Aorist voice patterns in the diachrony of Greek

The New Testament as a sample of Koine

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Abstract

This paper deals with the aorist voice system in NT Greek and focuses on middle-passive markers, namely middle inflection, e.g. in the middle sigmatic aorist, and affixes $-\eta/-\theta\eta-$, in the so-called passive aorist. The research is corpus-based and investigates the occurrences of ca. 1800 verbal items. According to the grammarians, in the NT both middle and passive aorists spread. The present study confirms this observation by providing a comprehensive account of the distribution of these forms, but also shows how they have functionally reorganised. Passive aorists spread at the expense of middle aorists in all kinds of intransitive constructions, namely passive, unaccusative, and reflexive, whereas middle aorists are either found in transitive middles, e.g. possessive, benefactive etc., or occur as deponent verbs in both transitive and intransitive clauses. The parameter transitive vs intransitive appears to be relevant for this functional reorganisation.

Keywords

Ancient Greek – aorist – voice – middle – passive – deponent – New Testament

1 Introduction

This paper deals with the verbal category of voice in Koine Greek and focuses on the aorist. As Browning (1983) and Horrocks (2010) pointed out, the aorist underwent major changes in voice from Ancient to Modern Greek: “the endings of the aorist middle $(-(\sigma)\acute{\alpha}\mu\eta\nu [(s)\acute{\alpha}me:n], -\acute{\omicron}\mu\eta\nu [-\acute{\omicron}me:n], \text{etc.})$ were increasingly replaced by those of the aorist passive $(-(\theta)\eta\nu [-(t^h)e:n], \text{etc.})$ ” (Horrocks 2010: 103) and, some centuries later, the replacement led to “[t]he reduction

of the three voices of Classical Greek to two" (Browning 1983: 30). The avoidance of middle aorists increased over the centuries and overlapped with the collapse of the functional distinction between aorist and perfect. In the early Byzantine period, for instance, the perfect γέγονα 'I have become' replaced the middle aorist ἐγενόμην 'I became', which had already been in competition with the passive ἐγενήθην in the Koine (cf. Horrocks 2010: 256).

The aim of the paper is twofold. First, a synchronic analysis of the Hellenistic Greek system of voice is provided, through an in-depth investigation of the New Testament (henceforth NT). Second, some insights are developed concerning diachronic changes in the voice system from Classical to Hellenistic Greek. Since the language of the NT is "a reasonably close reflection of the everyday Greek of the majority of the literate population in the early centuries AD" (Horrocks 2010: 147), the NT offers a good sample for investigating the changes that occurred in Greek in the first centuries CE.

The data analysis concerns both quantitative and qualitative aspects. To carry out the quantitative analysis, all the aorist occurrences were collected, with special emphasis on middle and passive aorists. The search for all the relevant forms was made by combining a manual search through the NA28 edition of the Greek New Testament (text available on the website <http://www.nestle-aland.com/en/the-28-edition/>) with electronic tools (e.g. TLG, Perseus 4.0 released on www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/). The research was refined by using lexica, e.g. Kittel & Friedrich (1932–1936) and Thayer (1995). Our goal was to check how many middle aorists were replaced by passive aorists, how many were still functionally oppositive and how many were deponent or quasi-deponent forms. This quantitative analysis provides the basis for the qualitative one, which focuses on the values still retained by middle inflection in the Koine and the role of deponency within the voice system, with attention to aspects of both form and function.

Even though many studies have been devoted to the topic of voice, particularly middle voice, in Ancient Greek, most of them are not corpus-based, adopt a predominantly synchronic point of view, and mostly concern Homeric and Classical Greek.¹ The perspective of this study is different in both respects. The corpus-based research provides a picture of how the voice system is organised within a single, but entire text. Even though the results obtained concern only the text investigated, they presumably reflect the voice system of the language in the first centuries CE. Further research could carry out a

1 Cf. Risselada (1987), Bakker (1994), Rijksbaron (2002), Allan (2003, 2014a, 2014b), Benedetti (2005, 2006, 2017), Alexiadou & Doron (2012), and Tronci (2014) who, though adopting different perspectives, provide accounts of the voice in its entirety.

corpus-based analysis of texts contemporary to the NT, with the aim of giving a more complete description of the voice system(s) in Koine and Hellenistic-Roman Greek. Some differences may also be found from one text to another, depending on the language register, the regional varieties, the speakers'/writers' knowledge of language and further sociolinguistic parameters. The issue of sociolinguistic variation might also be dealt with by comparing the texts which compose the NT, e.g. Gospels vs Acts vs Letters, which are different in terms of genre, style, author, and addressee, and, among Gospels, the more literary and Classical-shaped Gospel of Luke vs the more popular and spoken-like Gospel of Mark. However, this issue is too wide and complex to be dealt with here. The reader is referred to Porter (2000a, 2000b) for some preliminary analysis.

As far as the synchrony vs diachrony dichotomy is concerned, this study provides both a synchronic analysis of the aorist voice system in the NT and a diachronic comparison with both Homeric and Classical Greek.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In Section 2 a brief survey of the literature is provided. Section 3 is devoted to the analysis of data, by focusing on middle-inflected aorists in 3.1, passive aorists in 3.2 and some problematic cases in 3.3. In Section 4 the diachronic aspects of the aorist voice system are addressed, by comparing data from the NT with Homeric Greek (4.1) and Classical Greek (4.2). Finally some conclusions are drawn in Section 5.

Before starting the next section, a terminological remark is necessary. By passive and middle aorists, I mean the passive- and the middle-inflected aorists, namely the inflectional classes marked by the affixes $-\eta/-\theta\eta-$ and the middle inflection respectively, no matter what syntactic or semantic values these forms carry. Both labels are misleading when referring to the aorist, since not all passive aorists are true passives and middle aorists can overlap with the passive ones in some middle values, the term "middle" being applied in some recent studies, e.g. Kemmer (1993), also to some functional values regardless of the verbal forms which express them.

2 A brief survey of the literature

It is commonly agreed among scholars that the system of three voices—active, middle, and passive—in general remained the same in the NT, and more generally in Hellenistic Greek, as in the Classical language (cf. Moulton 1906: 158–160; Blass, Debrunner & Funk 1961: 161). Besides the common idea of continuity with respect to Classical Greek, scholars also remark that there existed some differences between Classical and NT Greek, concerning in particular the relation-

ship between middle and passive aorists. In his historical grammar, Jannaris (1897: §1478) stated (emphasis mine):

[The middle and passive voices] should sooner or later finish by being completely identified [...]. The final outcome was then that **the passive form soon gained ascendancy over the middle** and began to extrude it. One, probably also the primary, cause of this issue was that the subtle functions of the middle verb [...] had been lost sight of **in the popular language**, which in the great majority of cases dispensed altogether with such fine shades of thought [...], or, when indispensable, preferred to express them in a different, clearer mode, [...] that is by means of a special complement [...]. This circumstance naturally led to **the disuse and final disappearance of all indirect middle verbs** [...]. It is now obvious that, as this class had been the commonest, the number of middle verbs was reduced to a very small group as compared with the hosts of their rival or passive verbs.

In accordance with this analysis, McKay (1994: 26) stressed that the deponent middles of Classical Greek also take on passive morphology and he quotes the example of the deponent middle ἀπεκρίνατο ‘he replied’, which was replaced in the NT by “the normal Hellenistic aorist” ἀπεκρίθη ‘he replied’ (cf. §3.1). This example also occurs in Caragounis (2004: 152), who noted that the phenomenon “is old having begun to occur already in A [= Classical, LT] authors”. He also refers to Hatzidakis (1892: 193–194), who remarked that “[v]on vielen Verbis kannten aber auch die Attiker nur die Formen des Passivaoristus in medialer Bedeutung” (“for many verbs, however, even Attic authors used only passive aorists in middle meanings”), e.g. ἐδυνήθην ‘I was able’, ἠγέρθην ‘I woke’, ἐκοιμήθην ‘I fell asleep’, ἐχορέεσθην ‘I satisfied myself’, ᾤήθην ‘I believed’, ἐπειράσθην ‘I tried’, ἐσεβάσθην ‘I was afraid’, ἐχάρην ‘I rejoiced’, etc. This view is also shared by Aubrey’s (2016: 573) study, which is devoted to the topic of voice in Hellenistic Greek: “[f]rom Homeric to Classical and into Hellenistic, -(th)ē-slowly expanded in two directions: (1) enveloping the semantically and syntactically passive events, and (2) encroaching on and gradually displacing sigmatic middles as the marking of choice for certain middle event types”.

Some scholars also remarked that middle aorists were still abundant in NT Greek. This statement seems to conflict with the idea that passive aorists spread at the expense of the middle ones. Blass, Debrunner & Funk (1961: 161), for instance, pointed out that in NT Greek there is a “tendency to merge the middle and the passive into a single voice”, formally represented by the passive aorist, and that “NT authors in general preserve well the distinction between middle

and passive” (1961: 165). Robertson (1934: 809) stated that “[i]n the flourishing period of the language [i.e. Classical Greek, LT] this [i.e. indirect middle, LT] was by far the most frequent use, but it finally faded before the active and the intensive (reflexive) pronoun or the passive. [...] But in general the indirect middle is abundant and free in the N.T.”

Summing up, two facts have been considered essential with respect to the aorist voice system of the NT: the spread of the “passive” aorists, which increasingly replaced the middle aorists, on the one hand, and the abundance of the middle aorists, on the other hand. Even though these two facts might appear to be inconsistent, this is not so. The fact that both classes are robustly attested in the NT seems to be in line with the state of affairs in Classical Greek. However, their functional distribution has changed with respect to Classical Greek. Our aim is to investigate the distribution of the two classes, in terms of both forms and functions, in order to determine the role of both inflectional opposition (middle vs active endings) and affixes contrast (-η-/-θη- vs -σα-) in the aorist voice system of NT Greek.

3 Analysis of data

The database for this research comprises 1838 verbal items (*types*) and a larger number of *tokens*. Some *types* are *hapax legόμενα* in the NT and are exclusively inflected in the present stem, e.g. γυμνιτεύω ‘I am naked’, κουφίζω ‘I am light, I relieve’, λυμναίνομαι ‘I outrage’, μηχύνομαι ‘I delay’. The *types* attested in aorist forms amount to 1016 by taking into account only finite moods (indicative, subjunctive, optative and imperative) and to 1222 by also counting non-finite forms (infinitives and participles). For simplicity’s sake, our analysis only concerns finite forms.

