductive study of middles in the NT that is valid for <u>every</u> occurrence of a true middle, the suggestion that the middle voice depicts the subject as in some special manner involved or interested in the action of the verb serves as a <u>general</u> guideline in the majority of cases in the NT. However, this significance should not be automatically attributed to every true middle. A survey of the historical evolution of a verb may indicate idiomatic usage of the middle, possible deponent indications which may not be lexically cited, or a distinct semantic shift that has become fixed over a limited time period.

Also the form and tense need to be considered when evaluating voice significance. Although all finite forms of a verb and the participle demonstrate distinct voice functions, this is not <u>always</u> the case of an infinitive, especially when used as a complement to adjectives and in epexegetical usage. Regarding tense, it is important to know the principal parts of a verb. For a shift from active to middle voice form

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[1] The monumental task of deductively studying mood shifts to ascertain this assertion has not been done. However, again, no negating evidence has been encountered nor has any grammarian been found to suggest otherwise.

[2] This is especially true regarding future deponent middles of many non-deponent present tense verbs. For example see the list in <u>NTG</u>, 318-22.

with a shift in tense, such as present to future, may simply be a transition to a deponent form.

CHAPTER III

USAGE OF THE MIDDLE VOICE

Although the middle voice signals an intensification in some
degree or manner between subject and action expressed by its verb, what
this precise intensification is, the middle voice <u>per se</u> does not
indicate.[1] The nature of this intensification must be derived from the
context, the historical development of the verb, and the significance
of the verb itself.[2] Thus, usage is the key. Gildersleeve maintains
that the interpretation of the differences between active and middle are
not so much grammatical as lexical.[3] The grammatical definition does
not determine the practical use, the conventional use. Thus, γῆμαι is
used of the man and γήμασθαι of the woman.[4] However, these differences
of interpretation are not due to features inherent in the voice itself.
When analyzing usage of the middle voice in the NT, grammarians often
center their discussions around two phenomena. First, there is the
purported usage of the middle voice which overlaps or is synonymous with
the active and passive voices. Second, there are usages in which the
middle voice expresses a distinct nuance, and these nuances are usually
treated with a taxonomical approach.

[1] <u>GNTG</u> 1:41; William H. Davis, <u>Beginner's Grammar of the Greek New Testament</u> (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1923), p. 37.
[2] <u>GLHR</u>, p. 804.
[3] Gildersleeve, "Stahl's Syntax of the Greek Verb," p. 277.
[4] Ibid., p. 277.

<p style="text-align:center">Interchangeability</p>

Turner asserts that during the New Testament period there was much confusion of meaning between the active and middle voice forms, and the middle form was a luxury which was dispensed with in time. New Testament authors were rapidly losing their grip on nice grammatical distinctions in voice.[1] An even more vague generalization reached by Simcox is that although perhaps the distinction is beginning to be blurred among some of the NT writers, it is preserved to a greater or lesser extent in most.[3] While recognizing possible overlap, Moulton agrees with the summary of Blass that on the whole NT writers were per-fectly capable of preserving the distinction between the active and the middle.[4] This more reserved conclusion is also arrived at by Zerwick, who notes that on careful examination, the use of the active can usually be accounted for.[5] In view of this controversy, the specific examples cited as support need to be evaluated. The passages pertaining to this controversy may be aligned under three headings: middle for active, active for middle, and passive for active or middle.[6]

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[1] Nigel Turner, Grammatical Insights into the New Testament (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1965), p. 112.
[2] Moule, Idiom Book, p. 24.
[3] William H. Simcox, The Language of the New Testament, Reprint ed. (Winona Lake: Alpha Publications, 1980), p. 95.
[4] GNTC 1:158; Blass, Grammar of New Testament Greek, p. 95.
[5] Zerwick, BG, p. 73.
[6] Allen C. Willoughby, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew, ICC 3d ed., ed. C. A. Briggs, et al. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1912), p. xxiii. He also uses a fourth category of active for passive.

Middle for Active

Turner, an avid proponent of the interchangeability of voice forms without a difference in meaning, declares the following bold assertion.

> While it is true that the lexicons provide no example of the middle voice being used in an active sense, the New Testament abounds (emphasis mine) in instances where a middle voice is used when there is an active form of the verb available; indeed, the middle is often used in the very sentence where its active form occurs with the same meaning.[1]

However, one certainly hesitates to subscribe to such a dictum without solid evidence.[2] Indeed, the passages usually cited are few in number, with James 4:2 being given as the classic example of voice indistinction.[3]

James 4:2,3

In this passage the same verb αἰτέω alternates in voice between middle, active, and middle, respectively. "You do not have because you do not ask (διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτεῖσθαι ὑμᾶς). You ask (αἰτεῖτε) and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives (κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε), so that you may spend it on your pleasures" (Jas 4:2, 3). Numerous and varied attempts to explain this interchange of voice in terms of a definite semantic difference have been set forth.

Semantic difference

Mayor suggests that a slight additional shade of meaning is added by the middle voice. The active suggests using the words without

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[1] Turner, Grammatical Insights, p. 106.

[2] The purported numerous passages are not cited by the author.

[3] Leddusire, "Middle Voice," p. 127.

the spirit of prayer, while the middle means asking with the spirit of prayer.[1] However, the context does not support this suggestion. For how can one ask with wrong motives (κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε) with a true spirit of prayer?[2] On the other hand, to ascribe an un-prayerlike request to the voice of αἰτεῖσθε as the reason for its being κακῶς is to ignore διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτεῖσθαι which states that one does not have what he needs because he does not ask in that very verbal voice.[3]

Zerwick finds the difference between middle and active to be especially clear when the same verb is used in the same context in both verses.[4] Thus, Mark makes a quite classical distinction between αἰτέω simply ask, and αἰτοῦμαι avail oneself of one's right to ask. "And he swore to her, 'whatever you ask (αἰτήσῃς) of me, I will give it to you; up to half of my kingdom.' And she went out and said to her mother, 'What shall I ask (αἰτήσομαι)?'" (Mark 6:23, 24).[5] So also the same distinction may be in James 4:2, 3.[6] Hiebert agrees that the middle here retains its usual middle force of to ask for your own selves since the purpose clause in verse three certainly involves this personal interest

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[1] Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James, 3d ed. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1913), pp. 137-38. This suggestion is apparently based upon the notion that the middle combined with the verbal idea suggest the notion of asking for oneself with selfish interests.

