The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek. A study in Polysemy

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CHAPTER 3

The Middle and Passive Voices in the Aorist Stem

3.0 Introduction

Undoubtedly one of the most intriguing features of ancient Greek is the complex voice morphology in the aorist stem. Besides a number of different active formations, we find the middle root aorist, the middle thematic aorist, the middle sigmatic aorist, and the passive aorists in -η- and in -θη-. The aim of this chapter is to describe the distributional patterns of these various aorist formations, and the way in which these patterns have changed from Homer to the Classical language.

The distributional patterns of the aorist formations can be employed to corroborate the structure of the network described in chapter 2. In chapter 2, the analysis of the structure of the network was based chiefly on semantic criteria. A semantic relation between two given middle uses was assumed if these middle uses had certain salient semantic features in common. The aim of chapter 3 will be to find morphological and diachronical evidence that supports the semantic analysis of chapter 2. In section 1.2.2, it has been set out that this morphological and diachronical evidence hinges on two claims, namely:

(I) A form will always cover a connected region of variant middle uses in the semantic network.

(II) A form will only spread from one variant use to another if these uses are directly semantically related.

I stated that these claims can serve as an empirical tool to test the accuracy of our network structure. Two predictions can be derived from these claims. First, every single aorist formation should cover a contiguous region of middle uses in our network. Second, extensions of the aorist forms should follow the connected paths through the semantic network.

In this chapter, I will focus on two morphological oppositions: (i) the opposition between the passive aorist form in -η- vs. the form in -θη- (section 3.1), and (ii) the opposition between the sigmatic middle aorist vs. the passive aorist forms in -η- and -θη- (section 3.2). The distributions of the formations at issue will be described, both in Homer and in Classical Greek. Special attention will be devoted to those verbs that exhibit a variation between two (or more) aorist formations. Additionally, I will briefly discuss the root and thematic aorist forms (3.2.4). Finally, an attempt will be made at a definition of the abstract schema of the passive aorist form (3.3).
3.1 The Distribution of -η- vs. -θη-

3.1.1 The Distribution of -η- vs. -θη- in Homer

In Homer, the passive aorist in -θη- occurs in the following meanings\(^{218}\):

| Passive | E.g. εβλαφθησαν 'was hindered, harmed', ἔχθην 'been done' |
| Spontaneous process | ἀστάθησαν 'disappeared', ἔξηράθη 'dried up', ἰώνθη 'became warm' |
| Mental process | χολόθη 'became angry', μνησθήνα 'have remembered' |
| Collective motion | ἀγάθη 'gathered (intr.)', ἀσπλάθησαν 'gathered (intr.)', μίχθη 'mingled' |
| Body motion | ἐκινήθην 'moved', εὑνήθην 'went to bed', ἑστάθη 'stood up'\(^{220}\), ὀρμήθη 'set off' |

The passive aorist in -η- occurs in the following meanings:\(^{221}\)

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\(^{218}\) For an inventory of the attested forms in Homer, as well as in a number of classical authors, I refer to Prévoit (1934). The strange form δηρίνθην (Π 756) is often interpreted as a passive aorist of δηρίμως (Chantraine 1958: 404). If this is correct, it would be the only passive aorist form with reciprocal meaning. Furthermore, the inserted -v- is problematic. Janko proposes to read δηρίνθην θήτην (see Kirk e.a. 1985-93).

\(^{219}\) With regard to Homer, only actually attested forms are cited.

\(^{220}\) Two instances in Homer: (i) πορφύρεαν δ' ᾨρα κύμα περιστάθη, οὐρεί ἰσον (λ 243) ('And the dark wave stood about them like a mountain'); (ii) δ' δ' ἐστάθη ἥπετε πέτρην/ ἐμπεδών (ρ 463) ('But he stood firm as a rock'). Ruijgh suggests that σταθη- contains the extended root σταθ-. This root is also found in σταθ-ερός 'stable (adj.)' and σταθ-μός 'standing place, dwelling, stable (noun)'. This root extension must be of a considerable age, witness Latin stabilis 'stable (adj.)' and stabulum 'stable (noun)'. He further hypothesizes that the passive suffix -θη- arose by metanalysis of this formation σταθ-η- as σταθ-θη- (see Ruijgh 1996: 187n75).

\(^{221}\) The attested forms are collected in Risch (1937: 220-1), and Van de Laar (2000: 413-5).
Passive

E.g. πλήγη ‘was hit’, ἐτύπη ‘was hit’

Spontaneous process

ἐπάγη ‘got stuck’, τράφη ‘grew up (intr.)’

Mental process

ἐδότην ‘learned’, ἔμαθην ‘enjoyed’, ἔχαρη ‘rejoiced’

Collective motion

ἐάλη ‘thronged together’, τύμην ‘parted’

Body Motion

ἐάλη ‘crouched’

The two passive forms occur in the same meanings. There are, however, differences in frequency, as we shall see below. The question is what factors may explain why some verbs have the aorist in -η- while others have the form in -θη-. To get an idea of the different distributions of the two forms, it is useful to consider first the following tables.

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222 Τραφή- probably replaced the older intransitive thematic aorist ἔτραφον.

223 Possibly also λίπεν (v.l. Π 507) and διατρυφέω (Γ 363). Ruíjgh (2000: 346) suggests that the anomalous aorist βίωνθα may belong to this group: βιω- < *g*iβω- < *g*iθμ*ε. This analysis would also be in harmony with its spontaneous process meaning which can be paraphrased as ‘enter the state of being alive, come alive’. Possibly also ἐσβη ‘was quenched, went out’, originally a root aorist (*sg*ēs-t, see Risch 1937: 209), was felt to be a passive aorist form given its spontaneous process meaning.

224 From ἔλλω εἰλέω, e.g. κέλεαν κατά άνευ ἐλήμεναι άντις ιόντας (Σ 286) (‘you ask us to go back and throng together inside the city’), see also Ἡφιστάτης εἰλέω (I 1a).

225 E.g., τῷ γ’ ὡς θολεύσαντε διέτμηγεν (A 531) (‘When the two had taken counsel in this way, they parted’).

226 E.g., ὡς τὰ πρῶτα ἐμίγησαν ἐν Ἡφαίστει τίσι δόμοις (Θ 268) (‘how first they layed together [lit. mingled] in the house of Hephaestus’).

227 Ἐάλη (ἐλλω) is the only example that I am aware of. The verb ἐάλη sometimes denotes a volitional action ‘contract one’s body, draw oneself together’, e.g. ὡς εἰπὼν ‘Ἀχιλής ἄλεις μένε (Φ 571) (‘so saying he crouched to await Achilles’), cf. also N 408, Π 403, Y 168, Y 278, X 308 = ω 538. However, the more frequent meaning of ἐάλη (and ἐλλώμαι) is ‘throng together’ (collective motion).

228 Prévo (1935) advocates an aspectual distinction between the two formations: “L’aoriste en -ην exprime une idée générale d’état (aspect indéterminé). L’aoriste nouveau en -θην, d’un sens plus précis, exprime la production du fait, l’événement (aspect déterminé)” (Prévo 1935: 25). Since this definition of the alleged distinction is rather vague, his analysis of the data remains far from convincing. Some critical remarks can also be found in Rosén (1962: 132-4).
Table 1: The semantic distribution of the passive aorist in -θη- and -η- in Homer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Type</th>
<th>θη</th>
<th>η</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous process</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental process</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective motion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body motion</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: The morphological distribution of the passive aorist in -θη- and -η- in Homer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morphological Type</th>
<th>θη</th>
<th>η</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polysyllabic stem</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem in vowel</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem in -σ</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy monosyllabic stem</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ε-vocalism</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stems (C)CαC-, (C)C[C-, (C)CυC-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have taken a sample of 100 tokens of aorist forms in -η- and -θη-, of which 66 turned out to be in -θη-, and 34 in -η-. This set of 100 instances was analyzed with regard to their semantics, and a number of their morphological features. It should be noted that these features relate to the passive aorist stem allomorph. In other words, they relate to the stem variant after which the suffixes -η- or -θη- are placed. Now what can we learn from these figures? With respect to their meaning (see table 1), it can be observed that the formation in -η- prevails in the spontaneous use; in the body motion use the

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229 With the term heavy is meant a syllable structure /CVC/ or /CVCC/.  
230 From the first 4 books of the Iliad the first three occurring passive aorists were taken, from the remaining books of the Iliad and Odysse the first two occurring forms were taken.  
231 Note that the figures in the vertical columns of Table 2 do not add up to 66 or 34. This arises from the fact that most of the forms analyzed were dealt with more than once, as they possessed more than one of the features. For example, κνθη-θη has a stem which ends in a vowel, and which is polysyllabic.  
232 For example, the form ε-τα-θην has a passive stem allomorph τα-. Neither the form of the present stem την-, nor the root τεν- is relevant for my purposes.
formation in -θη- predominates (21 vs. 0). In the table that relates to morphological features, a number of very strong tendencies can be seen. The formation in -θη- tends to occur with

(i) **polysyllabic stems** (41 : 0), e.g. θωρηχθήναι, πημάνθηνι;233
(ii) **stems in a vowel** (31 : 2), e.g. δημηθέντα, ταθείς;234
(iii) **stems in -σ-** (9 : 1), e.g. νάσθη, δαμάσθην.235

The features **heavy monosyllabic stem** (e.g. πλάγγεθη, χρίμφθη, πηχθεν236), and **ε-vocalism** (e.g. ρεχθεν, περιπλέθθη, στρεφθείς) have, according to the table, a slight predilection for the aorists in -θη-. Many forms have both features, e.g. ἐρχθείς, θέλθθη. It must be noted, however, that the table regards *token* frequency. Qua *types*, this predilection is much stronger. There are only a few passive aorist forms with heavy stemyllables or ε-vocalism that have the suffix -η-. These are θερέα (subjunctive), τερσμέναι, τάρρημαν, and πλήμα. Apart from πλήμα (to be discussed below), these exceptions can be explained easily by assuming an analogy with their present stems θέρουμι, τέρσομαι and τέρσομαι. The original forms with zero-grade must have been *θαρ-θη-237, *τρασ-θη- and τραθ-θη- (cf. τραπείομεν). The former pair took the ε-grade, the latter form took the position of the -ρ- from their presents. In sum, we can safely add two rules to those mentioned above. In Homer, the aorist in -θη- occurs with

(iv) **heavy monosyllabic stems**, e.g. πλάγγεθη, χρίμφθη, πηχθεν;
(v) **stems with ε-vocalism**, e.g. ρεχθεν, περιπλέθθη, στρεφθείς.

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233 Most polysyllabic stems are denominative verbs. For example, πημ-άν-θη (πημαίνω), derived from πημα. There are no exceptions to the rule that polysyllabic stems have -θη- in Homer. In Classical Greek, only (απ)-αλλαγ-η- occurs.

234 The few exceptions to this rule, ἐδόθη, ἐκάθισθη and ῥώθη, can be explained historically. The former two originally had a consonant (*δηθ-θη- and *καθ-θη-), the latter probably had a phonetic glide (*σρα-θη-). Incidentally, I would like to refer to a form μύθ- 'be defiled', a 3rd sg. subj. passive aorist, occurring in a Cyrenean inscription (see Buck 1955: 311). It could be an old form (*μιθ-θη, > μιν-) of which the original meaning may have been *'become stained' (i.e. a spontaneous process). The form that is found elsewhere is ἐμιάνθην.