Before turning to the analysis of voice, some rough quantitative data is useful. This data strictly concerns the level of forms, so “active”, “middle” and “passive” refer to the verb morphology. Within the 1016 verbal items inflected in the aorist, more than half (580 *types*) are exclusively inflected in the active voice, 104 in the middle voice and 121 in the passive voice. Some examples are ἀλλάσσω ‘I change’, ἀμαρτάνω ‘I go wrong’, ἐγγίζω ‘I bring near’, εἰσάγω ‘I lead into’, ἐκτείνω ‘I stretch out’, ἐντυλίσσω ‘I wrap up’, ἰσχύω ‘I am strong’, κλέπτω ‘I steal’, κλίνω ‘I cause to lean’ for the active voice, ἀμύνομαι ‘I defend’, ἄπτω ‘I touch’, ἀρνέομαι ‘I deny’, γεύομαι ‘I taste’, δέχομαι ‘I receive, welcome’, ἐργάζομαι ‘I work’, κομίζω ‘I receive’, κόπτω ‘I smite’ for the middle voice, and αἰσχύνομαι ‘I feel shame’, ἀπατάω ‘I deceive’, αὐλίζομαι ‘I lie in the courtyard’, βαρέω ‘I weight down, I depress’, βούλομαι ‘I desire’, δέομαι ‘I pray’, διαφθείρω ‘I destroy’, δυναμόω ‘I strengthen’,

TABLE 1 Distribution of voice markers in finite aorists

Finite aorist <i>types</i> : 1016			
Non-oppositive <i>types</i>		Oppositive <i>types</i>	
<i>Activa tantum</i>	580	Active vs middle	22
<i>Media tantum</i>	104	Active vs passive	167
<i>Passiva tantum</i>	121	Middle vs passive	13
		Active vs middle vs passive	9
Total	805		211

ἐρημοῦμαι ‘I set free’ for the passive voice. As can be seen, a large number of verbs which belong to the two latter classes are *media tantum*. Besides these forms, which do not feature any voice opposition, in the NT are also attested aorists which feature some voice opposition. The distribution is as follows. Only 9 *types* feature a tripartite opposition of active vs middle vs passive, e.g. βαπτίζω ‘I baptise’, ἐὐαγγελίζω ‘I bring good news’; the remaining 202 *types* show bipartite oppositions: active vs passive (167 *types*), active vs middle (22 *types*), and middle vs passive (13 *types*). See Table 1 for a summary.

In the following sections, I show the semantic and syntactic values of the three aorist voices in both their oppositive and non-oppositive uses. More emphasis is given to middle and passive voices, because in Hellenistic Greek they increased as *types* and entered into competition as strategies for marking middle meanings such as reflexive (e.g. *I washed myself*), unaccusative (*I grew*), benefactive (*I bought the book for myself*), possessive (*I touched my eyes*), etc.² The middle voice tended to correlate with middle and deponent transitives, whereas the passive voice spread as a marker of intransitive structures, namely

2 Terminology is not consistent in the field of voice studies, as syntactic and semantic notions are not distinguished from one another. Unaccusative and reflexive are syntactic notions, like the passive. Unaccusative corresponds more or less to anticausative. Benefactive and possessive are, rather, semantic notions and relate to the co-occurrence on the subject argument of the semantic roles of beneficiary and possessor, respectively. I refer to Kulikov (2010), who illustrates the different terminologies, and to Kulikov (2013) and Kulikov & Lavidas (2013), who account for the different voices in Greek and other Indo-European languages. Allan (2003) proposes a description of the middle voice in strictly semantic terms by distinguishing, for instance, the unaccusative middles in four semantic classes: (i) the Spontaneous Process middle, (ii) the Middle State/Process middle, (iii) the Body Motion middle, and (iv) the Collective Motion middle (see also Allan 2014b: 496–499). In this paper, however, I do not follow this classification.

passive and unaccusative. The productivity of middle and passive aorists is not comparable. The aorist middle became a non-oppositional marker, whereas the aorist passive extended as an oppositional marker with respect to the active voice, by also replacing the intransitive middles, especially the unaccusative and the reflexive.

3.1 *Middle aorists*

In my database, most of the middle aorists are deponent verbs, namely verbs with middle morphology and an active meaning in all forms of the paradigm. They amount to 89 *types*, e.g. ἀσπάζομαι ‘I greet’, δέχομαι ‘I receive, welcome’, διηγέομαι ‘I describe’, δύνάμαι ‘I am able’, ἐργάζομαι ‘I work’, ἰάομαι ‘I heal’, κτάομαι ‘I acquire’, ὀρχέομαι ‘I dance’, χαρίζομαι ‘I gratify’, and are the main group among the aorists exclusively attested in the middle voice in the NT (104 *types*). They are attested in both intransitive and transitive structures, e.g. ὀρχέομαι ‘I dance’ in (1a) and δέχομαι ‘I receive, welcome’ in (1b).

- (1) a. γενεσίῳ δὲ γενομένοις τοῦ Ἡρώδου
 birthday:DAT PTCL happened:PTCP ART.GEN Herod:GEN
 ὠρχήσατο ἡ θυγάτηρ τῆς
 dance:AOR.MID.3SG ART.NOM daughter:NOM ART.GEN
 Ἡρωδιάδος ἐν τῷ μέσῳ
 Herodias:GEN in ART.DAT middle:DAT
 ‘But on Herod’s birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before them’
 (*Matthew* 14:6)

- b. ὅτε οὖν ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν,
 when PTCL come:AOR.ACT.3SG to ART.ACC Galilee:ACC
 ἐδέξαντο αὐτὸν οἱ Γαλιλαῖοι
 welcome:AOR.MID.3PL 3SG.ACC ART.NOM Galileans:NOM
 ‘So when he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him’ (*John* 4:45)

The functional equivalence between the middle morphology of deponent verbs and the active morphology of non-deponent verbs had been already remarked on by Mayser (1906: 112) in his grammar on Ptolemaic Greek papyri and was recently emphasised by Lavidas & Papangeli (2007: 105) who state: “the active and the middle/passive transitive interchange without any difference in meaning since the Koine period”. Further evidence of this functional equivalence is given by the passive counterparts for the transitive deponents. In 9 of the 13 *types* which are inflected as both middle and passive, the morphological difference correlates with the functional opposition between transitive and

passive. They are ἀνατρέφω ‘I nourish’, θεάομαι ‘I see’, ἰάομαι ‘I heal’, κατεργάζομαι ‘I accomplish’, λογίζομαι ‘I reckon’, λυτροῦμαι ‘I redeem’, μωμάομαι ‘I blame’, ῥύομαι ‘I deliver’, and χαρίζομαι ‘I gratify’: an example is given in (2a)–(2b). In the remaining 4 verbs (ἀποκρίνομαι ‘I reply’, γίνομαι ‘I become’, διαλέγομαι ‘I reason’, ἐμβριμάομαι ‘I groan’), the voice difference appears to be meaningless; see (3a)–(3b):

- (2) a. ἐπετίμησεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ πνεύματι
 rebuke:AOR.ACT.3SG PTCL ART.NOM Jesus:NOM ART.DAT spirit:DAT
 τῷ ἀκαθάρτῳ, καὶ ἰάσατο τὸν παῖδα
 ART.DAT unclean:DAT and heal:AOR.MID.3SG ART.ACC boy:ACC
 ‘But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy’ (*Luke* 9:42)

- b. καὶ ἰάθη ὁ παῖς αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ
 and heal:AOR.PASS.3SG ART.NOM boy:NOM 3SG.GEN in ART.DAT
 ὥρᾳ ἐκεῖνῃ
 hour:DAT DEM.DAT
 ‘and the servant was healed at that hour’ (*Matthew* 8:13)

- (3) a. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτοῖς
 ART.NOM PTCL Jesus:NOM answer:AOR.MID.3SG 3PL.DAT
 ‘but Jesus answered them’ (*John* 5:17)

- b. ὁ δὲ Πιλάτος ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς
 ART.NOM PTCL Pilate:NOM answer:AOR.PASS.3SG 3PL.DAT
 λέγων
 saying:PTCP
 ‘and Pilate answered them, saying’ (*Mark* 15:9)

Out of the total number of 148 *types* inflected as middle aorists, 105 occur in biargumental structures and 43 in intransitive structures. Among the biargumental verbs, 99 are fully transitive and 6 occur with the genitive (ἀντιλαμβάνομαι ‘I help’, ἐπιλαμβάνομαι ‘I help’, τάσσω ‘I appoint’, φείδομαι ‘I spare’) or the dative (ὀνίναμαι ‘I buy’, χράομαι ‘I use’). A summary of these data is provided in Table 2.

Let us return to the issue of deponency, which has been debated ever since the 19th century (cf. Kühner & Gerth 1892: § 324; 1898: § 377) and has received renewed attention in recent years (cf. Lavidas & Papangeli 2007, Ladewig 2010, Grestenberger 2014, Campbell 2015). In particular, Lavidas & Papangeli propose an account of both semantic and syntactic approaches to deponency

TABLE 2 Distribution of middle aorists in
transitive vs intransitive structures

Middle aorists: 148 types	
In biargumental structures:	105
+ accusative (fully transitive)	99
+ genitive/dative	6
In intransitive structures	43

and an insightful diachronic analysis from Ancient to Modern Greek. As they cogently argue, the proposed unified analysis of deponent verbs in terms of either semantic features or syntactic parameters does not match with Greek data. According to their investigation, “the data [i.e. Greek diachronic data, LT] lack any systematic pattern: an initially deponent verb may have an active variant with identical interpretation that is used in parallel or, even, instead of the deponent” (Lavidas & Papangeli 2007: 116).³

In the light of these considerations, one could interpret as “quasi-deponent” the verbs in the database which feature middle morphology in all aorist occurrences of the NT, while not being elsewhere deponent, namely ἀπονίπτω ‘I wash’ (*hapax legómenon*), ἀποτίθῃμι ‘I put, lay down’, ἀσφαλίζω ‘I make sure’, and κολάζω ‘I punish’. Among the remaining *media tantum* aorists, ἅπτω ‘I touch’ and κομίζω ‘I receive’ are each attested only once with active morphology, ἅπτω in the present stem (*Luke* 15:8) and κομίζω in the aorist participle (*Luke* 7:37), and ἄρχω ‘I begin’ is attested only twice in the active voice (*Mark* 10:42 and *Romans* 15:12). For some of the remaining verbs, namely ἀπειλέω ‘I warn’, συμβάλλω ‘I help’, συμβουλεύω ‘I counsel’, ὑποστέλλω ‘I keep back’, there is no semantic difference between active and middle forms, whereas there is a difference for the last verbs of our list, namely καταρτίζω ‘I prepare’ vs καταρτίζομαι ‘I am perfect’, κείρω ‘I cut off (hair)’ vs κείρομαι ‘I am shaved’ and κόπτω ‘I cut’ vs κόπτομαι ‘I mourn’. For instance, the active forms (present stem) of κόπτω are transitive, e.g. (4a), whilst its middle forms (both aorists and imperfects) are transitive/intransitive, e.g. (4b): the meaning ‘to mourn, to mourn for’ of middle forms is presumably a semantic extension from the reflexive middle ‘to beat or strike oneself’.