[2] D. Edmond Hiebert, The Epistle of James: Tests of a Living Faith, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), p. 248.

[3] Leddusire, "Middle Voice," p. 129.

[4] Zerwick, BG, p. 76.

[5] However, using this passage as a parallel to James 4:2 is only supportive and does not establish the distinction as always valid. For a different viewpoint, see William Hendriksen, Exposition of the Gospel according to Mark (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), p. 240.

[6] Zerwick, BG, p. 76.

element.[1] Leddusire offers a paraphrase which bears out the voice distinctions. "You do not have because you are unaffected by asking. When you do ask, you are without results because your interest in asking is undesirable, namely to squander with your sensualities.[2] Using generative transformational grammar, he concludes that the persistence of overt markers in a system where the contrasts are demonstrably productive point to distinction. However, the interpretation of this assertion in terms of traditional grammar is uncertain. For he must ultimately depend upon context to give two <u>different</u> meanings to the middle of αἰτέω, i.e., <u>because you are unaffected by asking</u> (διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτεῖσθαι ὑμᾶς) and <u>because your interest in asking is undesireable</u> (διότι κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε). Furthermore, the validity of the suggestion because you are unaffected by asking is very dubious. Is James stating that if his readers are affected by their asking, then their requests will be answered? How is one to be affected by his own asking? If this was the crucial point of the condition, it would seem that James would make plain the answers to such questions. Thus, this suggestion appears to be forced and unnatural.

Semantic indistinction

This alternation of voices in James 4:2,3 has also been viewed as simply an arbitrary interchange.[3] Yet, as Moulton suggests, it is difficult to understand how a writer like James could permit so purposeless a freak as this would be.[4] Perhaps on the basis of style

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[1] Hiebert, <u>James</u>, p. 248.
[2] Leddusire, "Middle Voice," p. 131.
[3] <u>GOEL</u>, p. 166; Simcox, The Language of the New Testament, p. 95; Henry Nunn, <u>A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek</u> (Cambridge: University Press, 1912), p. 64.
[4] <u>GNTG</u> 1:160. Although he argues against an arbitrary interchange, he concludes this usage is an extinct subtlety.

the middle forms were adopted to balance the two active forms αἰτεῖτε and οὐ λαμβάνετε.[1] Yet this also is a tenuous suggestion, for such stylistic usage of voice does not appear elsewhere in James.[2]

In view of this controversy and lack of strong support for either position, Adamson correctly observes that no certain distinction has been established between the active and middle in this passage.[3] Yet there are also no cogent reasons which eliminate the possibility of the middle conveying an intensification between the subject and its verbal action.[4] This context suggests the possibility that the intensification may be the personal interest of the subject in the request. Thus, this passage is certainly not irrefutable evidence that the active and middle voices of certain verbs are used interchangeably, nor vice versa.[5]

<u>1 John 5:14, 15</u>

Parallel in difficulty are the five occurrences of αἰτέω in 1 John.[6] Within two verses there is a variation of middle, middle, and

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[1] James B. Adamson, <u>The Epistle of James</u>, NICNT, ed. F. F. Bruce (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), p. 169.

[2] An examination of the flow of verbs according to voice in James has not revealed another sequence of middle-active-middle-active or any similar combination.

[3] Adamson, <u>James</u>, p. 169.

[4] For opposing view, see <u>TDNT</u>, s.v. "αἰτέω," by Gustov Stahlin, 1:192. Although he states that there is no option but to explain this voice variation in James in terms of the formal structure of the sentence, his arguments are really only applicable to Mayor's suggestion.

[5] Turner, <u>Grammatical Insights</u>, p. 164. Hence his assertive conclusions for interchangeability need to be more balanced. Even BAGD, p. 25, concludes that the middle and active only <u>seem</u> to be used interchangeably.

[6] 1 Jn 3:22, 5:14, 15, 16. Also the twelve occurrences of αἰτέω in the Gospel of John display voice variation and present difficulties of interpretation.

active. "And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask (αἰτώμεθα) anything according to his will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask (αἰτώμεθα), we know that we have the requests which we have asked (ἠτήκαμεν) from Him" (1 John 5:14, 15). Certainly in this passage the qualifying phrase κατὰ τὸ θέλημα does not seem to permit any self-interest to be involved. On the basis of the usage of αἰτέω in contexts of business dealings where the middle may add the nuance that one has the right to ask, it is suggested that this difference in meaning is apparent and certainly seems to be intended.

> Why should the two middle forms that are used here not include this right? Does the phrase 'according to his will" (θέλημα, what God has willed and has made known as being willed by him) not imply a certain right for our asking?[1]

However, the context does not support this nuance. The requisitioning in prayer is the same in both αἰτώμεθα and ἠτήκαμεν without adverbal modifiers as in James 4:2, 3. Although perceiving no difference in meaning, two suggestions attempt to account for the variation in form in this passage. First, the cognate accusative αἰτεῖν αἰτήματα in the active voice is understood as a periphrasis for the middle αἰτεῖσθαι.[2] Second, it is suggested that in Johannine usage the active is used with the accusative.[3] These notions, however, appear to be inadequate,

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[1] R. C. U. Lenski, <u>The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John, and St. Jude</u> (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966), p. 533.

[2] David Smith, "The Epistles of John," in vol. 5 of <u>Expositor's Greek Testament</u>, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), p. 197. He does note a difference of meaning in James 4:3.