235 The one form with stem in -σ- and suffix -η- is τερσ-θη-. It is probably based on an archaic form *τρασ-θη- (the ε-vocalism is analogical). This would semantically fit in well since its original meaning 'dry up' is a spontaneous physical process - the prototypical meaning of the formation in -η-. The aorist forms with stems in -σ- include the verbs with roots in denticels (e.g. ερράσθη), and the presents in -δζω, -ζω. A number of forms, such as δαμά-σ-θη-ν, has an analogically inserted -σ-.

236 Clearly a secondary form, analogically after πήγνυμι, ἔπιθα and πηκτός. Incidentally, πήγνυμι and πηκτός, in their turn, are probably influenced by their antonyms ῥήγνυμι and ρηκτός (both regularly from zero degree *wrh,g-). Regular forms would be *πήγνυμι and πηκτός (preserved in πηκτός).

237 *Θαρ- from *καθ-τε- (Lindeman’s Law), cf. χαρ- (see Ruijgh 1996: 366).
As to the stem with a phonological structure (C)C itkC-, (C)CtC-, (C)CtC-, a tendency can be observed to occur with the suffix -η- (24 : 7). This predominance of -η- is partly due to the following rule. In Homer, the formation in -η- occurs with

\[(vi)\quad \text{stems of the structure } (C)\text{C}\alpha\text{l}, (C)\text{C}\mu-, (C)\text{C}\varphi-.\]

Although in Homer only the forms évłoη, édýmη and échýrpη239 occur, there is no evidence against this rule. In Classical Greek, this rule is also operative (see below).240

Above, a number of morphological rules (i-vi) were formulated that determine the distribution of the two passive aorist formations. However, there is a group of forms that cannot be explained by means of these morphological rules. These are the forms that possess a stem with the structure (C)C itkC-, (C)CtC-, and (C)CtC-. The question remains to be answered as to what factors determine the aorist of these remaining stem forms. I would suggest that these forms can be explained by a semantic factor. This semantic factor can be summarized by two rules:

1. Forms that denote a spontaneous process have -η-;241
2. Forms that have a passive meaning or denote body motion have -θη-.

Consider the following table:

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238 One might hesitate to include stems -αv- in this rule. The only example in Homer, φάνη, can also be explained by semantic factors (spontaneous process; see below). A further reason not to include stems in -αv- here might be that, in the Classical language, stems in -αv- do not always take the passive form in -η-, cf. ἐφάνην, ἐρράνθην (see next section).

239 'Εχύρη has two alternative forms with, apparently, the same meaning, κεχάροντο and χήρατο. The former may well be old; the latter is either analogically formed to present χαίρω (cf. ἐκάθηρα to καθαίρω), or - more speculatively - a Mycenaean relic (cf. Arc. φθήρω vs. Ion. φθείρω). The regular Ionic form should have been *χέραστα or *χέιρατο.

240 An apparent exception is ἄρθεν (from ἄραρίσκω). However, there may have been a rule that stems with the structure #VIC- receive the suffix -θη-. In Classical Greek, there are more examples that corroborate this rule (see below). Ἄρθείς from αἰρω probably has a long vowel (< ἄρθέρ-).

241 The spontaneous process use can be considered the semantic prototype of the aorist in -η-. Note that this was probably also the original meaning of the formation before it spread to the passive meaning and the body motion meaning (in Homer only ἔκλη). There is some controversy as to the meaning of the suffix -θη, -/η/, in PIE. Was it stative or fientive? The alignment of the formation with the aorist stem in Greek argues in favour of the latter option, as recently advocated by Harðarson (1998). According to Harðarson, the formations with stative meaning found in the daughter-languages (e.g. Latin rub-ē-re 'be red') go back to a yod-present in *-(e)h1-yeθ- that is derived from the aorist in -η-. Ruijgh explains the suffix -η- from a complex suffix *-η-σ- (cf. the Hittite fientive formation in -έσσ-), of which the -σ- can be identified as the aorist suffix. The combination *-η-σ- designated the transition to a state. The -σ- disappeared after the reinterpretation of 2nd sg. forms like πάγης (< *παγν-η-σ-σ> as παγ-η-ς). This led, in turn, to the replacement of 3rd sg. παγης (*παγν-η-σ-) by πάγη (see Ruijgh 1996: 187-9, 366-7). A comparable development is found in 3rd sg. σβή, which, according to Risch (1937: 209), must go back to *σβηέσ-.
These forms are not determined by one of the morphological rules (i-vi). It can be observed that forms that denote spontaneous processes have the suffix -r|-, whereas forms that are passive or denote body motion take the suffix -θη-. The working of these semantic rules can be illustrated by the stems in -αγ- and -απ-. The spontaneous process verbs have -αγ-θη- (έδαγ, έδαγη, -ράγη), whereas the one form with passive meaning has the suffix -θη-: φρασθείς (φράσσω) 'be fenced'.

Likewise, the form σπα-θη- designates a spontaneous process, while τραφ-θη- (τρέπω) designates body motion (see for this form also section 3.2.1). These semantic rules are also reflected in the frequency figures in Table 1. In the table, we can see that passives (19 : 9) and body motions (20 : 0) more often take the suffix -θη-, whereas spontaneous processes prefer -r|- (14 : 10).

The mental process meaning and the collective motion meaning have not yet been considered. Mental processes can have both the suffixes -θη- and -η-. Most fall under the morphological rules (i-vi), e.g. χολόθη [stem in vowel], μνηθήνατ [stem in -σ-], and ἕχωρην [stem in -αρ-]. The two forms that cannot be explained by these morphological rules, ἔδαγην and τάρπημεν, may predate the emergence of the aorist in -θη-. As to the collective motion verbs, it appears - though there are very few forms attested in Homer - that they can have both the form in -θη- and in -η-. The only examples are ἐμίγην and μίχθη (or μείχ?) 'I mingled', and τμάγη 'divide oneself, part'.

It is but a small number of verbs in Homer that cannot be explained by the morphological and semantic factors set forth above. Notable exceptions are the aorists in -

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242 The form -ράγ-θη- (ρήγνυμι) must have been adapted by analogy with (φ)άγ-θη- ((φ)άγνυμι). The regular development would have been *(f)ρη-θη- from *wr̩h-ê-eh-.

243 In spite of their stem forms (ending in a vowel and a heavy syllable, respectively), they have the suffix -η-. Above, I gave a historical explanation: their original stems were *δα-θη- and *τρα-θη-. Alternative middle forms to these passive formations exist, apparently with the same meaning (at least, a semantic nuance is not distinguishable): δεδάθαι (with active causative δέδω); ταρτάμεθα, τεταρτάμεθα, τετράκεμος. The reduplicated formations are probably old. The sigmatic actives with causative meaning are relatively recent, and so are the sigmatic middles that have been derived from them. The occurrence of the suffix -η- with verbs expressing mental events is probably old. Evidence is the formation PIE *wid-êh- (‘see’; hence ‘have in mind, know’) that can be reconstructed on the basis of Lat. videre ‘see’, OCS. videti ‘see’, and perhaps Greek ἰδεμεν < *η-ιδ-ε-μεν < *-wid-êh- (Ruijgh 1996: 194). Another very old formation might be PIE *mn-êh- as in ἐμανήν ‘raged’ (not attested in Homer), and OCS. 3 pl. mînê-ê ‘they believed’ (see Rix e.a. 1998).

244 The form ἐάθη ‘thronged together’ cannot be used as evidence here, since it falls under the morphological rule (mentioned above) that stems in -αλ- take the form in -η-.
that have a passive meaning, and do not fall under the morphological rules (i-vi): ἐβλαβην, ἐτύπη, πλήγη, ἀναβροχέν. For these cases, I would like to give a tentative explanation. The passive forms ἐβλάβη, ἐτύπη and πλήγη may have been formed by analogy with verbs expressing violent, destructive events such as -ράγη, διατρυφέν, ἐδάμη (cf. also post-Homeric ἐκόπην?). The form πληγ-η is exceptional in another respect. After all, one would expect a form in -θη- (e.g. πλάγχθη) for heavy stem syllables. Perhaps *πλάγ-η- (< *πλήγα-) was influenced by the verbs with aorist stems in -ἀγ-, e.g. ἀγ-η-, ἀγ-η-, παγ-η-. Not surprisingly, in later Greek the anomalous form πληγ-η- is sometimes replaced by synchronically more regular forms. Thus, the compounds ἐκπλαγήναι and ἐκπληχθῆναι (only E. Tr. 183) occur, used in the special meaning 'to be stricken with terror'.

There are two variant forms: βλαβη- and βλαφθη- . The former is probably older. In Homer, βλαφθη- is more frequent, but that could be due to the demands of the hexameter. In Classical Greek it is somewhat less frequent. How can this alternation be explained? I would suggest the following explanation. Βλαβ-η- might have orginally designated a spontaneous process 'got stuck, stumbled'. There are a number of instances with this meaning in Homer. For example,245

(1) ὁ δὲ που αὐτὸν
ἐβλαβεῖν ἐν πεδίῳ, ἀι κείσει γε φέρτεραί ἥσαν (Ψ 461)
And the other [mares] have stumbled out there in the plain, they that were superior up to that point.

Subsequently, the βλαβ-η- acquired a true passive meaning 'was hindered, harmed'. This, in turn, led to the creation of the alternative form in -θη-. Eventually, the semantic contrast became faint, and the two variants could be used both in the spontaneous meaning and in the passive meaning.

The following table roughly summarizes the distribution of the forms in -η- and -θη- in Homer:

Table 3: The distribution of the passive aorists in -η- and -θη- in Homer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spontaneous Process</th>
<th>Passive Body Motion</th>
<th>Collective Motion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polysyllabic stem</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem in vowel</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem in -σ-</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy monosyllabic stem</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ε-vocalism</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stems (C)Caλ-, (C)Caμ-, (C)Caρ-</td>
<td>η</td>
<td>η</td>
<td>η</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining stems</td>
<td>η</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>ηθη</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

245 Cf. also Ψ 545.
In this section, I have also discussed the exceptions (e.g. βλαβ-η-, πληγ-η-) to this distributional pattern. I tried to explain most of the exceptions either by their historical background or by occasional analogical processes.
3.1.2 The Distribution of -η- vs. -θη- in Classical Greek

In the previous section, we have seen that distributions of the aorist in -η- and the aorist in -θη- in Homer could be explained by a number of morphological rules, and a number of additional semantic rules. To get an idea of the distribution of the two passive aorist formations in Classical Greek, some figures may once again be helpful:

Table 4: The semantic distribution of the passive aorist in -θη- and -η- in Classical Greek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>θη</th>
<th>η</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous Process</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Process</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Motion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Motion</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The token-frequency of the passive in -η- has decreased clearly (10 : 90) compared to that in Homer (34 : 66). As in Homer, the typical use of the formation in -η- is the spontaneous use (5 instances out of 10). The formation in -θη- is relatively infrequent in the spontaneous use (6 out of 90).