3 For further insights into the issue, with special emphasis on *media tantum* futures, cf. also Tronci (2017).

- (4) a. ἄλλοι δὲ ἔκοπτον κλάδους ἀπὸ τῶν
 other:NOM PTCL cut:IMPF.ACT.3PL branches:ACC from ART.GEN
 δένδρων καὶ ἐστρώωνυσον ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ
 trees:GEN and spread:IMPF.ACT.3PL in ART.DAT road:DAT
 'and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road'
 (*Matthew* 21:8)
- b. Ἡυλήσαμεν ὑμῖν καὶ οὐκ ὠρχήσασθε·
 play:AOR.ACT.1PL 2PL.DAT and not dance:AOR.MID.2PL
 ἐθρηνήσαμεν καὶ οὐκ ἐκόψασθε
 sing:AOR.ACT.1PL and not mourn:AOR.MID.2PL
 'we played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge,
 and you did not mourn' (*Matthew* 11:17)

The semantic disjunction between active and middle forms of the same verb is evidence of the loss of the syntactic, i.e. diathetic, relationship between them (see below for further details). This phenomenon had already begun in Late Classical Greek and the new deponent verbs attested in Hellenistic Greek are evidence of this (cf. Lavidas & Papangeli 2007: 105–107).

In the NT, there are also aorists which feature oppositive middle inflection. They are less frequent than the *media tantum* aorists and they also occur in both intransitive and transitive structures. In (5a)–(5c) I provide examples of some oppositive values of the middle, namely possessive, benefactive and unaccusative:

- (5) a. λαβὼν ὕδωρ ἀπενίψατο τὰς χεῖρας
 taking:PTCP water:ACC wash:AOR.MID.3SG ART.ACC hands:ACC
 ἀπέναντι τοῦ ὄχλου
 before ART.GEN crowd:GEN
 '[Pilate] took some water, washed his hands before the crowd' (*Matthew* 27:24)
- b. ἐνοσφίσατο ἀπὸ τῆς τιμῆς, συνειδυῖς
 keep.back:AOR.MID.3SG from ART.GEN proceed:GEN knowing:PTCP
 καὶ τῆς γυναικός
 and ART.GEN wife:GEN
 '[Ananias] kept back for himself part of the proceeds with his wife's
 knowledge' (*Acts* 5:2)

- c. ὡς δὲ ἐγεύσατο ὁ ἀρχιτρίκλινος τὸ
 when PTCL taste:AOR.MID.3SG ART.NOM steward:NOM ART.ACC
 ὕδωρ οἶνον γεγενημένον
 water:ACC wine:ACC become:PTCP
 'When the head steward tasted the water that had been turned to wine'
 (*John* 2:9)

Paired middle vs active aorists are very rare in the NT; an example is (6):

- (6) a. καὶ χρόνῳ ἱκανῶ οὐκ ἐνεδύσατο ἱμάτιον
 and time:DAT long:DAT not wear:AOR.MID.3SG clothes:ACC
 'For a long time this man had worn no clothes' (*Luke* 8:27)
- b. ἐξέδυσαν αὐτὸν τὴν χλαμύδα καὶ
 strip:AOR.ACT.3PL 3SG.ACC ART.ACC robe:ACC and
 ἐνέδυσαν αὐτὸν τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ
 wear:AOR.ACT.3PL 3SG.ACC ART.ACC clothes:ACC 3SG.GEN
 'they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes back on him'
 (*Matthew* 27:31)

Much more frequent are the cases in which only the middle is attested, even though the verb is not deponent and the active aorist is elsewhere attested, for instance in Classical Greek, e.g. (7a)–(7b):

- (7) a. οὐχ ὑμεῖς με ἐξελέξασθε, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ
 not 2PL.NOM 1SG.ACC choose:AOR.MID.2PL but 1SG.NOM
 ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς
 choose:AOR.MID.1SG 2PL.ACC
 'You did not choose me, but I chose you' (*John* 15:16)
- b. οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ἐχάρησαν καὶ
 ART.NOM PTCL hearing:PTCP be.delighted:AOR.PASS.3PL and
 ἐπηγγείλαντο αὐτῷ ἀργύριον δοῦναι
 promise:AOR.MID.3PL 3SG.DAT money:ACC give:INF
 'When they heard this, they were delighted and promised to give him money' (*Mark* 14:11)

The distribution of middle aorists is evidence of the functional decline of middle inflection in Hellenistic Greek. Even though it is widespread in many verb forms, the occurrences in which middle inflection expresses some middle

values are very rare. It is preserved as a form, though it has lost its oppositive values. According to Caragounis (2004:152), middle inflection in its entirety, the present stem included, is no longer productive as a voice marker in NT Greek. In interpreting the passage 15:2 of the Gospel of Matthew, in which the middle present $\nuίπτονται$ [wash:PRS.MID.3PL] ‘they wash’ is combined with the object $τὰς$ [ART.ACC] $χεῖρας$ [hands:ACC] $αὐτῶν$ [3PL.GEN] ‘their hands’, Caragounis remarks: “[t]he use of the middle with an expressed object indicates that the feeling for the fine distinction between the active and the middle has been lost” and quotes as further evidence the passages *Acts* 7:58, 26:21, *Ephesians* 5:16, and *Titus* 2:7. In my opinion, there are some essential differences between the present middle and the aorist middle in the NT. The present middle preserved all the functions of middle inflection, from the intransitive (the passive and the unaccusative) to the transitive ones (see Tronci *forthcoming*, who investigates the functional distribution of the middle forms belonging to all tenses and moods in the Gospel of Matthew for a total number of 979 occurrences). The aorist middle continued to exist as a form but lost its main functional values, e.g. unaccusative and reflexive, which were increasingly expressed by the passive aorist. The present middle, instead, still correlated with the intransitive middle values and tended to be replaced by the active in transitive middle values, namely benefactive and possessive. The analysis of changes in voice morphology by Lavidas (2009: 108) is in line with this view: “[f]rom the Hellenistic period, the marking of the benefactive (‘personal interest’) meaning by non-active [i.e. middle, LT] morphology begins to be abandoned”.

3.2 *Passive aorists*

The distribution of passive aorists within the database is as follows: 121 verbs are exclusively inflected as passive aorists, 167 are coupled with active aorists, 13 with middle aorists, and 9 with both of them. This picture allows us to have a clearer idea concerning the functions of passive aorists in the NT. The main function is to express the passive, e.g. (8a), and the unaccusative, e.g. (9a), by means of opposition to active morphology, e.g. (8b) and (9b):

- (8) a. $Τότε \delta \quad \quad \quad \text{Ἰησοῦς} \quad \quad \quad \text{ἀνήχθη} \quad \quad \quad \text{εἰς τὴν}$
 then ART.NOM Jesus:NOM lead:AOR.PASS.3SG into ART.ACC
 $\xi\rho\eta\mu\omicron\nu \quad \quad \quad \text{ὕπὸ τοῦ} \quad \quad \quad \text{πνεύματος}$
 wilderness:ACC by ART.GEN spirit:GEN
 ‘Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness’ (*Matthew* 4:1)
- b. $\text{ἀνήγαγον} \quad \quad \quad \text{αὐτὸν} \quad \quad \quad \text{εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα} \quad \quad \quad \text{παραστήσαι τῷ}$
 lead:AOR.ACT.3PL 3SG.ACC to Jerusalem:ACC present:INF ART.DAT

κυρίῳ

Lord:DAT

‘[Joseph and Mary] brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord’ (*Luke 2:22*)

- (9) a. τότε ἠγέρθησαν πᾶσαι αἱ παρθένοι
 then weak.up:AOR.PASS.3PL QUANT.NOM ART.NOM virgins:NOM
 ἐκεῖναι καὶ ἐκόσμησαν τὰς λαμπάδας ἐαυτῶν
 DEM.NOM and trim:AOR.ACT.3PL ART.ACC lamps:ACC REFL.GEN
 ‘Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps’ (*Matthew 25:7*)
- b. καὶ προσελθόντες ἤγειραν αὐτὸν λέγοντες
 and coming:PTCP weak.up:AOR.ACT.3PL 3SG.ACC saying:PTCP
 ‘So they came and woke him up saying’ (*Matthew 8:25*)

The occurrence of the same verbal morphology in passives and unaccusatives is syntactically motivated. Both structures are characterised by the movement of an argument from underlying object status to subject status. The difference between the two clauses concerns the underlying subject of the clause; there is a subject present in the deep structure in the passive (whether expressed or absent in the surface structure), but one does not occur in the unaccusative (cf., among others, La Fauci & Tronci 2009). For instance, the anticausative events which occurred after the death of Jesus are shaped into a sequence of unaccusative passive aorists in the Gospel of Matthew (27: 51–53).

In some cases, the choice between passive and unaccusative is a matter of interpretation, e.g. in (10a) compared to the transitive in (10b). This fact is hardly surprising, since the two voices, not being formally distinguished in Greek, are not expected to diverge much in meaning either (cf. Jankuhn 1969: 18–25).