[3] Robert Law, <u>The Tests of Life: A Study of the First Epistle of St. John</u>, 3d ed. (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1914,; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), p. 406. An exception is John 11:22. Also the usage of the active of αἰτέω in James does not follow this pattern, although the difference may be accounted for simply on the basis of different authorship.

for they confuse the notion of transitiveness with that of voice.

Therefore, in this passage neither a difference of meaning between active and middle is discernible, nor does the difference appear to be satisfactorily explained in teams of transitiveness. While there may be a semantic distinction of voice regarding αἰτέω in James, none is discernible in 1 John. Thus, one should be wary of broad generalizations regarding voice distinctions, even with a specific verb, apart from an examination of each individual context.[1]

Parallel Synoptic Passages

Striking evidence for the notion of interchangeability of middle and active without semantic difference may be derived from parallel synoptic accounts. Whereas one author uses the middle voice, another author employs the active voice in the same verb while describing the same event.

Matthew 26:23; Mark 14:20

The particular detail with voice variation is in the significant description by Jesus of the traitor.[2] Mark uses the middle voice and Matthew uses the active. "He who dips (ὁ ἐμβαπόμενος) with me into the dish" (Mark 14:20). "He who dips (ὁ ἐμβάψας) his hand in the dish with me" (Matt, 26:23). Yet not only does the voice vary, but also the tenses

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[1] For example, see DNTT, s.v. "Prayer," by H. Schonweiss, 2:856.
[2] This specific detail is omitted in the Lukan and Johannine accounts. Furthermore, ἐμβάπτω does not occur elsewhere in the NT or LXX, apart from the textual variant at John 13:26.

are present and aorist, respectively. Any intended difference of
meaning by either writer in his use of tense is not readily discernible.[1]
However, a lexical citation of these passages gives <u>dip</u> for the active
and <u>dip for oneself</u> as the middle.[2] This additional nuance in the middle
is in accord with Gould's suggestion that Mark does not mean to indicate
the traitor, but only to emphasize the treachery of the act.[3] But this
emphasis may be understood apart from any contribution of voice.
Matthew 19:20; Mark 10:20; Luke 18:18

  The rich young ruler's response to Jesus concerning the command-
ments involves the use of φυλάσσω. Whereas Matthew and Luke both use
the aorist active ἐφύλαξα, Mark uses the aorist middle. "Teacher, I
have kept (ἐφυλάξαμην) all these things from my youth" (Mark 10:20).
Leddusire, finding a semantic difference, attempts to explain this in
terms of a dative middle model which has the inference of an affected
subject. He attempts to gather further contextual support from the
young ruler's questioning of Christ.

> The exegetical distinction is also supported in the context, which
> follows the original question in Mark 10:17, "What (else) must I
> do?" On the other hand, the active sentence of Matthew is in

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[1] R. C. H. Lenski, <u>The Interpretation of St. Mark's Gospel</u>
(Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 616. He views both
the aorist and present as timeless tenses with any intended difference
of meaning as unlikely.

[2] <u>BAGD</u>, p. 254. However, no difference is stated in <u>LSJ</u>, p. 539.
The shift of tense from the present of ὁ ἐμβαπτόμενος to the aorist
ὁ ἐμβάψας cannot be accounted for by deponency. The verb ἐμβάπτω is not
a middle deponent form for the present but an active form for the aorist.

[3] Ezra P. Gould, <u>A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the
Gospel according to St. Mark</u>, ICC ed. C. A. Briggs, et al. (New York:
Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), p. 262. His suggestion is not based on
simply the voice difference.

answer to the question in Matt 19:16, "what is a good action I can perform?" and can be paraphrased as "why, I've already done that."[1]

Yet the following three questions posed by the young man and directed to Christ have little, if any, difference.

1. "Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life" (Matt 19:16)

2. "Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17)

3. "Good teacher, what shall I do to obtain eternal life?" (Luke 18:18)

In fact, the only difference between the question in Mark and Luke is the use of ἔχω rather than κληρονομέω in the ἵνα clause. Thus, the cause of Mark's use of the middle ἐφυλάξαμην is not to be found in this question. Nor is the suggestion that Matthew and Luke independently corrected Mark's use of ἐφυλάξαμην particularly cogent.[2] Brown cautiously concludes that, while the middle may have the same force as the active, it may also mean guard for oneself, store, or be careful.[3] If Mark intends to clarify that the young ruler has emphasized his guarding of the commandments in relation to himself, it is extremely difficult to detect this from contextual clues. The contexts, including specific details, are nearly identical by each author.

Matthew 26:51; Mark 14:47

These two writers, while reporting a specific detail of a single event, selected different voices for its transmission. When describing

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[1] Leddusire, "Middle Voice," pp. 136-38.

[2] Vincent Taylor, <u>The Gospel according to St. Mark</u>, 2d ed. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1966), p. 428. He not only assumes the primacy of a Marcion source, but also assumes misuse of the middle by Mark. However, if the middle is interchangeable with the active, it is simply disused, not used incorrectly (Simcox, <u>Language of the New Testament</u>, p. 96).

[3] <u>DNTT</u>, s.v. "Guard," by C. Brown, 2:134.

the drawing of the short sword from its scabbard, Matthew uses
$\dot{\alpha}\pi\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\pi\alpha\sigma\epsilon\nu$, but Mark employs $\sigma\pi\alpha\sigma\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\nu o\varsigma$. Again, it is Mark who consis-
tently uses the middle form when there is a voice form difference.[1]
Matthew's use of the prefix $\dot{\alpha}\pi\grave{o}$ with the verb does not add any additional
significance to $\sigma\pi\acute{\alpha}\omega$.[2]

Summary

From these synoptic passages, several factors emerge. First,
various verbal features <u>may</u> vary without any semantic significance.[3]
These include the choice of a particular verb, the selection of a speci-
fic tense of the same verb, the selection of a specific voice of the
same verb, and the addition of a prefix to the verb. Mark has been the
only author known who consistently uses the middle when parallel synoptic
accounts have the active. Thus, it appears that Mark may simply have a
stylistic preference for the middle without an intended difference of
meaning, compared to the active, for no intended difference is
discernible.[4]

Paired Sentences

Additional support for the theory of voice interchangeability
has been gathered from sentences which, although contextually disparate,

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[1] Although Luke does not include this detail, John includes it
with the usage of a different but synonymous verb ἕλκω.