246 The sample of 100 instances was taken from Herodotus: from the first book the 12 first occurring passive aorists were taken, and from the remaining books the 11 first occurring instances.
Table 5: The morphological distribution of the passive aorist in -θη- and -η- in Classical Greek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>θη</th>
<th>η</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polysyllabic stem</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem in vowel</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem in -σ</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy monosyllabic stem</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ε-vocalism</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem #VC-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stems (C)CaC-, (C)CiC-, (C)CoC-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of morphological rules can be inferred from the figures. As in Homer, the aorist in -θη- occurs with the following stems:

(i) **polysyllabic stems**;
(ii) **stems in vowels**;
(iii) **stems in -σ-**;
(iv) **heavy monosyllabic stems**;\(^{247}\)
(v) **stems with ε-vocalism**.\(^{248}\)

As in Homer, there is a tendency for stems of the structure (C)CaC-, (C)CiC-, (C)CoC- to occur with the aorist in -η-. As in Homer, the form in -η- occurs with

(vi) **stems of the structure (C)Caλ-, (C)Caμ-, (C)Caρ-.**\(^{249}\)

For example, ἐστάλην (στέλλω), ἔσφαλην (σφάλλω), ἔδόμην\(^{250}\) (δάμνημι), ἔδάρην (δέρω), ἐκάρην\(^{251}\) (κείρω), ἐπάρην (πείρω), ἐσπάρην (σπείρω), ἐφθάρην (φθείρω).

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\(^{247}\) E.g., ἀνείψθην, ἀλήψθην/ἀλάμφθην, and the novel form ἐτήχθην (Eur., Pl.), formed under influence of the present and the active aorist forms. The form ἐκλήγην is the only exception.

\(^{248}\) E.g., ἐθρέφθην (τρέφω), ἐπλέξθην (πλέκω), ἐστρέφθην (στρέφω), ἐτρέφθην (τρέπω). There are a few exceptions: ἐλέγην (from λέγω 'gather'), ἐστέρην, ἡγγέλην (E. IT 932). These forms are, however, less common than the variant forms in -θη-, ἐλέχθην, ἐστερήθην, ἡγγέλθην. Ἐλέγην and ἡγγέλην are younger than the variants in -θη-.

\(^{249}\) The - at least partial - productivity of these rules is shown by the replacement of the old thematic aorist ἐπτάρον 'sneezed' (πτάρνυμαι) by the aorist in -η- ἐπτάρην (Arist. Pr. 887\(^{255}\), Hippocr.)

\(^{250}\) Ἐδόμην is Homeric and poetic. Attic prose has ἔδομάσθην (Xen., Isocr.).

\(^{251}\) The form κερθεῖς (with -ε- from κείρω, ἐκείρα or older ἐκερα) is found at Pi. P. 4.82 (cf. rule v).
Table 6: The distribution of the passive aorists in -η- and -θη- in Classical Greek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Spontaneous Process Mental process</th>
<th>Passive Body Motion</th>
<th>Collective Motion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polysyllabic stem</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem in vowel</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stem in -σ-</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy monosyllabic stem</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ε-vocalism</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stems #VC-</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stems (C)Cāλ-, (C)Cēμ-, (C)Cēρ-</td>
<td>η</td>
<td>η</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stems (C)Cēκ-, (C)Cēπ-, (C)Cēφ-</td>
<td>η</td>
<td>η</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remaining stems (C)CēC-, (C)CēC-, (C)CēC-</td>
<td>η</td>
<td>θη</td>
<td>η/θη</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of exceptions to this pattern have already been discussed in this section. In the next section, I will discuss those verbs that show a variation between the two aorist forms.

3.1.3 Morphological variation

In the previous section I have set forth the morphological and semantic principles that determine the distribution between the aorist in -η- and the aorist in -θη-. However, the boundary between the two formations is not entirely clear-cut. Many verbs exhibit a variation between the two forms. The aim of this section is to take a closer look at those variant forms that are not covered by the morphological and semantic rules that were proposed in the previous section.\(^{262}\) In most cases, the variation can be attributed to a conflict between the morphological rules and the semantic rules. Generally, the alternative form that is not expected on the basis of the aforementioned rules occurs less frequently, or even only sporadically. Additionally, stylistic factors may be relevant. In comedy there is a statistical preference for the form in -η- for verbs that show variant aorists, while tragedy prefers the forms in -θη-.\(^{263}\) Here follows an inventory of the verbs that display morphological variation.\(^{264}\)

\(^{262}\) In other words, variant forms such as ἐστρέφθην vs. ἐστράφην will not be discussed since they can be explained by rule (v) and rule (vii), respectively.

\(^{263}\) This can be concluded from the figures given by Lautensach (1911: 228). He collected the forms that occur in a metrically equivalent environment. With the stems in labials and gutturals, the ratios are as follows: -η- tragedy 58x, comedy 29x vs. -θη- tragedy 69x, comedy 13x.

\(^{264}\) The verbs are collected by Prévol (1934: 24 [Homer/Herodotus], 45-6 [drama], 63 [Plato]).

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• ἀπηλλάγην vs. ἀπηλλάξθην (ἀπαλλάττω). Since these forms have polysyllabic stems, the meaning of these forms is ‘depart’ (body motion) or ‘be removed’ (passive), the passive aorist form in -θη- is to be expected according to our rules. However, in Attic several stems in -σγ- show morphological variation, for example, ἀπηλλάγην, ἐμάγην (only in Plato), ἔσφάγην, and ἔτάγην (once in the comic Phrynichus. The regular form is ἐτάχθην). Outside Attic we find forms in -θη-. Thus, ἀπηλλάξθην is the commonest form in Herodotus (Did he take ἀπηλλαγήνναι (8.84.1) and ἀπαλλαγήσεσθαι (2.120.3), from Attic?); ἔσφάγην is found in Herodotus, Pindar, and Euripides (once, at IT 177 [1yr.]).

• ἐβάφην vs. ἐβάφησθην (βάπτω). According to the rule stating that stems in -αφ- take a passive in -η-, ἐβάφην is the regular form (vii). Βαφ-θη- only occurs at Ar. Fr. 416 [ἀπεβάφηθη], and might be explained by the strong association of passive meaning with the form in -θη- (see table 4: 54x -θη- vs. 2x -η-). There may also have been an analogy with βλάπτω: ἐβλάφηθην = βάπτω : X.

• ἐξύγην vs. ἐξεύχθην (ξεύγνυμι). The latter form is regular because it has a stem with a heavy syllable. It occurs more frequently. However, it does not occur in comedy, which may suggest that ἐξέψηθην is of a higher register (cf. Lautensach 1911: 255). Ἐξύγην was probably formed by analogy with μείγνυμι: ἐμείγθην : ἐμίγνυμι = ἐξέψηθην : ἐξεύχθην : X (= ἐξύγην).

• ἐθλίβην vs. ἐθλίφθην (θλίβω). Since these forms have a passive meaning ‘was squeezed, compressed’, the latter form is in accordance with the semantic tendency. It is attested slightly earlier (in Plato, whereas the former appears in Aristotle). The aorist in -η- was probably formed by analogy with ἐτρίβην: ἐτρίφθην, which is both phonologically and semantically similar.

• ἐκάντα vs. ἐκαύθην (καίω). After the disappearance of the ζ, the stem ended in a vowel. Ἐκαυθήθην was formed in accordance with the rule which states that stems in vowels get the -θη- form. However, the older variant did not disappear.

• ἐκλίνην vs. ἐκλίνθην (κλίνω). The passive form is either volitional ‘lie down’ or passive ‘be lain down’, so the suffix -θη- is regular. Originally, -ἐκλίνην (only in compounds) was probably a somewhat colloquial variant (as mentioned above, the comics prefer the variant form in -η-) since it is attested first in Aristophanes and Pherecrates, then also Plato. Elsewhere the older ἐκλίνηθην occurs. The more recent variant is possibly formed by analogy with forms like ἔφηνα: ἔφανην = ἐκλίνα : X (= ἐκλίνην).

• ἐκόπτην vs. ἐκόφθην (κόπτω). The passive meaning favours the latter form. Ἐκόφθην however, is post-Classical. Ἐκόπτην may have been created by analogy with the synonymous forms ἐπλήθην and ἔτυπην (see section 3.1.1). Furthermore,

265 In the same way, ἐφλίβην in Hippocrates can be explained analogically to ἐτρίβην and ἐθλίβην. *Ἐφλίβην is unattested.
it is possible that the rule which states that stems in -απ- take -η- (rule vii) spread incidentally to this stem in -οπ-.

- **ἐκρόφην** vs. **ἐκρώφην**\(^{266}\) (κρύπτω). The former occurs only at S. Ai. 1145, whereas the latter is highly common (Hom., Aesch., Soph., Hdt., Eur., Th., Ar.), and it is also the form we would expect considering its passive meaning. The occurrence of ἐκρόφην is possibly due to an analogy with the verbs with passive aorist stems in -αφ-, e.g. ἀπάττω : ἔφραφην.

- **ἐμάγην** vs. **ἐμάχθην** (μάττω). The former occurs once in Plato (Thet. 191d), the latter is post-Classical. On the basis of their passive meaning ('was kneaded'), the latter is to be expected, but see under ἀπηλλάγην above.

- **ἐπλάκην** vs. **ἐπλέχθην** (πλέκω). Although the latter is attested earlier, in Homer, it is probably more recent, considering its ε-vocalism (which, in turn, explains the suffix -θη- (rule v)). Both variant forms can have a passive meaning 'be entangled, intertwined', as well as a volitional meaning 'entangle oneself, embrace' (body motion or collective motion?). ἐπλάκην may be absent from Homer because it only fits into the hexameter with difficulty. In Classical Greek, it is more frequent than ἐπλέχθην. The ε-vocalism of ἐπλέχθην must have been introduced under the influence of πλέκω or ἐπλέξα.

- **ἐρρίφην** vs. **ἐρρίφθην** (ρίπτω). A priori, one would expect the form to be in -θη- since the verb stem is heavy. However, both forms are found and roughly with the same frequency. The secondary -φ- of ἐρρίφθην, which was taken from ἐρρίφην (Duhoux 2000: 381n3), or from perfect ἐρρίφθαι (C.J. Ruijgh, pers. comm.), is an indication that it is more recent. It is possible that the verb was influenced by the verbs having passive aorist stems in -αφ-η-. This rule might also be responsible for the highly marginal aorist form ἡλιφην- (only once, in Pl. Phdr. 258b; ἡλιφθην first attested in Aeschylus). Further, an analogy with the pair ἀπάττω : ἔφραφην could have played a role.

- **ἐστέρην** vs. **ἐστερήθην** (στερέω). The former only appears in Euripides, and is possibly a backformation of the regularly formed future στερήσωμαι. According to Ruijgh (1991: 119n32), this might be an old form, evolved from *strh₁-éh₁-.\(^{266}\)

- **ἐσφάγην** vs. **ἐσφάχθην** (σφάξω). The former occurs in Aeschylus and Euripides. Considering the passive meaning of the forms, ἐσφάχθην is to be expected. See further under the heading ἀπηλλάγην above.

- **ἐτάγην** vs. **ἐτάχθην** (τάττω). The former is attested only once, namely in the comic poet Phryneichus, whilst the latter form shows a high frequency. Above, it has been

\(^{266}\) 'Ἐκρόβην is late, though mss. Eur. Supp. 543 have κροβήσωμαι, also printed by Diggle. The increase of passive forms with stems in velar and labial voiced stops is a typical post-classical phenomenon (see Blass-Debrunner-Rehkopf 1979: 60, Ruijgh 1991: 480n8), e.g. ἔθροβην, ἔφυγην.
noted that in comedy a tendency exist to use the forms in -νη. See further under ἀπηλλάγην above.