- (10) a. καὶ ἐθεραπεύθη ὁ παῖς ἀπὸ τῆς
 and heal:AOR.PASS.3SG ART.NOM boy:NOM from ART.GEN
 ὥρας ἐκείνης
 moment:GEN DEM.GEN
 ‘and the boy (was) healed from that moment’ (*Matthew 17:18*)
- b. καὶ πάντας τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας ἐθεράπευσεν
 and QUANT.ACC ART.ACC sick having:PTCP heal:AOR.ACT.3SG
 ‘and he healed all who were sick’ (*Matthew 8:16*)

The verb θαμβέομαι is a good example to illustrate the voice changes in Ancient Greek. The verb θαμβέω is attested in both present and aorist stems with active voice from Homer until Classical Greek, as shown by the aorist ἐθάμβησεν in (12b) and the imperfect ἐθάμβεον attested in Homeric poems, Pindar and Herodotus. The verb is commonly considered to be intransitive, the occurrences with a noun in the accusative commonly being interpreted as constructions with an accusative of relation, e.g. θάμβησαν [be.astounded:AOR.ACT.3PL] δ' [PTCL] ὄρνιθας [birds:ACC] (*Od.* 2:155) 'the people were seized with wonder at the birds'; τὸν [ART.ACC] ἐθάμβεον [be.astounded:IMPF.ACT.3PL] Ἄρτεμιν [Artemis:NOM] τε [PTCL] καὶ [and] θρασεῖ' [bold:NOM] Ἀθήνα [Athena:NOM] (*Pi. N.* 3:50) 'Artemis and bold Athena gazed at him with wonder'; τέρας [monstrous.thing:ACC] δ' [PTCL] ἐθάμβουν [be.astounded:IMPF.ACT.3PL] (*A. Supp.* 570) 'and they were astonished at the monstrous thing'. In the NT the verb is exclusively attested with non-active morphology, namely with passive morphology in the aorist, see (12a), and with middle morphology in the present stem, see (12c):

- (12) c. οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ ἐθαμβοῦντο ἐπὶ
 ART.NOM PTCL disciples:NOM be.astounded:IMPF.MID.3PL at
 τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ
 ART.DAT words:DAT 3SG.GEN
 'and the disciples were amazed at his words' (*Mark* 10:24)

Summing up, the verb θαμβέω was *activum tantum* in Homeric and Classical Greek⁴ and became deponent (*medium* or *passivum tantum*) in Post-Classical Greek. This phenomenon is part of a larger phenomenon which concerned many verbs throughout the history of the Greek language. According to Lavidas & Papangeli (2007: 108), "[n]ot all deponents display stable behaviour through the different stages of Greek. In many cases, the deponent verbs have changed to actives, and, in other cases, they have attracted other verbs from the class of actives". The syntactic and semantic behaviour of the verbs which changed from active to middle/passive and vice versa remains the same, because the change concerns only verb morphology; cf. Lavidas & Papangeli (2007: 121). Deponency does not involve diathesis, since the morphology of deponent verbs, be they *activa* or *media/passiva tantum*, is not oppositive.

4 The verb is especially attested in Homeric poems and in tragic authors, so it belongs to the poetic lexicon.

Let us now turn to the 71 types of *passiva tantum* aorists that belong to non-deponent verbs. Most of them are attested in the NT with both active and middle morphology in stems other than the aorist. As for the aorist, only the passive is attested. See for instance the present transitive of ἀνακρίνω ‘I judge’ vs the aorist passive in (13a), the future transitive of πληθύνω ‘I multiply’ in (13b) vs the aorist passive in (13c), the perfect transitive of πωράσκω ‘I sell’ in (13d) vs the aorist passive in (13e):

- (13) a. ἵνα ὑφ’ ὑμῶν ἀνακριθῶ ἢ ὑπὸ ἀνθρωπίνης
 COMP by 2PL.GEN judge:AOR.PASS.1SG or by human:GEN
 ἡμέρας· ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ ἐμαυτὸν ἀνακρίνω
 court:GEN but not REFL.ACC judge:PRS.ACT.1SG
 ‘[But with me it is a very small thing] that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself’ (1 *Corinthians* 4:3)

- b. χορηγήσει καὶ πληθυνεῖ τὸν σπῆρον
 supply:FUT.ACT.3SG and multiply:FUT.ACT.3SG ART.ACC seed:ACC
 ὑμῶν
 2PL.GEN
 ‘[He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food] will supply and multiply your seed for sowing’ (2 *Corinthians* 9:10)

- c. ἠϋξήσεν ὁ λαὸς καὶ
 increase:AOR.ACT.3SG ART.NOM people:NOM and
 ἐπληθύνθη ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ
 multiply:AOR.PASS.3SG in Egypt:DAT
 ‘the people increased and multiplied in Egypt’ (*Acts* 7:17)

- d. ἀπελθὼν πέπρακεν πάντα ὅσα
 going:PTCP sell:PF.ACT.3SG QUANT.ACC REL.ACC
 εἶχεν καὶ ἡγόρασεν αὐτόν
 have:IMPF.ACT.3SG and buy:AOR.ACT.3SG 3SG.ACC
 ‘[who, on finding one pearl of great value,] went and sold all that he had and bought it’ (*Matthew* 13:46)

- e. Διὰ τί τοῦτο τὸ μύρον οὐκ
 for Q.ACC DEM.NOM ART.NOM ointment:NOM not
 ἐπράθη τριακοσίων δηνάρων καὶ
 sell:AOR.PASS.3SG three.hundred:GEN denarii:GEN and

ἐδόθη πτωχοῖς;
 give:AOR.PASS.3SG poor:DAT
 'Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred *denarii* and given
 to the poor?' (*John* 12:5)

Within the database, only the verb χαίρω is inflected as a passive in the aorist stem and as an active in the present stem without any difference in meaning. In both cases it means 'to rejoice, to be glad' (on this verb, cf. Tronci 2005: 20, fn. 14):

- (14) a. καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος ἔχαιρεν ἐπὶ
 and QUANT.NOM ART.NOM people:NOM rejoice:IMPF.ACT.3SG at
 πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐνδόξοις τοῖς γινομένοις ὑπ'
 QUANT.DAT ART.DAT glorious:DAT ART.DAT produced:PTCP by
 αὐτοῦ
 3SG.GEN
 'and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by
 him' (*Luke* 13:17)

- b. ἐχάρησαν οὖν οἱ μαθηταὶ ἰδόντες
 rejoice:AOR.PASS.3PL PTCL ART.NOM disciples:NOM seeing:PTCP
 τὸν κύριον
 ART.ACC Lord:ACC
 'Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord' (*John* 20:20)

Among the 71 types of *passiva tantum* aorists, there are also some *hapax legόμενα*, namely διαλλάσσω (διηλλάγην 'I was reconciled'), διαλύω (διελύθην 'I was dispersed'), διανέμω (διενεμήθην 'I spread'), ἐξουθενέω (ἐξουδενήθην 'I was set at nought'), ἐπικαλύπτω (ἐπεκαλύφθην 'I was covered'), καταστρώννυμι (κατεστρώθην 'I was spread'), κληρώω (ἐκληρώθην 'I obtained an inheritance'), μετατρέπω (μετετρέπην 'I was turned'), μορφώω (ἐμορφώθην 'I was formed'), πλήσσω (ἐπλήγην 'I was struck'), πρίζω (ἐπρίσθην 'I was sawn in two'), τυμπανίζω (ἐτυμπανίσθην 'I was tortured'), ὑπολείπω (ὑπελείφθην 'I was left'), and some verbs which are attested in all stems with non-active morphology, namely passive morphology in the aorist and future, and middle morphology in the present, imperfect, future and perfect. A couple of examples of each type follow in (15a)–(15b) and (16a)–(16b) respectively:

- (15) a. Μακάριοι ὧν ἀφέθησαν αἱ
 blessed:NOM REL.GEN forgive:AOR.PASS.3PL ART.NOM

ἀνομίαι καὶ ὧν ἐπεκαλύφθησαν αἱ
 lawless.deeds:NOM and REL.GEN cover:AOR.PASS.3PL ART.NOM
 ἁμαρτίαι
 sins:NOM

‘Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered’ (*Romans* 4:7)

b. καὶ πάντες ὅσοι ἐπείθοντο αὐτῷ
 and QUANT.NOM REL.NOM obey:IMPF.MID.3PL 3SG.DAT
 διελύθησαν καὶ ἐγένοντο εἰς οὐδέν
 disperse:AOR.PASS.3PL and become:AOR.MID.3PL to nothing:ACC
 ‘and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing’ (*Acts* 5:36)

(16) a. ἐὰν τὸν κόσμον ὅλον κερδήσῃ τὴν
 COMP ART.ACC world:ACC whole:ACC gain:AOR.ACT.3SG ART.ACC
 δὲ ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ζημιωθῇ;
 PTCL soul:ACC 3SG.GEN forfeit:AOR.PASS.3SG
 ‘[For what will it profit a man] if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?’ (*Matthew* 16:26)

b. Μὴ φοβοῦ, Ζαχαρία, διότι
 not be.afraid:PRS.MID.2SG Zechariah:VOC COMP
 εἰσηκούσθῃ ἡ δέησίς σου
 hear:AOR.PASS.3SG ART.NOM prayer:NOM 2SG.GEN
 ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard’ (*Luke* 1:13)

A few passive aorists expectedly feature the affix *η-*. Following the alphabetic order of the dictionaries, they are ἀπεστράφην ‘I turned away’, διηλλάγην ‘I was reconciled’, διεσπάρην ‘I was scattered’, διεφθάρην ‘I was destroyed’, ἐνετράπην ‘I was put to shame’, ἐξεπλάγην ‘I was astonished’, ἐξετράπην ‘I turn aside’, ἐπεφάνην ‘I appeared’, κατεκάην ‘I was burned up’, κατηλλάγην ‘I was reconciled’, κατενύγην ‘I was pierced’, μετετράπην ‘I was turned’, ἐπλήγην ‘I was struck’, συνετάφην ‘I was buried’, συνεχάρην ‘I rejoiced with’, ἐχάρην ‘I rejoiced’. They are forms inherited from Homeric and Classical Greek which continued to exist in Post-Classical Greek, even though the affix *η-* was not productive. The semantic and syntactic values of the passive aorists with *η-* are comparable to those of the aorists with *-θη-*; see the passive (17a) and the unaccusative (17b):

- (17) a. *συνετάφημεν* *οὖν* *αὐτῷ* *διὰ* *τοῦ* *βαπτίσματος*
 bury:AOR.PASS.1PL PTCL 3SG.DAT through ART.GEN baptism:GEN
εἰς *τὸν* *θάνατον*
 into ART.ACC death:ACC
 ‘We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death’ (*Romans* 6:4)
- b. *ἰδοὺ* *ἄγγελος* *κυρίου* *κατ’* *ὄναρ* *ἐφάνη*
 PTCL angel:NOM Lord:GEN in dream:ACC appear:AOR.PASS.3SG
αὐτῷ *λέγων*
 3SG.DAT saying:PTCP
 ‘an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying’ (*Matthew* 1:20)