[2] <u>BAGD</u>, pp. 98, 761.

[3] For other conspicuous grammatical differences without apparent
semantic significance, see Alfred Plummer, <u>An Exegetical Commentary on
the Gospel according to St. Matthew</u>, 3d ed. (London: Robert Scott, 1911),
p. xiii.

[4] For a different conclusion, see Leddusire, "Middle Voice," p.
135. While recognizing Matthew's stylistic preference for the active
as undisputed, he views this fact as irrelevant to the theory of voice.

use the same verb. A verb in fts active voice form is paired with an occurrence of its middle form in a different context.[1]

Using εὑρίσκω

The perfect active infinitive εὑρήκεναι is cited as having no semantic difference as compared to the aorist middle participle εὑράμενος (Rom 4:1, Heb 9:12).[2] However, this assertion is wholly arbitrary and subjective. Appropriate criteria for the establishment of voice interchange, i.e., parallelisms, contextual similarity or identity, and stylistic preferences, are lacking.[3] The middle voice of εὑράμενος can be clearly distinguished from the active.[4]

Using ὑστερέω

In a similar vein, the active of ὑστερέω in Hebrews 4:1, 12:15 is viewed as possessing exactly the same significance as the middle in Romans 3:32.[5] Again, the same objections regarding εὑρίσκω are applicable to this methodology. No evidence is cited by either Winer or Simcox to support their assertions.

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[1] These same. verbs are also acknowledged by others to have semantic difference according to voice form. For example, note the lexical listings of φαίνω in <u>BAGD</u>, pp. 851-2.

[2] Simcox, <u>Language of the New Testament</u>, p. 96.

[3] This problem is further compounded by the fact that non-finite forms, especially infinitives, do not always reflect the force of the voice. Gildersleeve, <u>Syntax of Classical Greek</u> 1:63; Leddusire, "Middle Voice," p. 42.

[4] Brooke F. Wescott, <u>The Epistle to the Hebrews</u> (New York: Macmillan Co., n.d.; reprint ed. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), p. 259.

[5] Simcox, <u>Language of the New Testament</u>, p. 95; Winer, <u>A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament</u>, p. 260. Winer more generally concludes that the middle and the active of this verb are always synonymous in NT.

Using Additional Verbs

Although they are cited without specific passage indicators,
the following verbs have been purported as having interchangeable voice
forms without semantic distinction: λάμπω; ὁράω; σέβω; and φαίνω.[1]

Summary

From these passages and specific verbs, it appears that the
assumption of voice interchangeability has a very weak foundation. Sup-
portive passages are tenuous and infrequent. It is possible, although
not probable, that in each of the cited passages the middle voice conveys
in some degree or manner an intensification of the relationship between
the subject and the verbal action. However, the voice interchange in
parallel synoptic passages renders this as improbable. Yet each specific
passage must be examined in light of its own contextual factors, and
broad generalizations promoting interchangeability should be avoided.
For while the middle and active of αἰτέω appear to be semantically dis-
tinct in James 4:2, 3, this is not the case in 1 John 5:14, 15.

Active for Middle

The assumption that the active is used for the middle as sup-
portive of interchangeability rests on several slightly different
foundations.

Based on Similarity of Meaning

Concerning classical usage, Smyth observes that the active is
often used for the middle when it is not of practical importance to

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[1] Thompson, A Syntax of Attic Greek, p. 160; James T. Allen, The
First Year of Greek (New York: Macmillan Co., 1932), p. 310; Winer,
A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament, pp. 256-57. As in the
previous examples, no solid evidence is cited.

mark the interest of the subject in the action. The active implies what the middle expresses.[1] Regarding Attic usage in particular, it is noted that the active is used <u>like</u> the middle.[2] Inarguably, a significant difference of meaning between the active and middle forms of the verbs cited in their examples is not evident.[3] However, similarity in meaning does not necessarily establish identity of usage in general. As Turner observes, the verbal idea inherent in certain verbs is not significantly expressed as a difference in either active or middle.

> For practical purposes, it mattered very little whether the active or middle voice was used with verbs of a certain type. "I make a request" is active, but is not profoundly different from the middle, "I make a request for myself." <u>It defines the idea more narrowly</u> (emphasis mine), but in normal conversation, either active or middle would do.[4]

But even as Turner recognizes, this does not mean that no subtle nuance may be intended. Thus, rather than assuming that the active is used for the middle, it seems better to view this phenomenon as a result of the verbal idea. Certain verbal ideas do not have a significant semantic shift in active to middle, but subtle nuances may be detected.

<u>Based on Classical Precedent</u>

Some verbs are thought to appear in the active where the middle would be expected in classical Greek.[5] The most notable example is ποιέω with a verbal noun. In classical Greek, there are numerous

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[1] Smyth, <u>Greek Grammar</u>, p. 393.
[2] Thompson, <u>Syntax of Attic Greek</u>, p. 167.
[3] μεταπέμπω, δηλόω, διδάσκω, μεταχειρίζω, βιάζω, παρέχω, ὁμολογέω.
[4] Turner, <u>Grammatical Insights</u>, p. 163.
[5] <u>GNTG</u>, 3:56.

differences between ποιεῖν and ποιεῖσθαι with verbal nouns in which the active gives the literal side "to fashion," "to bring about," whereas the middle serves to form a periphrasis with the verbal noun for the corresponding verb.[1] This periphrasis, composed of ποιεῖν in the middle voice plus a noun denoting action as an object, is equivalent to a simple verb.[2] However, λόγον ποιεῖσθαι (to make a speech) may correspond to λεγεῖν, but it is not the same as λόγον ποιεῖν (to compose a speech). Similarly, ὁδὸν ποιεῖσθαι (to make one's way) may correspond to ὁδευεῖν, but this is not the same as ὁδὸν ποιεῖν (to construct a road). Thus, using this criterion, the middle would be expected in Mark 2:23, but in fact the active occurs. "And his disciples began to make their way (ὁδὸν ποιεῖν) while plucking the heads of grain" (Mark 2:23). Yet, this assumption that the classical distinction is lost may be challcnged.[3] A possible explanation is that the disciples began to make a way, i.e., to open a path, by plucking the ears of corn.[4] But this cannot be maintained as an inviolable rule, for the LXX clearly uses ὁδὸν ποιεῖν

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[1] Gildersleeve, <u>Syntax of Classical Greek</u>, p. 69; Smyth, <u>Greek Grammar</u>, p. 391.