- ἐτάφην vs. ἐθάφθην (θάπτω). The latter form violates the rule which states that stems in -αφ- have aorists in -νη (vii). It occurs only very infrequently and is clearly more recent, considering the absence of aspirate dissimilation (‘Grassmann’). It was probably created by analogy with ἐβάφην : ἐβάφθην, or with βλάκτω : ἐβλάκθην.

- ἔτριβην vs. ἔτριφθην (τρίβω). We would expect the latter form since the stem is heavy (cf. τρίβω). ἔτριβην, however, occurs more frequently and is probably older (see Ruijgh 1991: 480). Possibly, ἔτριβην originally referred to a spontaneous process ‘waste away, wear out (intr.)’, whereas ἔτριφθην has a strictly passive meaning ‘be rubbed, be worn out’. In historical Greek, however, this semantic distinction had disappeared. The -νη- must be analogical, possibly by analogy with verbs like *τάκω : ἐτάκην = τρίβω : X (>> ἔτριβην).

- ἤγγέλην vs. ἤγγέλθην (ἄγγέλλω). The former occurs only at E. IT 932, and in an inscription (Ἰ. 78.19 [ca. 422 BC?], see Threatte 1996: 557), whereas ἤγγέλθην is very common, and regular - it is polysyllabic (rule i) and it has e-vocalism (rule v). ἤγγέλην may have been formed under influence of the stem in -αλ- such as στέλλω : στέταλην.

- ἡλίφην vs. ἡλεῖφθην (ὕλεῖμω), see ἔρριφην above.

- συνελέγην vs. συνελέχθην (συνλέγω). In Attic, συνελέγην is more frequent than συνελέχθην. This form, in turn, is preferred by Herodotus. The occurrence of the suffix -νη- with this verb could be the result of one of several factors: (a) the need to bring about a contrast with ἐλέχθην, passive of λέγω ‘say’; (b) the influence of synonymous (συν)εμίγην; or conversely, (c) there might have been some influence of the stems in -αγ- that have -νη-, e.g. ἀπηλλάγην, ἐκάγην.

- ἐψύχθην vs. ἐψύχην (ψύχω). The former is the oldest (e.g. K 575), and it is also the expected form since the verb stem is long (cf. ψύχω). In the creation of ἐψύχην, its meaning ‘grow cold’ (a spontaneous process, e.g. Ar. Nu. 151, Pl. Phdr. 242a) may have played a role.267

To conclude, in sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 I argued that the distribution of the aorists in -νη- and -θη- can be explained primarily by means of a number of morphological rules. With a number of stems, however, a semantic tendency appeared to be relevant to the distribution of the two variant suffixes. In section 3.1.3, verbs were discussed that possess both variant aorist forms. For each individual verb, the specific morphological and semantic factors were analyzed that may have motivated the emergence of the variant forms.

267 Ἐψύχην is post-Classical.
Fig. 1: The Distribution of the Sigmatic Middle Aorist and the Aorist in -οη- in Homer

- Distribution of the sigmatic middle aorist
- Intersection of the distributions of the sigmatic middle aorist and the aorist in -οη-
- Distribution of the aorist in -οη-
- Extension of the aorist in -οη-

- Indirect Reflexive: ἐλύσατο
- Perception: γεύσασθαι
- Mental Activity: βουλέσατο
- Speech Act: μυθήσατο
- Direct Reflexive: κείρασθαι
- Body Motion: ὑφησάτο ὑφῆθη
- Mental Process: χολώσατο χολώθη
- Spontaneous Process: ιάνθη
- Collective Motion: λέξασθαι ἰγέρθην
- Passive: ἐβλάφθην
3.2 The Distribution of the Sigmatic Middle vs. the Passive Aorist Form

In the course of the history of the Greek language, a gradual expansion of the passive aorist form can be observed. This expansion take place mainly at the cost of the sigmatic middle aorist. As a result, in the modern Greek language the sigmatic middle aorist form has disappeared completely. In section (3.0), this expansion of the passive aorist form was presented as a test-case of our semantic network. This was built on the assumption that the extension of the aorist form follows the connected paths through the semantic network. In the following sections, this assumption will be tested through analysis of Homeric and of Classical Greek.

3.2.1 Sigmatic Middle vs. Passive Aorist Form in Homer

In the previous section, the distribution of the passives in -\(\text{-}\eta\) was contrasted with that of passives in -\(\text{-}\eta\). The focus of this section concerns the distribution of the passive in -\(\text{-}(\theta)\eta\)- as compared to that of the sigmatic middle aorist. The uses of the aorist in -\(\text{-}(\theta)\eta\)- have already been discussed above. The Homeric uses of the sigmatic middle aorist are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Reflexive</td>
<td>E.g. ἔλυσα, ἐτιμήσασθε; media tantum: ἐδέξατο, ἐκτήσατο;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Activity</td>
<td>βουλεύσατο, μησάτο, μητίσατο;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Act</td>
<td>μαντεύσατο, μυθήσατο, φθέγξατο;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>γεύσασθαι, δηήσατο;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Reflexive</td>
<td>κείρασθαι, ἀλέψατο;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocal</td>
<td>δηρίσαστο, μαχήσαστο;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Motion</td>
<td>ὁμῆσαστο, κλινάμενος;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Motion</td>
<td>λέξασθαι(^{268});</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Process</td>
<td>ἀσάμην, ἤρασάμην, ἤδέσατο, ἐχολόσατο.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sigmatic middle never occurs with the spontaneous middle nor with the passive meaning.\(^{269}\) Notice, further, that all sigmatic middle aorists have an animate subject, and that most of them are volitional (with the exception of the mental processes, e.g.

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\(^{268}\) I know of only one example: Τρώας μὲν λέξασθαι ἐφέστοι ὄσσοι ἔστιν (B 125) ('and the Trojans should gather, all those who dwell in the city').

\(^{269}\) Sigmatic middle aorists with passive meaning do not exist in historical Greek. The places that are often mentioned as examples of a passive meaning such as κρινάθιον (\(\Theta\ 35\), ἐπέερετ' ο Κριός (Simon. Fr. 22D) and στεφανωσάμενον (Pi. O. 7.15) are at least open to considerable doubt. K-G (I: 118-9) rightly explains the former as an indirect reflexive 'soll man sich (sibi) auswählen', and the latter two as direct reflexives. Thus, στεφανωσάμενον is paraphrased by K-G as 'der sich den Kranz auf's Haupt gesetzt hat'. As to the Simonides line, Koniaris (1986: 347) convincingly argues that Simonides plays with the athlete's name, using the verb πέκομαι. When referring to people the verb means 'to comb'; in reference to animals, the verb means 'to shear'. Using πέκομαι instead of κείρομαι, the athlete is presented as a semi-human, in accordance with his name Κριός ('Ram'). Thus we can render the verse as 'Ram had himself sheared'. By switching to a passive τὸν Κριόν ὡς ἐπέχθη (Ar. Nu. 1356), Aristophanes goes even further, according to Koniaris. By saying that Κριός "is shorn", he is presented as a "ram" tout court. For a discussion of the problem, I refer to Bers (1984: 103) and Molyneux (1992).
Recall that, in Homer, the passive aorist form has a passive use, a spontaneous process use, a mental process use, a collective motion use, and a body motion use (see 3.1.1). The mapping of the sigrmatic middle and the passive aorists in -η- and -θη- onto the usage types is shown in Fig. 1 (p. 110). Again, we can observe that the validity of the first principle of section (3.0) is confirmed. Both the aorist in -(θη)- and the sigrmatic middle aorist cover a connected region of middle meanings in the semantic network. In the mental process use, the body motion use, and the collective motion use, an overlap can be observed between the distribution of the sigrmatic middle and that of the aorist in -θη-. From here on, this overlap will be the focus of our interest.

One of the remarkable features of Homeric verbal morphology is the alternation of passive aorist form and middle sigrmatic aorist with verbs of motion and mental process verbs (generalizing, in the intransitive middles with animate subjects). Consider the following examples:

(2) a. τοῦ δ’ Ὀδυσσέα μάλα θυμὸν ἀποκτημένοιο χολαθή (Δ 494)
For his slaying was Odysseus mightily angered at heart.

b. τὸν δ’ Ὀδυσσέας ἔταρχοι χολασάμενος βέλε δουρὶ (Δ 501)
Him Odysseus, angered for his comrade’s sake, struck with his spear (...).

In both lines, Odysseus is furious about the killing of his comrade Leucus, and both verbs refer to the same event. Quite a number of verbs have this formal contrast, as it appears, without showing a difference in meaning. Inventories of alternating aorist forms are given by K-G (I: 118), Schwyzer (I: 760-1), and Chantraine (1958: 405-7). The semantic classification is mine.

**Mental processes**

- ἄσσαμην - ἄνοικην ‘was mistaken’ (ἀώω)
- ἡδόσατο - αἰδεσθεν ‘respected’ (αἰδικομαὶ)
- κοιμήσατο - κοιμήθημεν ‘fell asleep, went to bed’
- ἐκορέσατο - κορέσθην ‘was satisfied’ (no present in Homer)
- ἐμνήσατο - μνησθήνα ‘remembered’ (μνημήσαμοι)
- νεμεσισταται - νεμεσίσθη ‘became angry’ (νεμεσίσαμοι)
- τερόμενος - τερέρθηθε, τέρορθη, τάρθημεν, τραπεζίμοιον ‘enjoy’ (τέρπω)
- ἐχλωσατο - χολάθη ‘became angry’ (χολάω)
- ὀίσσατο - ὀίσθηθ ‘thought, suspected’ (ὁίομαὶ)
- πειρήσατο - πειρήθη ‘tested, tried, experienced’ (πειράομαὶ)
- φράσατο - ἐφραζθη ‘notice, understand’ (φράζω)

**Body motion**

- ἄξασθαι - ἕγηθη ‘darted’ (ἀέσσω)
- ἰσσίσατο - ἰστείσθη ‘leaned on’ (ἐρείδω)
- κλίνάμενος - ἐκλίνηθην ‘lay down’ (κλίνω)
- νοσοφύσλην - νοσοφύσθεις ‘retired, left’ (νοσοφύζομαὶ)
- ὠρήσατο - ὠριμήθη ‘set off’ (ὁρμάω)
- τανυσάμενος - τανυςθεὶς ‘stretched out’ (τανύω)

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270 The verb involves physical motion ‘lying down’, cf. κλίνομαὶ.

271 Admittedly, πειράομαὶ ‘test, try, experience’ is not a true mental process. Yet, in ch. 5 it will be argued that the middle inflection expresses an element of cognitive involvement of the subject (which is absent in semantics of the active πειράω): the subject acquires information as a result of the event.
This list can be extended with the following verbs. Again, the variant formations are used with apparently identical meanings. Both the sigmatic middle and the passive aorist forms designate volitional actions.

**ελιξάμενος - ελιξθέντων** 'went to and fro, turned around quickly' (ἐλίςσω)

(3)  

a. κέκλετο δὲ Τράω σειν ελιξάμενος καθ' ὁμιλον (M 467)  
And he went about in the throng, and called to the Trojans (...).

b. σύκετ' (...) οἰὼν οὐδ' ἀγγελον ἀπονέσθαι (...) ἐλιξθέντων ὑπ' Ἀχαϊῶν (M 74)  
(...), I think that not one man will return back as a messenger (...), before the Achaean when they turn around.