Before summing up, I discuss the case of the 5 verbs, namely ἀποκρίνομαι ‘I reply’, γίνομαι ‘become’, διαλέγομαι ‘I reason’, ἐμβριμάομαι ‘I groan’, χαρίζομαι ‘I gratify’, which occur as both middle and passive aorists in the NT without any difference in syntactic distribution and meaning. The first verb, ἀποκρίνομαι ‘I reply’, is attested 109× as a passive aorist and 7× as a middle aorist; see examples above in (3a)–(3b). The quantitative relationship between the two forms in the NT is inverted with respect to Classical Greek. In Classical Greek, the passive aorist is rare: it occurs 2× in Thucydides and 1× in Herodotus, whilst the middle aorist occurs 18× in Thucydides, 83× in Xenophon, 29× in Plato, 20× in Demosthenes. Furthermore, by comparing passive and middle aorists of ἀποκρίνομαι in Thucydides, two different meanings emerge, namely, ‘to reply’ for the middle and ‘to be separated’ for the passive:

- (18) a. *οἱ* *δὲ* *Κορίνθιοι* *ἀπεκρίναντο* *αὐτοῖς*
 ART.NOM PTCL Corinthians:NOM reply:AOR.MID.3PL 3PL.DAT
 ‘The Corinthians replied to them’ (Th. 1:28)
- b. *οὐ* *μέντοι* *ἐν* *γε* *τῷ* *παντί* *ἔργῳ*
 not PTCL in PTCL ART.DAT QUANT.DAT engagement:DAT
βεβαίως *οὐδέτεροι* *τελευτήσαντες* *ἀπεκρίθησαν*
 certainly neither:NOM finishing:PTCP separate:AOR.PASS.3PL
 ‘Still, in respect of the whole engagement neither side when they parted had a decided advantage’ (Th. 4:72)

In Post-Classical Greek, the passive aorist became more frequent than the middle and replaced it in its meaning ‘to answer, to reply’. *LSJ* s.v. remarks that this use “condemned by Phryn.86, is unknown in earlier Att., exc[ept] in Pherecr. 51,

Pl. *Alc.* 2.149b” and is “regular in Lxx (but [sometimes] ἀπεκρινάμην in solemn language, as 3 *Ki.* 2.1) and prevails in NT esp[ecially] in the phrase ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν *Eu. Matt.* 3. 15; ἀποκριθεὶς λέγει *Eu. Marc.* 8. 29”.

Let us now turn to the second verb of the list, namely γίνομαι ‘I become’. The middle aorist ἐγενόμην and the passive aorist ἐγενήθην occur in the NT 301× and 40× respectively. The passive aorist is attested in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, in the book of *Acts*, in the Pauline Epistles, and in the first Letter of Peter. In some cases, the two forms show the same textual distribution, e.g. (19a)–(19b):

- (19) a. ὅτι εἰ ἐν Τύρῳ καὶ Σιδῶνι ἐγένοντο
 COMP COMP in Tyre:DAT and Sidon:DAT happen:AOR.MID.3PL
 αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ γενόμεναι ἐν ὑμῖν
 ART.NOM mighty.works:NOM ART.NOM happened:PTCP in 2PL.DAT
 ‘For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon’
 (*Matthew* 11:21)

- b. ὅτι εἰ ἐν Σοδόμοις ἐγενήθησαν αἱ
 COMP COMP in Sodom:DAT happen:AOR.PASS.3PL ART.NOM
 δυνάμεις αἱ γενόμεναι ἐν σοί
 mighty.works:NOM ART.NOM happened:PTCP in 2SG.DAT
 ‘For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom’ (*Mat-*
thew 11:23)

However, the middle aorist also occurs in impersonal constructions with the meaning ‘it happened’, followed by an accusative plus infinitive (19c) or a coordinate finite clause (19d):

- (19) c. Καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς σάββασιν
 and happen:AOR.MID.3SG 3SG.ACC in ART.DAT Sabbath:DAT
 παραπορεύεσθαι διὰ τῶν σπορίμων
 go:INF through ART.GEN grain.fields:GEN
 ‘And it happened that one Sabbath he was going through the grain
 fields’ (*Mark* 2:23)

- d. Καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ
 and happen:AOR.MID.3SG in ART.DAT day:DAT ART.DAT
 ὀγδόῃ ἡλθον περιτεμεῖν τὸ παιδίον
 eighth:DAT come:AOR.ACT.3PL circumcise:INF ART.ACC child:ACC
 ‘And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the
 child’ (*Luke* 1:59)

The passive aorist is never found in these kinds of clauses in the NT. It occurs with a lexical subject and adjectival or nominal predicative of the subject, e.g. (19e)–(19f):

- (19) e. δ $\delta\epsilon$ $\acute{\alpha}\kappa\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\varsigma$ $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\alpha$ $\pi\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\lambda\upsilon\pi\omicron\varsigma$
 ART.NOM PTCL hearing:PTCP DEM.ACC sad:NOM
 $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\theta\eta$
 become:AOR.PASS.3SG
 ‘But when he heard these things, he became very sad’ (*Luke* 18:23)
- f. $\delta\varsigma$ $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\theta\eta$ $\sigma\omicron\phi\acute{\iota}\alpha$ $\eta\acute{\mu}\acute{\iota}\nu$ $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron$
 REL.NOM become:AOR.PASS.3SG wisdom:NOM 1PL.DAT from
 $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$
 God:GEN
 ‘[Christ Jesus,] who became to us wisdom from God’ (*1 Corinthians* 1:30)

The syntactic and semantic distribution of the passive aorist is more restricted than that of the middle aorist. Even though some uses of the two forms overlap, they do not appear to be free variants in the NT.

The verbs $\delta\iota\alpha\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ ‘I reason’ and $\acute{\epsilon}\mu\beta\rho\iota\mu\acute{\alpha}\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ ‘I groan’ can be quickly dealt with because their middle and passive aorists are rarely attested in the NT ($\delta\iota\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\xi\alpha\tau\omicron$ 2×, $\delta\iota\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\chi\theta\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$ 1×, $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\beta\rho\iota\mu\acute{\eta}\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron$ 1×, $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\beta\rho\iota\mu\acute{\eta}\theta\eta$ 1×) and the occurrences of $\delta\iota\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\xi\alpha\tau\omicron$ / $\delta\iota\epsilon\lambda\acute{\epsilon}\chi\theta\eta\sigma\alpha\nu$, on the one hand, and $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\beta\rho\iota\mu\acute{\eta}\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron$ / $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\beta\rho\iota\mu\acute{\eta}\theta\eta$, on the other hand, show the same syntactic distribution and meaning.

The last verb of the list is interesting because shows the emergence of a new passive voice in the aorist, expressed by the passive $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\alpha\rho\acute{\iota}\sigma\theta\eta\nu$ ‘I was granted’, besides the deponent transitive $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\acute{\alpha}\mu\eta\nu$ ‘I bestowed’. The middle aorist is attested 7× in the NT, whereas the passive is attested only once. The following pair shows the syntactic and semantic difference between the two forms, the former being transitive and the latter passive:

- (20) a. $\delta\iota\omicron$ $\kappa\alpha\iota$ δ $\theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu$ $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho\acute{\upsilon}\psi\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu$ $\kappa\alpha\iota$
 PTCL and ART.NOM God:NOM 3SG.ACC exalt:AOR.ACT.3SG and
 $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\alpha\tau\omicron$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$ $\tau\omicron$ $\delta\omicron\nu\omicron\mu\alpha$ $\tau\omicron$ $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\acute{\epsilon}\rho$
 bestow:AOR.MID.3SG 3SG.DAT ART.ACC name:ACC ART.ACC above
 $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$ $\delta\omicron\nu\omicron\mu\alpha$
 QUANT.ACC name:ACC
 ‘Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name’ (*Philippians* 2:9)

- b. ὅτι ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ,
 COMP 2PL.DAT be.granted:AOR.PASS.3SG ART.NOM for Christ:GEN
 οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύειν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ
 not only ART.NOM in 3SG.ACC believe:INF but also ART.NOM
 ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν
 for 3SG.GEN suffer:INF
 'For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should
 not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake' (*Philippians* 1:29)

Summing up, passive aorists are very productive in the NT. They spread at the expense of middle aorists in unaccusatives and intransitive deponents. Middle aorists continued to exist in transitive uses of deponent and quasi-deponent verbs, but lost most intransitive uses. As I show in Section 4, intransitive occurrences of middle aorists were attested in Homeric poems and had already decreased in number in Classical Greek. In Homeric poems we also find pairs of middle and passive aorists derived from the same verb and both occurring in unaccusative structures, e.g. ἐχολώθην/ἐχολωσάμην 'I became angry' (cf. Tronci 2011 and examples 27a–27b below).

The seemingly chaotic outcome of the competition between passive and middle aorists is evidence of some instability. However, there is some evidence that the system was being reorganised in binary terms: on the one hand, the diathesis expressed by both active and middle aorists, which increasingly correlated with transitive structures; on the other hand, the diathesis expressed by passive aorists, which embraced the core intransitive values of middle, namely the passive and the unaccusative, and extended into intransitive deponents. The reassessment shows the emergence of the syntactic feature transitive vs intransitive within the middle diathesis (cf. Section 5).

3.3 Some problematic cases

Three occurrences in my corpus do not fit into the illustrated patterns. They concern the verbs ἀγαλλιάω 'I rejoice exceedingly', ἀπολούω 'I wash' and βαπτίζω 'I baptise'. The first verb could be interpreted as a quasi-deponent, if it were not for the occurrence of one unaccusative active aorist: see discussion below. As for the latter two verbs, their middle aorists ἀπελουσάμην, ἐβαπτισάμην are commonly interpreted as passives, though they cannot be passive, because sigmatic middles are never passive in Ancient Greek, cf. Wackernagel (1926:137–138), Prévot (1935:17–18), Schwyzer (1990:757), Ambrosini (1996:21). In the following we argue for a different reading through an investigation of all the occurrences of these verbs.