[2] <u>BG</u>, pp. 72-73. Examples cited as evidence include πορείαν ποιεῖσθαι for πορεύεσθαι, μνεῖαν ποιεῖσθαι for μεμνῆσθαι. Also see James L. Boyer, "Notes on 2 Peter and Jude" (Winona Lake, IN, 1977), p. 10. Perhaps the middle sense of βεβαίαν ποιεῖσθαί should not be pressed, since Greek idiom in classical Greek required the middle. In the NT both active and middle forms of ποιεῖν are used in this peri-phrastic construction.

3 Heinrich A. W. Meyer, <u>Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospels of Mark and Luke</u>, vol. 2 trans. Robert E. Wallis in <u>Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament</u>, rev. and ed. William P. Dickson (London: T. and T. Clark; reprint ed., Winona Lake: Alpha Publications, 1979), p. 33; Alexander B. Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," in vol. 1 of <u>Expositor's Greek Testament</u>, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co_, 1979), pp. 354-55.

[4] Meyer, <u>Critical and Exegetical Hand-book to the Gospels of Mark and Luke</u>, p. 33.

in the sense of <u>to make one's way, to journey</u>. "Then the man departed
from the city, from Bethlehem of Judah, to dwell wherever he might find
a place, and he came to the hill district of Ephraim to the house of
Micah <u>as he made his journey</u> (τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὴν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ)" (Judg 17:8).[1]
Thus, the criterion of a classical precedent may be used to establish
either view, and it is a tenuous standard for the determination of voice
interchange without semantic distinction. Even if ὁδὸν ποιεῖν means to
make one's way in Mark 2:23, this only demonstrates a difference of
classical and koine usage. It does not establish the notion of inter-
changeability in the NT.

<u>Based on Different Construction</u>

In the NT, a verb in the active voice with a reflexive pronoun
is numerically predominant over the direct reflexive usage of the middle
voice.[2] These two different constructions have been equated in terms of
semantic significance in the NT.[3] In Luke 16:9, ἑαυτοῖς ποιήσατε might
have been fully expressed by one word, ποιήσασθε.[4] Similarly, the dif-
ference between προσέχετε ἑαυτοῖς and φυλάσσεσθε is viewed as minimal
in Luke 12:1, 15.[5] Yet, Robertson's conclusion that the use of the

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[1] Alfred Rahlfs, ed. <u>Septuginta</u>, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Wurttem-
bergische Bibelanstalt, 1935), p. 476.

[2] Alfred S. Geden and William E. Moulton, eds. <u>A Concordance to
the Greek Testament</u>, 5th ed. rev. Harold K. Moulton (Edimburgh: T. and
T. Clark, 1978), pp. 240-44.

[3] <u>BGHG</u>, 2:398.

[4] Samuel Green, <u>Handbook to the Grammar of the Greek New Testa-
ment</u> (New. York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1880), p. 293. However, the
numerical dominance of active voice with reflexive pronoun in koine
seems to indicate a loss of the directly reflexive sense in most cases.

[5] <u>GNTG</u> 1:157. Perhaps the reflexive construction is slightly
more emphatic.

reflexive pronoun with the active bears more sharply the reflexive relation than the mere middle has more justification.[1] For as early as Homer, the reflexive forms are occasionally used with the middle to more clearly bring out the reflexive notion.[2] Regardless of how closely the two constructions are identified in meaning this does not establish the notion of interchangeability. For the active voice per se is not equated with the middle, but rather the active with reflexive pronoun.

Summary

Therefore, in summary, the assumption of active for middle usually stands without warrant. Certain verbal ideas may be significantly different in their active as compared to middle voices, but this is due to the nature of the verbal idea. Also the appeal to classical usage is a two-pronged argument that may validate either position. However, even if the active is used where a middle might appear more appropriate in classical usage, the only fact established is that of a difference between koine and classical. The notion of interchangeability in the NT has not been supported. Finally, a difference of construction with identical or very similar meaning also fails to support voice interchange. Jannaris' conclusion that the use of the active instead of the middle occurs times without number is unwarranted.[3]

Passive as Middle

The aorist passive of some active verbs may have a reflexive or middle sense.[4] Whereas φαίνω means show, ἐφάνην showed myself,

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[1] GLHR, p. 802. Also, see BG, p. 75.
[2] Gildersleeve, Greek Syntax, p. 68. In the NT, note Acts 7:21, 20:24, 1 Tim 3:13; Titus 2:7. However, this phenomenon usually occurs with deponents.
[3] HGG, p. 364. His numerous NT illustrations usually involve ποιέω.
[4] Smyth, Greek Grammar, p. 222. He identifies these verbs as middle passives.

appeared. The same type of semantic shift is true of εὐφραίνω, κινέω, and χαίρω. However, this phenomenon appears to be adequately accounted for by the historical development of the θην aorist. The passive idea was not always the original sense, and hence, in NT times, the passive idea is not perceptible in these verbs.[1] This does not support voice interchange in the sense that the middle and passive voices are used interchangeably. Instead, these passives are simply used with a mild reflexive sense. The middle and passive of the same verb do not occur in parallel passages with semantic identity.