**ἐλελιξάμενος - ἐλελίξθη 'id.' (ἐλελίζω)**

(4)  

a. [snake] τὴν δ' ἐλελιξάμενος πέρνυγος λάβεν ἀμφισχύνα (B 316)  
But he coiled himself and caught her by the wing as she screamed at him.

b. στῆτ' ἐλελιξθέντες, καὶ ἀμύνετε νηλεῖς ἤμαρ (L 588)  
Turn around and stand, and ward off the pitiless day (...).

**τρεψάμενοι - τραφθήναι** 'turned' (τρέπω)

(5)  

a. οἱ δ' εἰς ὀρχηστῶν τε καὶ ἱμερόσσαν ἁοίδην τρεψάμενοι τέρποντο (α 422 = σ 305)  
But they turned to dance and heart-stirring song, and made merry.

b. εἰ δ' ἐθέλεις τραφθήναι ἀν' Ἑλλάδα (ο 80)  
And if you wish to make a tour through Hellas, (...).

The question remains as to how we can account for this remarkable alternation. To what extent can the demands of the hexameter be held responsible for this variation? In order to provide an answer to these questions, it is insightful to examine the sigmatic middle and passive aorist forms that are metrically equivalent. In the following, I will argue that, on the basis of these metrically equivalent forms, one can conclude that the sigmatic middle variants belong to an older stage of the epic tradition.

Forms that are metrically equivalent are

- **2nd pl. indicative, imperative:** -σασθε/-θητε;
- **3rd sg. and pl. imperative:** -σασθω(ν)/-θητω(ν);
- **2nd/3rd dual primary and secondary:** -σάσθων, -σάσθην/-θητον, -θητην;
- **infinitive:** -σασθαυ/-θηναι.  

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272 See section 2.3.2, note 216.

273 Ἐλελίζω is used as an equivalent to ἐλίςσω.
The occurrences of the sigmatic middle and passive aorist forms of those verbs that have both forms are shown in the following table:

Table 7: Occurrences of sigmatic middle and passive aorist forms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>-άμην</th>
<th>-όην</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which metrically equivalent</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excluding έμνησάμην/έμνήσθην, ἐπειρησάμην/ἐπειρήθην</td>
<td>3 (=11.1%)</td>
<td>24 (=88.9%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall occurrence of sigmatic middles of the verbs that have the alternation is higher (111 : 88). However, if we exclude the forms that are not metrically equivalent we get another picture. From themetrical equivalents, Homer uses the sigmatic middle aorist 18 times, and the passive aorist form (η and θη) 33 times. Of these 18 instances of sigmatic middle forms, 15 are forms of the aorists έμνησάμην (13x) and ἐπειρησάμην (2x). These two forms may belong to Homer’s Ionic dialect since these verbs also exhibit an alternation in Classical Ionic. This leaves us with only three cases in which the poet used the sigmatic aorist (άίξασθαι Χ 195, Ψ 773, κομήσασθε Ι 705) instead of the possible passive aorist form. Conversely, in contexts where he was free to choose, he used the passive aorist form 24 times. This is best illustrated by the forms ὀρμήθητην and ὀρμηθήναι. Although Homer could have employed the metrically equivalent forms ὀρμήσασθε and ὀρμήσασθαι, he only used the passive aorist forms (two and six times, respectively). On the other hand, sigmatic middle forms such as ὀρμήσασθα, which is metrically different from ὀρμήθην, were preserved for reasons ofmetrical conveniency.

We may conclude that the sigmatic middle designating mental processes and body motions (apart from έμνησάμην and ἐπειρησάμην) can be considered a relic of an earlier language stage, preserved by Homer as metrical alternatives to the passive forms. This would mean that, in this respect, the poet’s own language was not very different from Classical Greek.

In the earlier stage of the language, in which the passive form was restricted to the passive and spontaneous meaning, the morphological opposition between sigmatic middle and passive form probably implied a semantic distinction. For instance, ἔτρεψα�ην (τρέπω) may have had the volitional, reflexive-like meaning ‘I turned myself’, whereas

274 The forms found were: (sigmatic middle [18x]) αίξασθαι Χ 195, Ψ 773, κομήσασθε Ι 705, μνήσασθε Ζ 112, Η 371, Θ 174, Λ 287, Ο 487, 662, 734, Π 270, Π 185, Σ 299, μνήσασθα Π 671, μνήσασθαι ι 217, λ 71, πειρήσασθαι Θ 18, ψ 135; (passive form [33x]) αϊδάσθητε β 65, αἰχθητην Ω 97, αἰξθητην Ε 854, κλινθήτην Κ 350, κλινθήτην Ψ 335, κομήθητω Ι 427, κομήθηται Β 355, η 343, θ 295, ε 411, 525, μνηθήται δ 118, νευσασθητε Π 544, β 64, 98, ὀρμηθήτην Ε 12, Π 530, ὀρμηθήναι Σ 559, Σ 313, Σ 282, μ 126, πειρήσατε Κ 444, πειρήσατο Ψ 553, θ 205, πειρηθήτω Ε 220, Υ 349, Φ 225, ψ 804, ω 240, έτρεψατε ρ 174, τρεπθήναι ψ 212, τεταρτήτω ψ 300, τρεψθήναι ο 80.

275 Cf. Herodotus: έμνήσθην (e.g. 2.20.1), ἐμνησάμην (e.g. 7.39.1); ἐπειρηθήν (1.206.2), ἐπειρησάμην (e.g. 1.84.2).
ετράφην must have been strictly passive 'I was turned'\(^{276}\). Likewise, ετερψάμην (τέρηκα) might have had a reflexive-like meaning 'I amused myself'\(^{277}\), whereas ετάρφην was passive 'I was amused'. It is quite conceivable that the form in -η- designated a spontaneous event 'I became amused'. These fine semantic distinctions disappeared by the expansion of the passive form in -η- and -θη- to the body motion and mental process middle.

In Fig. 1 (on p. 110), the extensions of the aorist in -(θ)η- to the body motion use, the mental process use, and the collective motion use that took place in the course of the epic tradition are indicated by the thick arrows. It can be observed that the form in -(θ)η— spreads to uses that have a direct semantic relation within the network.

### 3.2.2 Sigmatic Middle vs. Passive Aorist Form in Classical Greek

In this section, I will treat the two passive aorist forms (in -η- and -θη-) as one formation, since, in Classical Greek, they are essentially equivalent with respect to their semantics. For Classical Greek, we can discern - roughly - the following distributional pattern.\(^{278}\)

The sigmatic *middle* is used in the meanings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indirect Reflexive</th>
<th>Speech Act</th>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Mental Activity</th>
<th>Reciprocal</th>
<th>Direct Reflexive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E.g. ἐκποιησάμην; (media tantum) ἡγοισάμην, ἔδεξαμήν, ἐκποιησάμην</td>
<td>(mostly media tantum) ἡταοσάμην, ἐλοιδορησάμην, παρακελευσάμην</td>
<td>(mostly media tantum) ἐγενσάμην, ἔκσεισάμην, ἐκποιησάμην</td>
<td>(mostly media tantum) ἐβολυκευσάμην, ἐλοιγσάμην, ἐτεχνοσάμην</td>
<td>(mostly media tantum) ἐμαχεσάμην, ἡγανισάμην(^{279})</td>
<td>ἐκευράμην, ἐλοινσάμην, παρακελευσάμην</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^{276}\) There is also a thematic middle form ἔτραφετο, which is probably older than ἔτερψάμην and ἔτραφην. The thematic aorist can be used both in a volitional meaning (body motion) (e.g. τ 389), and in non-volitional meaning, e.g. ἔτραφετ᾽ αἰχμῆ (Ἀ 237); πᾶσι δ᾽ ἄρα χρώτῃ ἐτράφετο (φ 413).

\(^{277}\) There is also a reduplicated middle aorist τετόρητο. This middle form is probably based on a causative reduplicated form *τéταρπαν* 'I amused'. This causative was replaced by the sigmatic form ἔτερψα. As a decausative, τετόρητο denotes a change of state of the subject 'became amused'.

\(^{278}\) The verb πειράσαμαι has a complex semantics and is therefore hard to classify. In ch. 5, I will argue that, at least in Homer, its middle voice expresses an element of cognition. Furthermore, also the fact that the verb has two aorist forms, ἐπειρασάμην and ἐπειράθην, constitutes a problem. In Herodotus, as in Homer, the two forms seem to be used indiscriminately (e.g., in 3.152 and in 7.135.3). In Thucydides, however, it appears that the sigmatic middle occurs with the meaning 'experience, get acquainted with', construed with a genitive complement (2.44.2, 2.85.2, 4.114.4) or absolutely (5.69.1, 4.117.1), whereas the passive aorist has the meaning 'try', and is construed with an infinitive (2.5.5, 6.92.4) or absolutely (2.33.2). Once it is the passive of the verb πειράω 'seduce' (6.54.4). There is one single exception to this pattern in 4.60.2. Here, πειράσασθαι [v.l. -σθαι] occurs in the meaning 'try', construed with an infinitive.

\(^{279}\) The verb ἡμιλλάδην ‘compete, strive for, race, hurry’ deviates from the typical reciprocal since it does not necessarily involve a sense of rivalry. It may indeed only imply that the subject makes great physical effort - typically in order to move forward, e.g., καὶ μην γέροντι δεῖπν ἡμιλλάταν ποθί (Ἑ. Ορ. 456) ('Lo, hither straineth on with aged feet'). The verb has thus become similar to a body motion verb. This semantic shift may explain why the verb usually has a passive aorist form ἡμιλλάθην. The sigmatic middle ἡμιλλησάμην occurs twice only in Euripides (Ἡλ. 1471 εξ' , Fr. 764), and late.
The passive aorist form is used in the following meanings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Body Motion</td>
<td>ἀπηλλάγην, ὁρμήθην, ἐκλίνθην</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Process</td>
<td>ἑμνήθην, ἐφοβήθην, ἑσθην, ἐχάρην</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Motion</td>
<td>ἡγέρθην, ἐμεληθην/ἐμίηγην, συνελέχθην/συνελέγην</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous Process</td>
<td>ἐκεκάθην, ἠμέσθην, ἐπάγην; (media tantum) ἐγενήθην¹²⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>ἐκοινήθην, ἐτύχην</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This distributional pattern is represented in Fig. 2 below. Once again, it can be observed that the two aorist formations cover connected regions on the semantic map (cf. principle (I) in section 3.0). The picture suggests that there is a sharp division between the two regions of distribution. In reality, however, the boundary is somewhat fuzzy; quite a number of verbs exhibit morphological variation. Another reason, as we have seen above, is that the passive aorist form shows a tendency to expand its territory. Notice, furthermore, that all sigmatic middle aorists have volitional subjects. This property is, however, not exclusive to the sigmatic middles since the body motion verbs, too, are volitional (e.g. ἀπηλλάγην, ὁρμήθην). The subjects of the passive aorist forms, on the other hand, are more patient-like. The abstract meanings of these two aorist formations will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3.