The first case concerns the verb ἀγαλλιάω ‘I rejoice exceedingly’, which is more frequent as deponent ἀγαλλιάομαι, according to *LSJ* s.v. In the NT, the verb is attested 4× with middle inflection, e.g. (21a), and 1× with active inflection, e.g. (21b), without any semantic and syntactic difference between them:

- (21) a. Ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἡγαλλιάσατο [ἐν]
 in 3SG.DAT ART.DAT occasion:DAT rejoice:AOR.MID.3SG in
 τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ εἶπεν
 ART.DAT spirit:DAT ART.DAT holy:DAT and say:AOR.ACT.3SG
 ‘On that same occasion Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said’ (*Luke* 10:21)
- b. Μεγαλύνει ἡ ψυχὴ μου τὸν κύριον, /
 exalt:PRS.ACT.3SG ART.NOM soul:NOM 1SG.GEN ART.ACC Lord:ACC
 καὶ ἡγαλλίασεν τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπὶ
 and rejoice:AOR.ACT.3SG ART.NOM spirit:NOM 1SG.GEN in
 τῷ θεῷ τῷ σωτῆρί μου
 ART.DAT God:DAT ART.DAT Savior:DAT 1SG.GEN
 ‘My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has begun to rejoice in God my Savior’ (*Luke* 1:46–47)

The inflectional opposition does not correlate with any difference concerning voice, unless we read (21b) as a transitive-causative clause ‘my soul let my spirit rejoice in God’. This would be a contrived interpretation, however, and for this reason we prefer to adopt the common reading and try to explain otherwise the occurrence of active inflection (cf. also commentaries on Luke’s Gospel, e.g. Carroll 2012: 47–48). The verb ἀγαλλιάω is attested 4× as a sigmatic middle (ἡγαλλιάσατο in *Luke* 10:21, *John* 8:56, *Acts* 2:26, 16:34), 1× as a sigmatic active (ἡγαλλίασεν in *Luke* 1:47) and 1× as a passive (infinitive ἀγαλλιαθῆναι in *John* 5:35). In the present stem, the verb occurs 4× as a middle (ἀγαλλιάσθε in *Matthew* 5:12, *1 Peter* 1:6, 1:8; ἀγαλλιώμενοι in *1 Peter* 4:16) and 1× as an active (ἀγαλλιώμεν in *Revelation* 19:7), without any difference in meaning between active and middle. The verb is also attested in the Old Testament, consistently inflected in the middle voice. According to some commentaries, e.g. Plummer (1960: 31–32), the entire passage of the Song of Mary is modelled on the Song of Hannah in *1 Sam.* 2:1–10, in which the verb ἀγαλλιάω does not occur, however.

Let us return to the active inflection of the verb in (21b), which is awkward with respect to the consistent picture provided by the other occurrences of the verb and needs, therefore, some further explanation. The passage has received much attention among scholars because the two verbs that occur in it present

some peculiarities with respect to both voice and tense. Firstly, *μεγαλύνει* is a present and *ἡγαλλίασεν* is an aorist. The combination is unusual because the two verbs are coordinated and both refer to the present time. To explain this oddity, Buth (1984) argues that the passage was literally translated by Luke from an original Hebrew poem. In Hebrew, tense shifting is a matter of aesthetics and poetry and does not correlate with any shift in time reference. The Greek translator, presumably the evangelist Luke, “accurately transmitted the Hebrew poetic form and preserved the poetic tension of the Hebrew in the Greek” (1984: 74). By following this suggestion, it can also be argued that the active voice of *ἡγαλλίασεν* depends on the wish of the translator “to parallel *μεγαλύνει*”, as proposed by Méndez (2016: 558, fn. 3). In sum, the peculiarity of *ἡγαλλίασεν* as far as tense and voice are concerned could be explained in terms of an ad hoc creation to translate an original Hebrew poem (cf. Plummer 1960: 30 who argues that Jews knew many of the Old Testament lyrics by heart and that Mary had recourse to these in the moment of exultation). A comparable hypothesis can be proposed for the active present *ἀγαλλιώμεν* (*Revelation* 19:7). The verb is preceded by *χαίρωμεν* and followed by *δύσωμεν*, both of them active. The morpho-phonetic parallelism, on the one hand, and the semantic closeness to *χαίρωμεν*, on the other hand, could have allowed the verb *ἀγαλλιώμεν* to take an active inflection. Consider, however, that the middle form *ἀγαλλιώμεθα* is provided by some manuscripts, even though it is presumably to be interpreted as *lectio facillior*.

The second problematic case concerns the middle aorist of ἀπολούω ‘I wash’ in (22a), which is commonly interpreted as a passive (cf. commentaries by Phillips 2002: 129 and Hays 2011: 97 who translate it with ‘you have been washed’ and ‘they were washed’ respectively) along with the two subsequent passive aorists ἡγιάσθητε ‘you were sanctified’ and ἐδικαιώθητε ‘you were justified’:

- (22) a. *ἀλλὰ ἀπελούσασθε, ἀλλὰ ἡγιάσθητε, ἀλλὰ*
 but wash:AOR.MID.2PL but sanctify:AOR.PASS.2PL but
ἐδικαιώθητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου
 justify:AOR.PASS.2PL in ART.DAT name:DAT ART.GEN Lord:GEN
Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ
 Jesus:GEN Christ:GEN and in ART.DAT spirit:DAT ART.GEN
θεοῦ ἡμῶν
 God:GEN 1PL.GEN
 ‘But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the
 name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God’ (1 *Corinthi-*
ans 6:11)

The second occurrence of the verb in the NT is again with middle inflection, but the clause is transitive:

- (22) b. ἀναστὰς βάπτισαι καὶ ἀπόλουσαι τὰς
 rising:PTCP baptise:AOR.MID.2SG and wash:AOR.MID.2SG ART.ACC
 ἁμαρτίας σου ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ
 sins:ACC 2SG.GEN calling:PTCP ART.ACC name:ACC 3SG.GEN
 ‘Rise and get yourself baptised and wash away your sins, calling on his
 name’ (*Acts 22:16*)

With respect to the transitive clause in (22b), the clause in (22a) could be either passive ‘you were washed’ or reflexive ‘you washed yourselves’. In both cases, the act of washing is metaphorical and implies ‘to wash of sin’: according to Hays (2011: 97) “Paul alludes here to [the] baptism”. The interpretation as a passive has presumably been encouraged by the occurrence of the passive aorists ἡγιασθητε and ἐδικαιώθητε in the sequence. We consider that the difference in voice between the middle ἀπελούσασθε and the passives ἡγιασθητε and ἐδικαιώθητε is meaningful. The middle aorist could be interpreted as a reflexive, thus implying an involvement of the subject in the event. The act of washing themselves (ἀπελούσασθε) could therefore imply sanctification (ἡγιασθητε) and justification (ἐδικαιώθητε); the three verbs “are three descriptions of the one fundamental transformation that has occurred for those who now belong to Christ” (Hays 2011: 98). This reading allows us to account for the sigmatic middle ἀπελούσασθε in accordance with the syntactic and semantic values of middle aorists which are attested in the NT as well as in Homeric and Classical Greek.

Let us now turn to the third problematic case, which concerns the following occurrence of the verb βαπτίζω ‘I wash, I baptise’:

- (23) a. καὶ πάντες εἰς τὸν Μωσὴν ἐβαπτίσαντο ἐν
 and QUANT.NOM into ART.ACC Moses:ACC baptise:AOR.MID.3PL in
 τῇ νεφέλῃ καὶ ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ
 ART.DAT cloud:DAT and in ART.DAT sea:DAT
 ‘and all were baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea’ (1 *Corinthians* 10:2)

The middle aorist ἐβαπτίσαντο is commonly interpreted as a passive (see also the modern translations on the website <http://biblehub.com/>), but this reading is not convincing and the syntactic structure of the clause leads to another interpretation. The verb is combined with two locative complements which designate the cloud and the sea. These complements also occur in the pre-

ceding clause: οἱ [ART.NOM] πατέρες [fathers:NOM] ἡμῶν [1PL.GEN] πάντες [QUANT.NOM] ὑπὸ [under] τὴν [ART.ACC] νεφέλῃν [cloud:ACC] ἦσαν [be: IMPF.ACT.3PL] καὶ [and] πάντες [QUANT.NOM] διὰ [through] τῆς [ART.GEN] θαλάσσης [sea:GEN] διήλθον [pass:AOR.ACT.3PL] (1 *Corinthians* 10:1) ‘our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea’. The reference to the Hebrews’ flight from Egypt could also be a figure of speech for baptism. Modern commentaries on this passage point to the fact that “Paul reads the exodus story and the Christ event as a double exposure” (Montague 2011: 166). Because of this double reference, the verb ἐβαπτίσαντο could have two complementary readings. It can be interpreted as a true reflexive ‘they dipped themselves’ and refer to the real fact that the Hebrews dipped into the cloud and the sea, which are, respectively, the symbol of God in the Old Testament and the prefiguration of baptism. If the figured interpretation and the reference to baptism prevail, the verb can be read as a causative middle ‘they got themselves baptised’. The passive reading ‘they were baptised’ is also possible, if we adopt the *lectio facilior* ἐβαπτίσθησαν, accepted in the NA28 edition, instead of the *lectio difficilior* ἐβαπτίσαντο, transmitted by papyrus P⁴⁶ of the Chester Beatty collection and accepted in both TLG and the Perseus Project.⁵

Both reflexive and middle causative analyses of ἐβαπτίσαντο are consistent with the other occurrences of the verb. In the aorist stem, the verb is attested 15× as a passive aorist with passive (‘I was baptised’) and reflexive (‘I washed myself’) meanings, e.g. (23b)–(23c) respectively, and 8× as an active aorist with an active and transitive meaning (‘I baptised’), e.g. (23d):

- (23) b. ἐβαπτίσθη εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην ὑπὸ Ἰωάννου
 baptise:AOR.PASS.3SG in ART.ACC Jordan:ACC by John:GEN
 ‘[Jesus] was baptised by John in the Jordan River’ (*Mark* 1:9)
- c. ὁ δὲ Φαρισαῖος ἰδὼν
 ART.NOM PTCL Pharisee:NOM seing:PTCP
 ἐθαύμασεν ὅτι οὐ πρῶτον ἐβαπτίσθη
 be.astonished:AOR.ACT.3SG COMP not first wash:AOR.PASS.3SG
 πρὸ τοῦ ἀρίστου
 before ART.GEN dinner:GEN
 ‘The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash [himself]
 before dinner’ (*Luke* 11:38)

5 The issue of textual criticism of the NT is too complex to be discussed in detail. For an overview, I refer the reader to Aland & Aland (1987: 83–102) and Metzger & Ehrman (2005).