<div align="center">Divisions</div>

In this section, except for deponents, fall the usages of the middle voice which do not overlap in meaning with the active and passive voices. In order to analyze the various usages, it is a matter of convenience to refer to the divisions of the middle voice constructed by grammarians. However, these divisions appear, as Robertson maintains, more or less arbitrary and unsatisfactory.[2] Almost every grammarian differs to a certain extent in his terminology and categorization, for the Greeks themselves did not need or possess such divisions. Grammarians have listed as few as two to as many as nine categories.[3] Furthermore, Green calls the reflexive usage direct or indirect, whereas

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[1] GNTG 1:161.
[2] GLHR, p. 806. Also, see MGNT, p. 158.
[3] HGG, pp. 360-61. He places all usages in either a directly reflexive or an indirectly reflexive category. For nine categories, see William W. Goodwin, Greek Grammar, rev. Charles B. Gulick (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1930).

Brooks and Winbery classify the same phenomenon as dynamic or intensive.[1] However, this is not an indictment against grammarians, for the categories are erected for analytic and didactic purposes. Even Dana and Mantey, who employ a taxonomic approach, offer the following warning.

> An analysis of the uses of the middle is of necessity more or less arbitrary. No rigid lines of distinction can in reality be drawn. Distinctions there are, however, and the following analysis is proposed as indicating the main lines of difference.[2]

Furthermore, when recognizing distinct nuances of usage of the middle voice, it is helpful to employ a distinctive term to describe the particular phenomenon of language. However, by, no means does this mean that these categories are an essential feature of the fundamental significance of the middle voice. The middle voice per se only relates an intensification of the relationship between the subject and the action expressed by the verb. The degree or manner of intensification may be mild or acute, and the determination of the intensification is in terms of a particular context and the meaning of a verb.[3] Thus, these categories are of usage and not of features inherent in the middle voice alone.

Since the categories are defined differently by grammarians, a somewhat arbitrary selection of the terminology and categorization of one author will be consistently employed in order to avoid confusion. As Robertson's six categories are generally defined and thoroughly

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[1] Green, Handbook to the Grammar of the Greek Testament, p. 292. This taxonomical confusion repeatedly occurs among grammarians.

[2] NGNT, p. 158.

[3] Ibid., p. 158.

illustrated, they will conveniently serve as the basis for an analysis of usage.[1]

Direct Middle

In the directly reflexive usage, the intensification of the subject to verbal action is such that the action is directly upon or to the subject. Although Jay denies this category, and Moulton only accepts one possible example in ἀπήξατο, Robertson offers over twenty illustrations.[2] However, over one-half of these examples may also be identified as passive and are questionable.[3] Thus, although a directly reflexive sense does occur in the NT, the number of occurrences is extremely small.[4]

Causative or Permissive Middle

The labeling of the middle voice as causative appears to be unwarranted.[5] The active voice is also designated as causative, but as both Robertson and Jannaris observe, this feature is not due to the voice.[6] In addition, this feature is common to all languages.[7] If transitiveness is to be properly separated from the notion of voice,

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[1] GLHR, p. 106. Even Robertson follows these divisions merely for convenience.
[2] Ibid., pp. 806-08.
[3] For example, note the verbs ποτάσσεσθε, δογματίζεσθε, and ἀναραύεσθε.
[4] MGNT, p. 158.
[5] Although Robertson does not explicitly define the term causative, his citation of Gildersleeve gives the impression that he is following Gildersleeve's definition.
[6] GLHR, p. 801.
[7] HGG, p. 359.

then so also is causation.[1]

Neither is the permissive label particularly lucid. The permissive sense of the middle is considered as closely allied to the causative and approaches the passive.[2] This permissive middle has been more clearly defined as representing the agent as voluntarily yielding himself to the results of the action, or seeking to secure the results of the action, or seeking to secure the results of the action in his own interest.[3] Simply stated, the action takes place by order or with permission of the subject.[4] Thus, the intensification of the relationship between subject and verbal action is such that the subject permits or allows the action. Again, it should be noted that this is derived from the context and the root idea of the verb. Δανίσασθαι and μισθώσασθαι appear to be valid examples of this usage (Matt 5:42; Matt 20:1).[5]

Indirect

In this usage the subject is represented as doing something for or by himself. This indirect usage is quite varied and abundant in the NT. Often the subject is merely highlighted as the doer of the action. This, along with the dynamic category, is very vague, and perhaps the two should be combined. For even Robertson finally concludes concerning this category that each word and its context must determine the result.[6]

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[1] Thompson, Syntax of Attic Greek, p. 162. Also see GLHR, p. 809. The causative idea in ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ παντὰ ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ is not due to the voice, but to the verb itself (Eph 1:10).

[2] GLHR, p. 809.

[3] MGNT, p. 160.

[4] Winer, A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament, p. 254.

[5] GLHR, p. 809.

[6] Ibid., p. 809.

In fact, the exact relation of the indirectly reflexive usage must be perpetually varied if the sense of the middle is to be appropriate to the particular example.[1]

Reciprocal

An interchange of effort between the members of a plural subject may be expressed by the middle voice.[2] This usage appears to be semantically equivalent to the active voice with a reciprocal pronoun.[3] The LXX quotation of διεμερίσαντο ἑαυτοῖς from Psalm 21:19 is given as διεμερίσαντο ἑαυτοις in John 19:24, but is only stated as διεμερίσαντο without the reciprocal pronoun in Matthew 27:35. Therefore, in Matthew the middle appears to be clearly used in either a reciprocal or distributive sense.

Redundant

In this usage both the pronoun and the middle occur.[4] This redundance also exists in classical Greek, and it may represent more clearly the reflexive force in some cases.[5] Overlap within these categories is apparent, for διεμερίσαντο ἑαυτοῖς, although being reciprocal, also falls within this class (John 19:24).