¹²⁰ In the 4th C. BC., this form emerges; the older form ἐγενόµην, however, does not disappear.
Fig. 2: The Distribution of the Sigmatic Middle Aorist and the Aorist in –θ(η)- in Classical Greek

- Distribution of the sigmatic middle aorist
- Distribution of the aorist in –θ(η)-
- Sporadic extension of the aorist in –θ(η)-
3.2.3 Morphological Variation

3.2.3.1 Between Body Motion and Direct Reflexive

The verb αὐλίζομαι has both the sigmatic middle form ηὐλισάμην and the passive form ηὐλίσθην. Both designate the volitional intransitive event ‘to camp, bivouac’. The passive form occurs in Hipponax, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus and Xenophon; the middle form in Thucydides and in Herodotus. No transitive active forms are attested. The actives in S. Ph. 33 and E. Ion 493 are intransitive (i.e. synonymous with the middles). Consider the following examples:

(6) a. ἐν Τανάγρῃ δὲ νύκτα έναυλισάμενος (Hdt. 9.15.1)
   Having camped in Tanagra for the night, (...).
   b. (…) ἑνίκα τὴν ἡμέραν ἔκεινην αὐτοῦ μείναντας τε καὶ αὐλισθέντας,
      μετέτειται (…) πορεύεσθαι (…) (Hdt. 8.9)
      (…) the opinion prevailed that they should abide and encamp where they were for that day, and thereafter
      (…) put to sea (...).

In both instances the clausal subject appears to be an agent, no external agent is implied. That the passive form does not necessarily express passive meaning is proven by the existence of the passive imperative νόν μὲν καταυλίσθητε (E. Rh. 518).281

The explanation of this morphological variation is that the verb possesses semantic features of both the direct reflexive use and the body motion use. On the one hand, the verb implies that the subject ceases to travel, and settles down for the night. As such it resembles middles of motion such as ίσταμαι, κλίνομαι. On the other hand however, the verb is similar to the direct reflexives in that it implies that the subject-referent prepares

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281 Schwyzer’s assertion that the passive imperative in ᾧθει is ‘kaum je rein passiv’ is correct (Schwyzer-Debrunner, I: 760n6). Possible passive cases are E. Ba. 914, Pl. Phdr. 236b, and Ar. Ach. 408. The Euripidean line runs as follows: ἐξίθη πάροιθε δωμάτων, ᾧθητι μοι (‘Come before the palace, show yourself to me’; lit.: ‘be seen by me’). The presence of aative complement suggests that the expression is influenced by the comparable expression φάνηθι μοι (which at 914 was metrically possible as well). In later Greek, the passive imperative ᾧθητι is used in the Septuagint, and elsewhere (for papyri, see Mayser 1926-34, ΙΙ: 122). This intransitive use of φάθηναι + dat. is comparable to the use of γνωσθῆναι with dative ‘become known’ (e.g. E. Cyc. 567 and Xen. Cyr. 7.1.44). In the Septuagint the influence of the Hebrew source is probably relevant, too. For instance, in ᾧθητι τῷ Ἀχααβ (Reg. III 18.1), the Hebrew text has the nif'al-form of ra'a, which has a passive use ‘to be seen’, as well as a middle intransitive one ‘to appear’. As for the case found in Plato, Phaedrus tells Socrates that, if he can make a speech more valuable and convincing than that of Lysias, he deserves a statue in Olympia: παρὰ τῷ Κυψελίδων σφυρήλατος ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ σταθήτι (‘have yourself set up in hammered gold beside the offering of the Cypselids in Olympia’). In prose, the aorist ἵσταθην is used only with passive meaning with subjects like statues and steles. However, it is possible that Plato also hints at the agentic use of ἵσταθην (equivalent to ἤστην) as it is found in poetry (e.g. A. Th. 33). The place may, therefore, also be interpreted as '(go and) stand in wrought gold'. Finally, sometimes ἐκκυκλήθητι (i) at Ar. Ach. 408 is also taken as a passive (cf. translation by Sommerstein ‘have yourself wheeled out’). Alternatively, the form might be interpreted as an agentic body motion verb, i.e. ‘wheel yourself out’.
him/herself (for the night), i.e. performing an action external to the body. As such αὐλίζο-μαι is comparable to verbs like παρασκευάζομαι.

3.2.3.2 Between Perception and Mental Process

In chapter 2, I have argued that the mental process middle and the perception middle are semantically adjacent. Formally, the two types are clearly distinguishable. The middles of perception have a sigmatic middle aorist, whereas the mental process middles have a passive aorist form. Thematic middles occur in both meanings.

*Perception* (volitional)

- ὁσφρόμην 'I smelled'
- ἐγενσάμην 'I tasted'
- ἰθειασάμην 'I gazed at'
- ἱκροσασάμην 'I listened'
- ἤςκεγάμην 'I looked at'

*Mental* (cognitive) process (non-volitional):

- ἐποδόμην 'I learned/heard that'
- (ἐπ)ελαδόμην 'I forgot'\(^{282}\)
- διενοιθήνην 'I thought, intended'
- ἐμνήσθην 'I remembered'
- ἐφράσθην 'I observed, thought, understood'
- ἐνεύσθην 'I erred, was mistaken'

There are, however, a number of isolated passive forms that denote perception. Besides the usual forms ὁσφρόμην and ἔδραχον, we also find the variant forms ἔδρακην, ἔδερχθην, and ὁσφράνθην, be it sporadically.\(^{283}\) The passive forms ἔδρακην and ἔδερχθην are found in Pindar (P. 2.20, N. 7.3), and in tragedy, respectively (A. Pr. 93 (lyr.), 547 (lyr.), S. Aj. 425 (lyr.), Fr. 837). The verb δέρχομαι had probably disappeared from the spoken language, since it does not occur in Classical prose until its reappearance in Aristotle. The verb is used as a poetic alternative to ὁρῶ. Formally, ἔδρακήν could have been formed by analogy with the pair ἔτραφον = ἔτραψ. However, this does not explain the appearance of the passive aorist from a *semantic* point of view. The semantic motivation might be that the verb in Classical Greek, contrary to the other middles of perception, is typically non-volitional (see 2.1.8), i.e. it means 'see', and not the volitional 'fix one’s eyes on, look at' (as in Homer). For example,

\(^{282}\) In Theocr. 2.46, we also find an isolated novel passive aorist λασθῆμεν 'to have forgotten'.

\(^{283}\) It is not surprising that the anomalous active aorist ἔδραχον was replaced, yet one would perhaps expect a sigmatic middle ἔδερχθην. This form, indeed, appears once, in the AP (16.166 [Evenus]), and is probably an artificial formation. An alternative form that eliminates the irregularity is middle ἔδρακήν, which is also found only once; again in the AP (7.224 [Anon.]). The form ὁσφρησάμην is found in Aratus (an artificial creation?), and in late Greek.
With regard to non-volitionality, ἔδρακη σ and ἔδειρχθην (‘I saw’) resemble the verbs of cognitive mental processes more closely than other middle verbs of perception (e.g. σκέπτομαι). It is therefore more likely that δέρκομαι adopted the passive aorist form from the verbs of cognitive processes (e.g. ἔφασθην ‘I perceived, noticed, understood’). The sigmatic middle aorist is a less likely candidate because the sigmatic middle in Classical Greek always denotes volitional events (see also 3.3).

The form ὧσφρανθην appears relatively late in Classical Greek, namely in Aristotle (de An. 424b4,7; Pr. 887b10). For instance,

(8) ἀπορήσεις δ’ ἂν τις εἰ πάθοι ἂν τι ὑπ’ ὀσμής τὸ ἀδύνατον ὀσφρανθηναι, ἢ ὑπὸ χρώματος τὸ μὴ δυνάμενον ιδεῖν (Arist. de An. 424b4)

The problem might be raised: Can what cannot smell be said to be affected by smell or what cannot see by colours (...) [transl. Barnes 1995].

As in the case of ἔδρακη σ/ἔδειρχθην, ὧσφρανθηματι probably adopted the passive aorist form rather than the sigmatic middle aorist because it typically has a non-volitional meaning, in which respect the verb resembles the mental process verbs.

Concluding, the cases of ἔδρακη σ/ἔδειρχθην and ὧσφρανθην demonstrate that the passive aorist form only extends gradually through the network, moving from one meaning to an adjacent one.

3.2.3.3 Between Speech Act and Mental Process

As I have argued in chapter 2, there is a semantic relation between the middle of mental processes and the speech act middle. As a rule, speech act middles have a sigmatic middle aorist, whereas mental process middles have passive aorist forms. A good example of this contrast is the pair ἐψυχάσαμην ‘I lied’ (speech act) vs. ἐψυχοῦσθην ‘I erred’. Consider also the following verbs:

Speech acts (volitional):
 ἐλοιδορήσαμην ‘I reproached’
 ἦπιστάμην ‘I denied, refused’
 ἤτυποσαμην ‘I accused’
 ἠποδύσαμην ‘I prayed, vowed’
 ὠδυράσαμην ‘I lamented’

Speech act (non-volitional):
 ἔδρακη σ
 ἔδειρχθην
 ὧσφρανθην

(7) [No longer shall you look upon a man]
 ὀἶον σύνια
 Τροιά στρατοῦ
 δέρκθη χθονὸς μολῶντ’ ἀπό
 Ἑλλανίδος (S. Aj. 425)

(... such as no other of the army that Troy has seen come from the land of Hellas!)
Mental processes (non-volitional):  
ελοκνήθην 'I got angry'  
ἔπιθηθην 'I believed, obeyed'  
ἔπιθηθην 'I enjoyed'  
φηγήθην 'I became angry'

The formal distinction between speech act and mental process middles can also be discerned within the verbal paradigm of μέμφομαι. The verb has both a sigmatic middle aorist ἐμμωχάμην and a passive aorist ἐμμηρηθήν. The opposition between the two aorists of μέμφομαι is found in Pindar, Euripides, Herodotus and Thucydides. Elsewhere only the sigmatic middle form appears. There appears to be a semantic distinction. Compare the following examples:

(9) δέσποιν', ἔχεις μὲν τὰμὸ μὲμψασθαί κακά (E. Hipp. 695)  
Mistress, you can, to be sure, censure the troubles I have caused you, (...).

(10) Τιμῆς ἐμμηρηθῆ, σωφρονοῦντι δ’ ἣχθετο (E. Hipp. 1402)  
She was wrathful (about the slight to) her honour, and she hated your chastity.

In (9), the construction with ἔχω 'be able' indicates that the action is controllable. In lines 682-94, Phaedra rebukes the nurse because she had been indiscreet to Hippolytus. The nurse admits that there is reason enough to do so (695), but adds that she can answer back: ἔχω δὲ κἀγὼ πρὸς τάδ’, εἰ δέξης, λέγειν (697) ('But if you will listen, I too have something to say in reply'). It is clear that μέμψασθαι at 695 denotes an (agentive) speech action 'censure, reproach'. The accusative object expresses the thing that is censured. In this manner, the verb can be compared to (near-)synonymous verbs (with sigmatic middle aorists) such as μοιέμομαι, λοιδορέμομαι. In example (10) however, the verb does not express a speech act. Rather, Artemis reveals to Hippolytus Aphrodite’s motive for ruining him: she had been dissatisfied with the (lack of) honour bestowed on her (see also Barrett 1964, ad loc.). Here, passive ἐμμηρηθή expresses an emotion (cf. also ἦχθετο) and the genitive-complement expresses the source of her anger. The passive ἐμμηρηθή can thus be compared to emotional verbs with passive aorist forms such as ὁργίζομαι.