- d. ὅτι Ἰωάννης μὲν ἐβάπτισεν ὕδατι
 COMP John:NOM PTCL baptise:AOR.ACT.3SG water:DAT
 'For John baptised with water' (*Acts* 1:5)

The verb is also twice attested with middle morphology, here in (23e)–(23f). In the first occurrence, the verb means 'to dip, to wash' and is a reflexive. The comparison with (23c), in which the reflexive is expressed by a passive aorist, clearly shows that the two voices are in competition. In the second occurrence (=22b), the verb means 'to baptise' and can be interpreted as a causative middle (lit. 'to get yourself baptised'), consistently with (23a):

- (23) e. καὶ ἀπ' ἀγορᾶς ἐὰν μὴ βαπτίσωνται οὐκ
 and from marketplace:GEN COMP not wash:AOR.MID.3PL not
 ἐσθίουσιν
 eat:PRS.ACT.3PL
 'and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash' (*Mark* 7:4)
- f. ἀναστὰς βάπτισαι καὶ ἀπόλουσαι τὰς
 rising:PTCP baptise:AOR.MID.2SG and wash:AOR.MID.2SG ART.ACC
 ἁμαρτίας σου ἐπικαλεσάμενος τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ
 sins:ACC 2SG.GEN calling:PTCP ART.ACC name:ACC 3SG.GEN
 'Rise and get yourself baptised and wash away your sins, calling on his name' (*Acts* 22:16)

The problem concerning the interpretation of βαπτίζω and its voices was posited by Moule (1959: 26) in his grammar of the NT. He lists the verb among "the specimens of problematic passages" and remarks: "[i]s there any significance in the comparison between *Acts* 9:18 ἀναστὰς ἐβαπτίσθη and 22:16 ἀναστὰς βάπτισαι καὶ ἀπόλουσαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας σου? Did a Christian in fact generally 'baptize himself', 'get himself baptized', or 'submit to baptism'?". It is not surprising that the interpretation of the verb βαπτίζω, which designates one of the core notions and practices of Christianity, is so problematic. In this verb, indeed, the linguistic issue of diathesis, in its etymological meaning of 'disposition' (of the arguments), meets the issue of baptism, its sacral value and its theological meaning. Which semantic roles do the subject and the object display? Are they 'one who baptises' vs 'one who is baptised' or, rather, 'one who lets someone get baptised' vs 'one who gets baptised'? The answers to these questions are not trivial for Christian religion and theology.

4 Diachrony of voice: Homeric and Classical Greek

In grammars and studies concerning the diachronic changes in the verbal system of Ancient Greek, the most hotly debated topics are the changes in future expressions from analytic to periphrastic strategies, the restructuring of verbal aspects and the disappearance of the optative (cf., among others, Horrocks 2010: 82, 102, 130–131). As far as the aorist is concerned, the merging with the perfect yielded major changes in the tense and aspect systems; see chapters 1–4, 14 and 17 of the book recently edited by Runge & Fresch (2016) and references therein. Not many studies have been devoted to the diachrony of the aorist voice system. Scholars limit themselves to remarking that passive aorists spread and middle aorists were reduced in number and were no longer productive (see the studies cited in Section 2 above). Since the aorist forms are the same as in Classical Greek, the functions are also expected to have been preserved, as Aubrey (2016: 620) argues for Hellenistic Greek: “-(θ)η- is used predominantly within its original five types, marking those events that shift the focus of attention to the more patient-like participant. The sigmatic middle aorist morphology predominantly marks the other middle types, which involve a more agent-like primary figure”. This assumption proves to be mistaken, as I show in what follows; here, I compare the aorist voice system of the NT with that of Homeric and Classical Greek.

4.1 *Homeric Greek*

In Homeric poems two different systems of voice are attested for the aorist (cf. Benedetti 2017 for more details). In the first system, inflection (active vs middle) marks the opposition between active and middle/passive voice, as in the voice system of the present. This system is presumably inherited and is not productive. It is only found with root and thematic aorists, see (24) and (25) respectively, and occurs with a few verbal items. What is peculiar is that middle inflection also marks the passive, e.g. (24b) and (25b), compared with the active transitive in (24a) and (25a):

- (24) a. ἡμεῖς δ' ἔρμα πόλῃος ἀπέκταμεν [...]
 IPL.NOM PTCL bulwark:ACC city:GEN kill:AOR.ACT.IPL
 ‘but we have killed the bulwark of the city’ (*Od.* 23:121)

- b. Τευκρε πέπον δὴ νῶϊν ἀπέκτατο πιστὸς
 Teucer:VOC good:VOC PTCL 1DU.GEN kill:AOR.MID.3SG true:NOM
 εἰταῖρος
 comrade:NOM
 ‘Good Teucer, a true comrade of ours has been killed’ (*Il.* 15:437)

- (25) a. ἤειδεν δ' ὡς ἄστν διέπραθον
 sing:AOR.ACT.3SG PTCL COMP city:ACC sack:AOR.ACT.3PL
 υἱες Ἀχαιῶν
 sons:NOM Achaeans:GEN
 'he sang how the sons of the Achaeans sacked the city' (*Od.* 8:514)
- b. ἦέ διεπράθετο πόλιν ἀνδρῶν εὐρυάγνια
 PTCL sack:AOR.MID.3SG city:NOM men:GEN with.wide.streets:NOM
 'was a city of men sacked, which has wide streets?' (*Od.* 15:384)

The second system involves the most productive aorist classes, namely the sigmatic and the passive aorists. Two patterns of voice markers characterise this system. On the one hand, the affixes -σα- vs -η-/-θη- codify the opposition between active and middle-intransitive, namely passive and unaccusative. On the other hand, the inflection (active vs middle) codifies the opposition between active and middle-transitive, namely reflexive, benefactive, reciprocal, etc. The three terms are exemplified in (26a)–(26c):

- (26) a. οἱ δ' ἵππους μὲν λύσαν ὑπὸ
 ART.NOM PTCL horses:ACC PTCL loosen:AOR.ACT.3PL from
 ζυγοῦ ἰδρώοντα
 yoke:GEN sweating:PTCP
 'their sweating horses they loosed from beneath the yoke' (*Il.* 8:543)
- b. εἶδε δ' ἀνακλινθεῖσα, λύθην
 sleep:AOR.ACT.3SG PTCL sinking.back:PTCP loosen:AOR.PASS.3PL
 δέ οἱ ἄψα πάντα
 PTCL 3SG.DAT joints:NOM QUANT.NOM
 'and she sank back and slept, and all her joints relaxed' (*Od.* 4:794)
- c. ἦ, καὶ ἀπὸ στήθεσφιν ἐλύσατο
 speak:PRS.ACT.3SG and from bosom:DAT loosen:AOR.MID.3SG
 κεστόν ἱμάντα
 embroidered:ACC strap:ACC
 'she spoke, and loosed from her bosom the embroidered strap'
 (*Il.* 14:214)

In the pair (26a)–(26b), the opposition between active transitive and middle-intransitive is marked by affixes, the inflection being active in both cases. In the pair (26a)–(26c), instead, the opposition between active transitive and middle-

ing. Only the deponent ἀλάομαι 'I wander, roam' is exclusively inflected in the passive voice in Homeric Greek (ἀλήθην).

4.2 *Classical Greek*

The tripartite voice system increased in Classical Greek, since passive aorists spread and replaced middle aorists in unaccusatives. For instance, the verb κοιμάω 'I put to sleep' is attested as both sigmatic middle (28a) and passive aorist (28b) in Homeric poems, but only occurs as passive aorist in Classical Greek (28c). Further examples are provided by κορέννυμι 'I satiate', μμνήσκω 'I remember', ὀρμάω 'I set in motion, start', πειράω 'I attempt, try' and the deponent verbs ἄγαμαι 'I wonder, admire' and ἔραμαι 'I love'. All the data for Classical Greek come from Xenophon's works.

(28) a. δὴ τότε κοιμήσαντο παρά πρυμνήσια νηός
PTCL PTCL sleep:AOR.MID.3PL by stern.cables:ACC ship:GEN
'they slept by the stern cables of the ship' (*Il.* 1:476)

b. δὴ τότε κοιμήθημεν ἐπὶ ῥηγμῖνι θαλάσσης
PTCL PTCL sleep:AOR.PASS.1PL on shore:DAT sea:GEN
'then we slept on the shore of the sea' (*Od.* 4:575)

c. ὥστ' ἐκείνης τῆς νυκτός οὐδεὶς
COMP DEM.GEN ART.GEN night:GEN nobody:NOM
ἐκοιμήθη
sleep:AOR.PASS.3SG
'and during that night no one slept' (*X. HG.* 2:2:3)

Sigmatic middles decreased in number and continued to exist in middle transitive structures, such as benefactives (29a) and possessives (30a); the corresponding active transitives are in (b).