Dynamic or Deponent

Whereas certain grammarians have a separate category for dynamic and for deponent, Robertson combines them.[6] Gildersleeve's remark that

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[1] GNTG, 1:157.
[2] MGNT, p. 160.
[3] GLHR, p. 810.
[4] Ibid., p. 811.
[5] Gildersleeve, Syntax of Classical Greek, 1:68.
[6] GLHR, p. 811. Also see Thompson, Syntax of Attic Greek, p. 161.

this is the drip-pan or πανδέκτης middle that is put at the bottom to catch the drippings of the other uses clearly demonstrates the difficulty of applying a label to every usage of the middle.[1]

However, it is important to recognize the phenomenon usually described by the term deponent. Deponent verbs have been defined as verbs which have no active forms, but only middle or passive forms with active meaning.[2] However, this definition is inadequate for advanced students because certain verbs, especially in the future tense, have both an active and a middle form with the middle voice form performing an active voice function. Both ἀκούσω and ἀκούσομαι are found in the NT, with ἀκούσομαι having an active voice function (Matt 12:19; Acts 3:22).[3] Rather than a facet of voice interchange, this phenomenon is closely parallel to verbs which are deponent only in the future. Thus the distinctive feature of a deponent is that its voice form is different from its voice function.[4] The active voice form may also occur when a middle form is deponent, although this is usually not the case.[5]

Identification

The identification of a deponent middle form is not simply limited to a lexicon. Whereas Thayer, Abbott-Smith and LSJ have an

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[1] Gildersleeve, "Stahl's Syntax of the Greek Verb," p. 277.
[2] J. Gresham Maclien, New Testament Creek for Beginners, (Toronto: Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 61.
[3] GNTG 1:154
[4] MGNT, p. 163.
[5] For additional verbs exhibiting this feature, see GNTG 1:154-55.

active form for προχειρίζω, LPGL and Sophocles have a deponent lexical listing.[1] BAGD lists it as active but observes that it is only middle deponent in the included literature.[2] The extent of the literature surveyed is a contributing factor in identifying a deponent middle. However, usage in the particular contextual environment is the key indication.[3]

Summary

Two areas of usage of the middle voice have been investigated. First, regarding the phenomenon of voice interchange without semantic difference, there is scant supportive evidence in the NT. An investigation of parallel synoptic passages as well as key individual texts does reveal voice interchange without semantic distinction as occurring. However, rather than being a general rule, this phenomenon must be determined per individual context.

Regarding the divisions of usage, they are not derived from any inherent feature of the middle voice per se. Contextual factors combined with the verbal idea are the foundation upon which these divisions have been erected. Naturally, therefore, they vary from grammarian to grammarian and are somewhat arbitrary. Yet, it is important to recognize the category of deponent, i.e., one whose distinctive feature is an

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[1] Joseph H. Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervon Publishing House, 1975), p. 554; Georg Abbott-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), p. 391; LSJ, p. 1541; Evangelinus A. Sophocles, Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods, vol. 2 (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 956.

[2] BAGD, p. 724. Also see λυμαίνω, παρρησιάζω, ἐπιλαμβάνω, ἐπεκτείνω, στρατεύω in the various lexicons.

[3] Concerning the problematic identification of παύσομνται as a possible deponent in 1 Cor 13:8, see Charles Smith, Tongues in Biblical Perspective (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1972), pp. 83-84.

active meaning with a middle form. Since for certain verbs the issue of deponency is not clear, further lexicography needs to be performed.

CHAPTER IV

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION

Before suggesting general guidelines, it is appropriate to
submit warnings that should remove artificial prescriptive rules.

Warnings

Over translation

Not a single grammarian has been encountered who advocates the
translation of every middle. Instead, they have appropriately warned
against overtranslating the middle voice by attempting to express every
single shade of meaning by an English word or phrase.[1] The variation of
the middle form may be too minute for translational discrimination.[2]
Stahl's attempts to translate the middle are cogently corrected by
Gildersleeve.

We translate ἰδεῖν to see and ἰδέσθαι to see with one's own
eyes; an overtranslation as ὀφθαλμοίσιν ὁρᾶν shows, but if there is
such virtue in ἰδέσθαι, why not in ἰδομάνος? Ah! the verse. Like
the rest of us, Stahl has to go into bankruptcy. Translation will
not suffice.[3]

Similarly, Smyth submits that the force of the middle in
ἀκούεσθαι, τίμασθαι, ἀριθμεῖσθαι, and ἀπορεῖσθαι cannot be reproduced
in translation. In some cases, it may not have even been felt.

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[1] Davis, Beginner's Grammar, pp. 36-37.
[2] GLHR, p. 804.
[3] Gildersleeve, "Stahl's Syntax of the Greek Verb," p. 278.

Rigid Rules

Against the definitive, exhaustive approach of erecting rigid

rules in any language stands the timely warning of Meyer-Myklestad.

> Within the limits imposed by the syntactic possibilities of a
> language, the speaker is a free agent: grammar cannot compel him to
> think this way or that. The sentence is instructive in that it shows
> the impossibility of prescriptive rules in grammar.[1]

Hence, it reasonably follows that no fixed rigid rule can be

maintained for the translation of a particular use of the middle voice.[2]

If the categories of usage themselves overlap and are somewhat arbitrary

and indistinct, how can a fixed rule be erected for that category?

Instead, each particular occurrence must be analyzed separately.

Unwarranted Dogmatism

In view of the difficulty involved in interpreting and trans-

lating many occurrences of the middle voice, it appears sound to conclude

with Moule that as a rule it is far from easy to come down from the

fence with much decisiveness on either side in an exegetical problem if

it depends on voice.[3] The assertion that the middle voice of $\pi\alpha\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\upsilon\nu\tau\alpha\iota$

demonstrates that tongues are no longer extant today is highly

gratuitous (1 Cor 13:8).[4] It is possible to reach a valid conclusion

based on partially erroneous exegetical reasoning since that conclusion

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[1] Johannes Meyer-Myklestad, <u>An Advanced English Grammar for Students and Teachers</u> (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), p.

[2] <u>GLHR</u>, p. 810.

[3] Moule, <u>An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek</u>, p. 24. However, for four arguments against this conclusion, see Leddusire, "Middle Voice," p. 135. Since his presupposition that generative transformational grammar is the only adequate framework for voice study problems has been questioned, his conclusions are unconvincing.