Further examples illustrating the semantic distinction are:

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284 In Classical Greek, σίδερομαι has both ἧδεσάμην and ἦδεσθην - as in Homer. However, the sigmatic middle only occurs in tragedy, and in Demosthenes (23.72 [corrupt], 37.59, 38.22, 43.57). Here, it has the special meaning 'pardon an unintentional homicide'. The occurrences in tragedy (A. Ch. 108, S. Ai. 506, E. Fr. 109) are best explained as archaisms, preserved in poetry as an alternative to ἦδεσθην. Likewise, μυμνήσκομαι has ἐμνησάμην and ἐμνήσθην (as in Homer). The sigmatic middle aorist, however, only occurs sporadically in tragedy, once in comedy (Eupolis, Fr. 413.1), and once in Herodotus (at 7.39.1, against 21x ἐμνήσθην). The instances in Thucydides (3.104.4, 3.104.5) and Plato (Lg. 629a, 660e) are quotations from Homer and Tyrtaeus, respectively. Again, it appears that the sigmatic middle is a poetic alternative to ἐμνήσθην.

285 I have examined the occurrences of the aorist of μέμφομαι only in those three authors in which both forms are found. The instances are: Euripides: (middle) Hec. 1184, El. 903, IA. 1020, Hipp. 695, Fr. 282.13; (passive) Hel. 463, 637, Hipp. 1402, Hel. 31, Fr. 18.2 (Antipr.), Fr. 199.2; Herodotus: (middle) 2.24.1; (passive) 1.77.1bis, 3.13.4, 7.146.2, 4.180.5; Pindar: (passive) I. 2.20, N. 11.30; Thucydides: (middle) 1.143.3, 2.64.4, 3.37.4, 3.61.1, 8.109.1; (passive) 4.85.2.
(11) (...) poroúeseTai dieufoieto próo aútoús épi toú 'Ellhnpóntou, ópocos méppnetai te tón perí thn 'Antanðrónn geyenHMnémonn (Th. 8.109.1)
(... he determined to go to the Hellespont and see them, that he might rebuke them for what had happened at Antandros (...)

(12) (...) ádvnatótero de toú káloðs eipóntos mépmnatoiá lágon (....) (Th. 3.37.4)
(... less competent to criticize the words of an able speaker, (...)

Observe that the final ópocos-clause in (11), and ádvnatótero in (12) indicate volition.

(13) "Hra de membheio' Oúvek' ou vicka theás, 
èxenémowse tâm 'Alexántrof léthi (E. Hel. 31)
But Hera, annoyed that she did not defeat the other goddesses, made Alexandros' union with me as vain as the wind (...).

Hera acts out of resentment because she didn’t prevail in Paris’ judgement. There is no question of verbal castigation (an interpretation ‘after she had chided (....)’ is implausible).

(14) Ξérfqis de òos épytheto taúta, membtheiç tōn strateygōn tēn gnómēn pēmpeí tōn tīnicas doryphōron (Hdt. 7.146.2)
But when Xerxes heard of it, he got angry about the judgement of the generals, and sent some of his guards (...).

Xerxes was displeased with the generals’ decision. As the generals are not present at that moment, the interpretation ‘verbally censure’ is rather unlikely. Instead, it is Xerxes’ emotional attitude that is important here. The contrast with the meaning of the sigmatic middle becomes apparent when we compare the following example, in which the object is also gnóμē:

(15) eì de dei membxménon gnómēas tás prokeiménas aúton perí tōn áfanoçn gnómēn 
apoðéxiaosi, phrásō (....) (Hdt. 2.24.1)
If, having condemned the opinions proposed, I must now set forth what I myself think about these matters, I will show (...).

After having verbally refuted the aforementioned ideas, Herodotus now intends to put forth his own opinion on the matter.

(16) Kpóisqos de membtheis katá tó pléthos tó éwntoú stratevmmata ἢν γάρ ὁ συμβαλόν στρατός πολλόν ἐλάσσων ἢ ὁ Κύρου), toúto membtheiç, (....), 
apélavan eic tas Sárdiç (Hdt. 1.77.1)
Croesus was not content with the number of his force (for his army which had fought was by far smaller than that of Cyrus); therefore, (....), he marched away to Sardis (...).

Here, too, an interpretation of verbal reproach is improbable, as the army itself is not to blame for being too small. Instead, the verb expresses Croesus motivation (his discontent with the size of his army) for returning to Sardis. Finally, consider

(17) (....), kai μιν membtheisàn tì tō patrì doúvai éwntēn tō Δi (Hdt. 4.180.5)
(... and being for some cause wroth with her father, she gave herself to Zeus (...).
Because she was angry with her real father Poseidon, Athena gave herself to Zeus.

Summarily, the passive aorist ἐμέμφηθην can be considered an emotional (mental process) middle; the sigmatic middle ἐμεμψάμην, on the other hand, denotes an emotional speech act.286 The passive form denotes a mental change of state in the subject, and is non-volitional.

Hitherto, we have seen that speech act middles normally have a sigmatic middle aorist. However, there are also a number of passive aorist forms that designate speech acts:

ἀπεκρίθην 'I answered'287
ἀπελογήθην 'I defended myself'288
ἐβρυχήθην 'I roared'289
ἐδείθην 'I asked, begged'
ἐλοιδορήθην 'I reproached'290
ἐμνησθην 'I mentioned'
ημείψθην 'I answered'291

286 Also in authors that do not use ἐμέμφηθην, the form ἐμεμψάμην appears to designate a speech act, rather than a mental process, e.g., S. OT 337, Ant. 1157; Pl. R. 487a, Phdr. 234b; Isocr. 15.87, 16.19.

287 The passive form does not yet occur in Classical Attic, and is condemned by Phrynichus (78 [Fischer]). Its first appearance is in the comic Pherecrates, and in the Koine. In Xen. An. 2.1.22, there is a variant reading ὀπεκρίνωτο.

288 The passive aorist form is only attested in those tetralogies of Antiphan (3.1.7, 3.1.9, 3.2.5, 4.3.2) that display many unattic features - the court-speeches always have ἀπελογήσαμην. There is controversy as to their authorship. Gagarin (1997: 32-3), however, seeks to explain this variation by assuming a difference in purpose and occasion of the speeches. Furthermore, a decade or two may separate the composition of the speeches. In Xen. Hell. 1.4.13, the passive ἀπελογηθήθης is probably a gloss.

289 The sole instance of this form is S. OT 1265: ὁ δ’ ὦς ὅρα νῦν, δεινὰ βρυχηθεῖς τάλας/ χαλαρὰ κρέμαστην ἁρτάνην ('And when he saw her, with a fearful roar, poor man, he untied the knot from which she hung'). It is hard to say whether the passive aorist was the regular form or not. The sigmatic middle, too, occurs only once in classical Greek: ἀναβρυχησάμενος in Plato (Phd. 117d). Later, we find it in Apollonius of Rhodes, Dio Cassius and Nonnus.

290 Ἐλοιδορησάμην is by far the form that occurs more frequently. The passive aorist occurs in Plato and Aristotle with passive meaning. In Demosthenes, however, the passive form is used with an 'active' meaning, i.e. equivalently to the middle (cf. Dem. 9.3.5, 21.86, 132, 54.5).

291 The normal and oldest aorist of ἀμελβόμαι is the sigmatic aorist (Hom., S., Hdt., Aristot.). The passive form is found three times: Pl. P. 4.102, Xen. An. 2.5.15 (ἀπέ-), Theocr. 7.27.
Contrary to Homer, in Classical Greek there is also evidence for the following morphological rule: the form in -η- also occurs with

(vii) stems of the structure (C)Cāx-, (C)Cāp-, (C)Cāφ-.

Examples are: (-ακ-) ἐπλάκην (πλέκω)225, (-απ-) ἐκλάπην223 (κλέπτω), ἐλάπην (λέπω), ἐσάπην (σήμαω), ἐτράπην (τρέκω); (-αφ-) ἐβάφην (βάπτω), ἐγράφην (γράφω), ἐράφην (ράπτω), ἐσάκην (σκάπτω), ἐστράφην (στρέφω), ἐτάφην (θάπτω), ἐτράφην224 (τρέφω).254 As for stems of the structure (C)Cāk- and (C)Cāφ- for lack of evidence we cannot be certain whether this morphological rule already applied for Homeric Greek. In the case of stems of the structure (C)Cāπ-, however, it can be seen that the rule probably did not exist in the Homeric language. In Homer, we find the form τραφθῆναι (τρέκω), whereas in Classical Greek the normal form is ἔτράψην.

Above, it was stated that stems of the structure (C)Cāl-, (C)Cām-, (C)Cāp-, (C-)Cāk-, (C)Cāπ-, (C)Cāφ- receive the suffix -η-. This implies that this rule only applies to stems that begin with a consonant. In other words, the passive in -θη- occurs with

(viii) stems of the structure #VĆ-.

Examples are: ᾧ-θη- (ἀραρίσκω), ᾧφ-θη- (ἅπτω), ᾧχ-θη- (ἀγω), ὦρ-θη- (Ὀρνυμι; Corinna 1.21), ὀφ-θη- (ὀράω). There are no counter-examples to this rule. Especially ᾧφ-θη- (from ἀραρίσκω) and ᾧφ-θη- are significant, as you would normally expect forms in -η- with stems in -αφ- and -αφ- (e.g. ἔδάρην, ἔγραφην).256

So far, the distribution of the two aorist forms has been explained by means of a number of morphological rules. However, there is a group of forms, that is not covered by these morphological rules. These remaining forms possess a stem with the structures (C)CāC-, (C)CīC-, or (C)CōC-. With these stems, the following semantic tendency can be observed:

(1) Forms that denote a spontaneous process or a mental process have -η-;
(2) Forms that have a passive meaning, or denote body motion have -θη-.

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225 In Pindar, we find the novel form δρακείς, aorist of δέρκομαι.

223 Also ἐκλέψην occurs (Eur., Hdt.), cf. rule (v). The ε-vocalism is probably adopted from κλέπτω or ἔκλεψα.

224 There is also a variant form ἐτρέφθην, an analogical (ε-vocalism taken from present stem), and younger (no deaspiration) formation. The suffix -θη- is due to the ε-vocalism (rule v). It occurs only marginally, and is especially used in poetry (for metrical reasons?).

225 Exceptions to the rule are ἐκλέφθην, ἐγράφθην (once in a Milesian inscription, 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC, SIG 57.5, and post-Classical), and ἐθάφθην (see also section 3.1.3). These forms, however, occur only marginally. Many verbs have variants in -θη- with an ε-vocalism in the stem (cf. rule v) which is probably introduced by analogy with the present stem (e.g. κλέπτω) or the active sigmatic aorist (e.g. ἔκλεψα): ἐκλέψθην, ἐπλέξθην, ἐστρέφθην, ἐπίθεθην, ἐτρέφθην.

226 This rule might be explained by the intransparancy of forms as *ἡγη (ἀγω), *ἡφη (ἅπτω), *ὁκη (ὀράω).
As for collective motion verbs, both aorist forms occur. Take, for instance, ἐμίγην vs. -ἔμ(ε)ἴχθυν, and -ἐλέγην vs. -ἐλέχθην.