(29) a. ἐξέφερε δὴ καὶ ἄλλας Μηδικὰς
bring.out:IMPF.ACT.3SG PTCL and other:ACC Median:ACC
στολάς, παμπόλλας γὰρ παρεσκεύασατο
robes:ACC many:ACC PTCL provide:AOR.MID.3SG
'he brought out other Median robes, for he had provided a great many made' (*X. Cyr.* 8:3:3)

b. ἐκεῖνος τοίνυν σαφῶς παρεσκεύασε τοῖς μὲν
DEM.NOM PTCL clearly provide:AOR.ACT.3SG ART.DAT PTCL

ἀγαθοῖς εὐδαιμονίαν, τοῖς δὲ κακοῖς κακοδαιμονίαν
 brave:DAT happiness:ACC ART.DAT PTCL coward:DAT misery:ACC
 'Clearly, what he did was to provide happiness to the brave, and misery
 to the coward' (X. *Lac.* 9:3)

(30) a. ἐπεδείξατο δὲ τῆς ψυχῆς τὴν ῥώμην
 show:AOR.MID.3SG PTCL ART.GEN soul:GEN ART.ACC force:ACC
 'And he displayed the stalwart nature of his heart' (X. *Ap.* 33)

b. ὅτι ἡμῖν τὸ κάλλος ἑαυτῆς ἐπέδειξεν
 COMP IPL.DAT ART.ACC beauty:ACC REFL.GEN show:AOR.ACT.3SG
 'because she showed us her beauty' (X. *Mem.* 3:11:2)

Sigmatic middles also occur with deponent verbs, e.g. ἀσπάζομαι 'I greet' (ἡσπασάμην), δέχομαι 'I receive, welcome' (ἐδεξάμην), εὔχομαι 'I pray' (ἡὔξάμην), ἡγέομαι 'I go before, lead' (ἡγήσάμην), θεάομαι 'I see' (ἐθεασάμην), κτάομαι 'I acquire' (ἐκτησάμην), μάχομαι 'I fight' (ἐμαχησάμην), ὀρχέομαι 'I dance' (ὠρχησάμην), φθέγγομαι 'I utter a sound, speak loud' (ἐφθεγγάμην), χράομαι 'I use' (ἐχρησάμην) and ψεύδομαι 'I lie' (ἐψευσάμην). Intransitive deponents also occur with passive morphology, e.g. ἄγμαι 'I wonder, admire' (ἡγάσθην), ἄχθομαι 'I am loaded, vexed' (ἡχθέσθην), βούλομαι 'I desire' (ἐβουλήθην), δέομαι 'I pray' (ἐδεήθην), δύναμαι 'I am able' (ἐδυνήθην), ἐπιμελέομαι 'I take care' (ἐπεμελήθην), ἡδομαι 'I enjoy myself' (ἡσθην), ἡττάομαι 'I am inferior, defeated' (ἡττήθην) and οἶομαι 'I presage, suppose' (ὥήθην). Among the quasi-deponents, it is worth mentioning the verb ψεύδομαι 'I lie', which is inflected as both middle and passive with two different meanings: it is transitive in the middle and unaccusative in the passive.

(31) a. ὁ μὲν δὴ Τισσαφέρνης ᾧ
 ART.NOM PTCL PTCL Tissaphernes:NOM REL.ACC
 ὥμοσεν εὐθύς ἐψεύσατο
 swear:AOR.ACT.3SG straightway violate:AOR.MID.3SG
 'Now Tissaphernes straightway violated the oaths which he had sworn'
 (X. *HG.* 3:4:6)

b. ταῦτα δὲ ποιήσας οὐκ ἐψεύσθη
 DEM.ACC PTCL doing:PTCP not be.disappointed:AOR.PASS.3SG
 'Having done all these things he was not disappointed' (X. *HG.* 4:8:36)

Some evidence of the functional decrease of middle morphology is also given by pairs such as the following, in which the three-argument verb κατασκευάζω

'I equip' occurs; see the active form in (32a). The verb with middle morphology in (32b) should be interpreted as a benefactive middle, but the occurrence of the dative reflexive pronoun shows that middle inflection is not sufficient to express the benefactive (in Italian, it would be literally translated 'si preparò per sé', with two redundant benefactive markers, the clitic "si" and the reflexive "per sé"):

- (32) a. σκηνᾶς δ' αὐτοῖς κατεσκεύασε
 tents:ACC PTCL 3PL.DAT make:AOR.ACT.3SG
 'Then, he made tents for them' (X. *Cyr.* 2:1:25)
- b. Κύρος δ' ἑαυτῷ σκηνὴν μὲν κατεσκευάσατο
 Cyrus:NOM PTCL REFL.DAT tent:ACC PTCL make:AOR.MID.3SG
 'And for himself Cyrus made a tent' (X. *Cyr.* 2:1:30)

The bipartite system disappeared together with most of the forms which featured it in Homeric poems. In the thematic aorists which continued to exist in Classical Greek, middle forms never occurred in passive clauses, in which they were replaced by passive aorists, e.g. (33a); they sometimes occurred in unaccusatives, e.g. (33b), in which passive aorists could also occur however, e.g. (33c), and mostly occurred in middle transitives, e.g. (33d). See the verbs λαμβάνω 'I take', which occurs as a passive within a passive clause in (33a) and as a middle within a middle transitive in (33b), ἀπόλλυμι 'I kill', which occurs as a middle within an unaccusative in (33c) and ἀνάγω 'I lead up', which occurs as both middle and passive in unaccusatives in (33d)–(33e); on this use of ἀνάγω cf. *LSJ* s.v.

- (33) a. οἱ ὕστερον ἐλήφθησαν τῶν πολεμίων
 REL.NOM thereafter take:AOR.PASS.3PL ART.GEN enemies:GEN
 '[identical reports were made by those] who were taken prisoners thereafter' (X. *An.* 1:7:13)
- b. ἀκούσας ταῦτα ὁ Ἀγησίλαος
 hearing:PTCP DEM.ACC ART.NOM Agesilaus:NOM
 ἐλάβετο τῆς χειρὸς αὐτοῦ
 grasp:AOR.MID.3SG ART.GEN hand:GEN 3SG.GEN
 'Upon hearing these words Agesilaus grasped his hand and said' (X. *HG.* 4:1:38)

c. ἐν τούτοις τοῖς σταθμοῖς πολλὰ τῶν
 in DEM.DAT ART.DAT stages:DAT many:NOM ART.GEN
 ὑποζυγίων ἀπώλετο ὑπὸ λιμοῦ
 baggage.animals:GEN die:AOR.MID.3SG of hunger:GEN
 'In the course of these stages many of the baggage animals died of
 hunger' (X. *An.* 1:5:5)

d. οἱ δὲ ἀνηγάγοντο ἐπ' αὐτὸν εἴκοσι
 ART.NOM PTCL set.sail:AOR.MID.3PL against 3SG.ACC twenty
 ναυσὶν
 ships:DAT
 'they put out against him with twenty ships' (X. *HG.* 1:1:2)

e. ἀνήχθη ταῖς ναυσὶν ἀπάσαις ἐπὶ τὸν
 set.sail:AOR.PASS.3SG ART.DAT ships:DAT QUANT.DAT to ART.ACC
 λιμένα τῶν Ἐφεσίων
 harbour:ACC ART.GEN Ephesians:GEN
 '[Alcibiades] set sail with all his ships to the harbour of Ephesus' (X.
HG. 1:5:15)

Further thematic aorists attested as middles in Xenophon are εἰλόμην 'I caught' (suppletive of αἰρέω), ἡρόμην 'I raised up' (αἶρω), ἡσθόμην 'I perceived' (αἰσθάνομαι), ἀφικόμην 'I reached' (ἀφικνέομαι), ἐγενόμην 'I became' (γίγνομαι), ἡύρόμην 'I found' (εὐρίσκω), ἐλαθόμην 'I forgot' (λανθάνω), εἰπόμην 'I said' (suppletive of λέγω), ἐπυθόμην 'I learnt' (πυνθάνομαι) and ἐθέμην 'I placed' (τίθημι).

5 Concluding remarks

In this paper it has been pointed out that the aorist voice system changed in Hellenistic Greek with respect to Homeric and Classical Greek. The major changes concerned the middle and passive voices. Starting from Homeric Greek and even more in Classical Greek, sigmatic aorists and passive aorists became the most productive aorist classes. Sigmatic aorists display a bipartite voice system, based on inflection opposition. Passive aorists are opposed to sigmatic aorists through the affixes -θη-/-η- vs -σα-. The coexistence of these two classes created a tripartite voice system, which included (sigmatic) active-inflected forms, (sigmatic) middle-inflected forms and (passive) affixed forms. This system spread at the expense of the bipartite system, which only displayed inflection opposition, concerned thematic and root aorists and was attested in

TABLE 3 Aorist voice system in NT Greek

	VOICE			
	Active	Middle		Passive
		<i>Transitive</i>	<i>Intransitive</i>	
AORIST FORMS	Active-inflected aorists	Middle-inflected aorists	“Passive” aorists	

Homeric Greek. In the tripartite system, the functional distribution of voice markers is as follows: active aorists occur in active clauses, passive aorists in passive and unaccusative clauses, and middle aorists in middle-transitive clauses, e.g. benefactives and possessives, in deponent verbs, and in some unaccusatives, e.g. ἐχολώσάμην ‘I was angered’ from χολόω ‘I anger’. In Classical Greek, a tendency towards a clearer distribution of voice markers developed, mostly in the middle. Passive aorists spread into unaccusatives and intransitive deponent verbs. Middle aorists increasingly occurred in middle-transitive structures. However, in some instances, e.g. (32b), middle inflection appears to be unable to express the middle meaning of the clause and other middle markers, e.g. reflexive pronouns, had to be used.

In the NT, the aorist voice system displays the same forms as Classical Greek, with some differences concerning their functional distribution. Passive aorists increasingly replaced middle aorists of deponent and quasi-deponent verbs, e.g. ἀπεκρίθην ‘I replied’ instead of ἀπεκρινάμην, and were also productive with the new items, e.g. βαπτίζω ‘I baptise’. In brief, passive aorists spread in all intransitive uses of the middle. As far as middle aorists are concerned, they continued to exist and maintained middle transitive meanings, e.g. benefactives, possessives and so on. Most deponent transitives continued to be middle-inflected in the aorist; in these verbs the opposition between middle and passive morphology was used to express the functional opposition between active and passive, e.g. (20a)–(20b). All these phenomena clearly show that the transitive vs intransitive feature became even more relevant in the middle voice and led to a reorganization of the functional distribution of aorist voice markers, as Table 3 roughly represents.

The expansion of passive aorists at the expense of middle aorists is not only a matter of forms that replace other forms; it also concerns the level

of functions. In other words, the productivity of passive aorists in Hellenistic Greek is the effect, at the level of form, of the syntactic feature associated with them, namely intransitivity. As an opposite term, transitivity is expressed by both active and middle aorists, middle inflection being completely defunctionalised as a voice marker, with some rare exceptions; see examples (5) and (6a) above.

So, in agreement with Blass, Debrunner & Funk (1961: 180), we contend that “[t]he system of three voices of the verb—active (transitive), passive (intransitive), and middle (i.e. transitive with reference to the subject)—remains on the whole the same in the NT as in the classical language”. Our research allows us to add that the functional distribution of sigmatic middle and passive aorists changed in NT Greek, even though the forms seem to be the same as in Homeric and Classical Greek. In our opinion, the reorganisation of the middle markers on the basis of the transitive vs intransitive feature is the first step in the creation of the Modern Greek bipartite system. However, further studies are needed to investigate whether and how this feature spread in later Greek texts.

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