[4] Again, for cogent argumentation, see Smith, <u>Tongues in Biblical Perspective</u>, pp. 83-84.

may be demonstrably valid via other argumentation. But this does not condone improper methodology and unwarranted dogmatism that will normally yield unsupportable results.

Authorial and Geographical Variations

Moulton's conclusion that usage inevitably varied in different localities and between different authors appears sound.[1] From the parallel synoptic passages, it has been suggested that Mark's use of the middle compared to the active in other passages may simply be a stylistic feature. Furthermore, the voice interchange in James 4:2, 3 may be explained as the writer's stylistic variation adopted to balance the two active forms.[2] Perhaps also the usage of the middle would vary with the writer's Greek culture.[3]

Insistence on Classical Greek Distinctions

It appears hazardous to agree with the conclusion that the system of voices in general remained the same in the Hellenstic period, including the NT, as in the classical period of the language.[4] To the other extreme, Turner concludes that NT writers are not happy in their understanding of the middle voice according to classical standards.[5] One of the principal characteristics of NT Greek in general is the

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[1] GNTG 1:159.
[2] Adamson, James, p. 169. However, that is not the position adopted in this paper.
[3] GNTG 1:159.
[4] GOECL, p. 161.
[5] Turner, Grammatical Insights, pp. 106-7.

absence of classical Greek standards.[1] Although a middle form of a verb may have had a distinctive sense in classical Greek, this meaning should not be automatically carried over into the NT.[2]

Guidelines

Only two basic guidelines emerge from this study that appear to be helpful.

For Translation

Each particular occurrence of the middle voice must be weighed in terms of the historical development of the verb, primacy of context and the idea itself. These factors determine not only if there is any intensification between the subject and the action expressed by the verb, but also the degree and manner of intensification. Although one may not always be able to clearly express the middle voice by an English translation, one can seek to acclimate oneself to its mental atmosphere and feel its force by repeated exposure in different contexts with different verbs.[3] Moulton's suggestion that "He pardoneth" could be used to represent ἀφίεται, whereas "He pardoneth" expresses ἀφίησι, would be valid only if the particular context indicated that this was the emphasis. The same is true for Dana and Mantey's suggestion for the use of italics.[4]

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[1] DNTT, s.v. "Presuppositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament," by Murray J. Harris, 3:1171-1215. Many of his observations do not simply regard prepositions but the language as a whole.

[2] Observe ποιεῖν ὁδὸν in the discussion of Mark 2:23 by Bruce, "The Synoptic Gospels," pp. 354-55.

[3] MGNT, p. 157. In addition, general guidelines and an elementary procedure for translating Greek into English are offered by Gideon and Vaughan, Greek Grammar of the New Testament, pp. 231-32.

[4] MGNT, p. 159. The Greeks employed the middle where we must resort to italics.

For Interpretation

As it is difficult, if not impossible, to translate without interpretation, the preceding suggestions are applicable here. In addition, Blass' conclusion that on the whole the NT writers were perfectly capable of preserving the distinction between the active and the middle appears to be sound.[1] Thus, although there is some usage which may be synonymous in meaning among the voices, voice interchange is an infrequent phenomenon. The probable exegetical significance of a true middle as dictated per context should not be overlooked.

[1] Blass, <u>Grammar of New Testament Greek</u>, p. 186.

CONCLUSION

The grammatical category of voice is the relationship between
the subject of a sentence and the action expressed by the verb. For the
sake of clarity and consistency, it is advantageous to define the three
Greek voices in terms of this relationship. The notion of general
reflexivity, although an apparent feature of the middle voice, does not
elucidate the nature of this relationship. General reflexivity is vague
and imprecise, and does not considerably aid one's comprehension. In
addition, the concepts of middle signification and transitiveness are
either inadequate or irrelevant regarding voice meaning. Although the
concepts of special advantage and subject participation in the results
may be involved at times, these ideas are not inherent to voice itself.
Historical argumentation and usage remove the idea that the middle voice
is middle in meaning between active and passive. Instead, a basic notion
of the middle voice as an intensification in some manner or degree of
the relationship between the subject and the action expressed by the
verb serves as a valid guideline. The precise nature of this intensifi-
cation between subject and verbal action is not indicated by the middle
voice per se. The nature of the intensification must be derived from
the context, the historical evolution of the verb, and the verbal idea
itself. Thus, even though this basic concept regarding the middle voice
occurs in the majority of NT true middles, it may be absent or modified
as indicated by these factors.

Concerning the controversy regarding voice interchange without

semantic distinction, the phenomenon does appear to exist but in a very limited number of cases. An investigation of parallel synoptic passages and key texts with voice interchange reveals that no apparent distinction is intended in certain cases. However, no general rule of thumb is available regarding this voice variation. For in one passage an intended semantic shift can be detected, but in another passage no semantic distinction is apparent.

Regarding the divisions of the middle voice, they are not derived from the middle voice per se. Contextual factors and the verbal idea are the foundation upon which these categories have been erected. The divisions are not rigid and definitive, but are somewhat arbitrary and overlap. The division of deponency is the most important category which includes middle voice forms with an active function. The identification of a deponent is not simply via lexicons, but in certain questionable cases further lexicography is needed.

Several warnings regarding translation and interpretation have emerged from this study. The middle voices cannot always be expressed by means of translation. Certain verbal ideas per se do not suggest that this is possible, and apparently the Greeks did not always intend a major difference. At times the variation of the middle from the active is so minute it is difficult to know if one has properly recognized an intended distinction. In view of this, it is difficult to be decisive in an exegetical problem if it depends on voice.

Also an author may use a specific voice as a stylistic feature, but this is not a general rule. However, it does warn against establishing principles without considering possible authorial tendency or preference.

Finally, classical Greek distinctions <u>per se</u> should not be used to determine NT usage. Examples contrary to classical usage do appear. A distinctive classical meaning for a middle voice should not be automatically carried over into the NT.

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