The best example of this semantic tendency is the pair ἐφάνην vs. ἐφάνθην; the former expressing a spontaneous process ‘appeared’, the latter a true passive ‘was shown, was discovered’\(^{257}\). Other examples of verbs with monosyllabic aorist stems in -av- are ἐμάνην (μαίνομαι), which is a mental process (rule (1)); passives are ἐκράνθην ‘was accomplished’ (κραίνω), ἐρράνθην ‘was sprinkled’ (ραίνω), ἐχράνθην ‘was defiled’ (χραίνω) (rule (2)). The semantic tendency can also be discerned with the stems in -αγ-. The forms in -ην- denote spontaneous processes: ἐρράγην, ἐπάγην, ἐάγην\(^{258}\), whereas the forms in -θη- denote passives: ἐσφαξθην (σφαῖτω), ἐτάχθην\(^{259}\) (τάττω), ἐκράχθην (φράττω).\(^{260}\) Compare, finally, the following stems in -υφ-: ἐτύφην (τύφω) ‘smoked (intr.), smouldered’ (e.g Ar. Lys. 221) denotes a spontaneous process, while ἐκρύφθην ‘was hidden’ is passive.\(^{261}\)

The following table sketches the distribution of the forms in -ην- and -θη- in Classical Greek:

\(^{257}\) In tragedy, the form ἐφάνθη seems to be used sporadically as an intransitive ‘appear’ (cf. also the intransitive use of ἐστάθην in Homer and tragedy). The strongest case in point is S. Ant. 103 (lyr.): ἀχτις ἀελίου, τὸ καλ-λιστόν ἐπιτακτύλῳ φανέν/ θῆβα τῶν κρετέρων φάκος/ ἐφάνθης ποτ’ ἐν χρυσέας/ ἀμέρας βλέφαρον (‘Beam of the sun, fairer than all that have shone before for seven-gated Thebes, finally you shone forth, eye of golden day, (…)’). Note the correspondence with φανέν in vs. 101. However, even this case can be interpreted as passive: ‘you [the beam] have been shown forth [namely, by the sun]’. As to the other cases of ἐφάνθην, one can likewise hesitate between an intransitive interpretation ‘appear’, and a passive ‘be revealed’. I prefer to take them as passives where possible: S. OT 525, 1485, S. Tr. 743, E. HF 804 (lyr.); A. Pers. 264 (lyr.) may be intransitive.

\(^{258}\) In Attic, the compound κατάγηναι is the usual form: a contraction of *κατα-φαγήναι. The long α also spread to the augmented forms, e.g. κατέαγην.

\(^{259}\) Ἐτάχθην does not have an agentive use ‘to post oneself’, as this notion is expressed by the form ἐτάξαμην.

\(^{260}\) Some of these verbs, however, have variant forms in -ην-: ἐσφάγην (σφάζω), ἐμάγην (μάττω), and ἐτάγην (τάττω). These variants occur less frequently than their counterparts in -θη-. The latter two are attested only once in Classical Greek. Ἐφάγην, furthermore, is post-Classical. I will return to this morphological variation below (3.3).

\(^{261}\) Also the form ἐνίγην (νίγω) can be explained by its meaning ‘choke, drown (intr.’) (e.g. Ar. Nu. 1504, Dem. 32.6), which is a spontaneous process.
The forms ἐδεήθην, ἐμνήσθην, ἤρνήθην are quite frequent. The remaining forms occur highly marginally, and in some cases just once. Yet the occurrence of these passive forms is a clear indication that the speech act middle is adjacent to the domain of the passive aorist form. In chapter 2 it was argued that the speech act middle neighbours on the mental process middle. It is therefore likely that the passive aorist form extended from this latter use to the speech act use. In the cases of ἐδεήθην and ἐμνήσθην this extension is evident since their central use still involves a mental process (respectively ‘be in need of, want’ and ‘remember’), from which the speech act use is a secondary semantic extension. As for βρυχάομαι, λοιδορέομαι, ὀλοφύρομαι, an emotional involvement is prominently present in their lexical meaning. This salient feature brings about a link between these verbs and emotional mental process verbs - that have passive aorist forms - like ἐλυπήθην, ὀργίσθην.

The remaining passive aorist forms mentioned above are somewhat harder to deal with. Conspicuously, four of them either have the meaning ‘to answer’ (ἀμείβομαι, ἀποκρίνομαι) or a related meaning ‘refuse, deny’ (ἀρνέομαι), ‘defend oneself’ (ἀπολογύεομαι). It is hard to assume that these verbs influenced one another as they each occur sporadically (with the exception of ἤρνήθην), at different times, and in different authors. It is unclear why precisely these verbs received a passive aorist form. Perhaps, ἤρνήθην was formed under the influence of the mental process verbs. Its meaning ‘refusing’ can be paraphrased by ‘do not want’ (thus comparable to οὐκ ἔβουλήθην) or ‘do not obey’ (compare οὐκ ἐπείδοθην), and ‘deny’ with ‘do not think’ (compare οὐκ ψήθην). Another possibility is that ἄπεκρίθην, ἀπελογήθην, ἠμείθην, ἤρνήθην were created after the example of ἐδεήθην ‘I asked for, begged’.

In conclusion, we have seen that a number of speech act verbs in Classical Greek adopted the passive aorist form. Some of these cases can be explained by their relation to the mental process verbs. Either their central use designates a mental process (ἐδεήθην, ἐμνήσθην) or they received the passive aorist form due to their subject’s strong emotional involvement (βρυχάομαι, λοιδορέομαι, ὀλοφύρομαι). Both processes attest to the semantic adjacency of the speech act middle and the mental process middle. As for the speech act middles ἀμείβομαι, ἀποκρίνομαι, ἀπολογύεομαι, ἀρνέομαι, a tentative explanation was given for the occasional occurrence of the passive aorist form.

292 The sigmatic middle occurs in epic, in Ionic and occasionally in Attic (Eur. 1x, Aeschin. 2x, Hyper. 1x, Aristot. 4x). The passive aorist is the most common form in Attic.

293 The passive ὀλοφύρθεις is found only once, in Thucydides (6.78.3): τοῖς σύντοι κακοίς ὀλοφύρθεις (‘even when he laments his own ills (...’). Here, the verb seems to be used very much like a mental process verb, witness the unusual dative complement that could be taken as a dative of cause (cf. ἢδομαί τινι, μέμφομαί τινι etc.). Elsewhere (even in Thucydides four times), the sigmatic middle is found: Homer, Aeschylus, Lysias, Andocides, Plato, and Xenophon.
3.2.3.4 Between Mental Activity and Mental Process

In chapter 2 it was argued that the mental activity and mental process middle are closely related. The distinctive feature is volition. In principle, the former has the sigmatic middle aorist form, while the latter has a passive aorist form, that is, in Classical Greek.²⁹⁴

**Mental activity** (volitional):
- ἐβουλευσάμην 'I considered, resolved'
- ἐλογισάμην 'I reckoned, considered'
- ἐμπνευσάμην 'I contrived'.

**Mental (cognitive) process** (non-volitional):
- δεινοθῆναι 'I thought, intended'
- ἐμνήσθην 'I remembered'
- ἔφρασθην 'I observed, thought, understood'
- ἔστωσθην 'I erred, was mistaken'.

Nevertheless, two isolated cases of extension of the passive form to mental activity verbs show that the two meanings are related. The first case is the following:

²⁹⁴ How subtle the transition between mental process and mental activity is, can be illustrated by the pair ἡγεόμαι, with a sigmatic middle ἡγησάμην, and οἴομαι, with a passive aorist ὄψθην. To ἡγεόμαι ('believe, hold that') a certain degree of agentivity can be ascribed. The verb denotes that the subject conceives an opinion as a result of a process of reasoning, of an assessment of the facts. The subject is thus more actively involved. Conversely, οἴομαι designates that the subject conceives an opinion that has sprung from his/her internal (emotional) disposition, especially in Homer. Compare Schmidt (1967-9, I: 335): "Hiernach bedeuten die Verben (…) νομίζεις und ηγείσθης einen subjektiven, auf Erwägung und Vergleichung der Tatsachen beruhenden Glauben, der nicht aus einem inneren unbestimmten Gefühle erwächst. (...) Die Verben (…) οἰσθείς, δοκεῖς und δοξάζεις, bedeuten ein subjektives Urteil. (...) es erwächst aber aus der Tendenz des eignen Geistes, aus einer Stimmung und Neigung und aus einer Betrachtung der Gegenstände namentlich der Beziehung nach, die sie zu uns selbst haben". The more active involvement of the subject of ἡγεόμαι ('believe') is apparent when one considers that this meaning is a semantic extension of the meaning 'lead the way'. This extension may be compared to the one found in ὁγιο, e.g. τιμώτερον τε ὁγιείν αὐτόν (Th. 8.81.2) ('(…) and that they should hold him in greater honour'). Cf. also Latin dūcō 'consider s.o. s.th'.

²⁹⁵ Φράξομαι occurs especially in epic and Ionic. In Herodotus, as in Homer, we occasionally find the sigmatic middle ἡρησάμην besides the common ἡρησάθη. Once φράσσομαι occurs in an oracle (3.57.4): clearly an epic-poetic form (cf. -σασθαι). However, in the two other instances of the sigmatic middle (Hdt. 1.48.2, 5.9), there may be a semantic distinction. Cf. ὁκαὶ δὲ αὐτοὶ Μηδῶν ἔποικοι γεγόνοιτο, ἐγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἐχω ἐπιφράσσομαι (Hdt. 5.9) ('How they have come to be colonists of the Medes I myself cannot account for'), and (…) Γόργα ὑπέθετο ἐπιφράσσησα αὐτή, τὸ κηρὸν ἐκκυναὶ κελεύονσαι (…) (Hdt. 7.239.5) ('(…) Gorgo noticed it herself, and suggested to scrape off the wax (…)'). In Hdt. 5.9, the verb seems to imply an active process of reasoning (i.e. a mental activity), while in 7.239.5, Gorgo discovers the trick only by accident (mental process).
(18) τηδ’ ἐπιλέξθης
ti’d’ épikelcethis²⁹⁶

'?Αγαμεμνονίαν εἶναι μ’ ἃλοχον (A. Ag. 1498 [anap.])

Having thus considered that I am the wife of Agamemnon.

'Ἐπιλέγομαι normally has a volitional meaning ‘think about, consider, read’, and it has a
sigmatic middle aorist ἐπιλεξάμην (e.g. Hdt. 3.65.3). Possibly, the passive aorist form
expresses that the element of volition is irrelevant here. In this way the verb may be
compared with ὄηθην ‘I thought’.

The second case of an extension of the passive aorist form to the mental activity
verbs is the following:

(19) ἀπάντα γὰρ προσκευάμενοι καὶ ἐπιλογισθέντες ὃτι οὔτε πλήθει ἔξουσι χρῆσθαι
oī βάρβαροι οὔτε ὕπποι (...) (Hdt. 7.177)

For they examined all in advance and came to the conclusion that the barbarians would not be able here
to use their numbers or their cavalry (...).

The normal aorist of λογίζομαι is ἐλογισάμην (e.g. Hdt. 7.46). Again, we are dealing
with an occasional spread of the passive form to a mental activity verb.²⁹⁷

3.2.3.5 Between Reciprocity and Collective Motion

We have seen above that reciprocal verbs have sigmatic middle aorists (ἐμαχεσάμην,
ηγονισάμην), whereas collective motion verbs have passive aorist forms (ἠγέρθην,
ἐμε)ξίζηθην/ἐμίγην, συνελέξηθην/συνελέγην). The verb διαλέγομαι ‘converse with’,
however, appears to violate this rule. Its aorist form in Classical Greek is διελέξθην. In
Homer, the form διελέξατο is found in the formula ἀλλὰ τί μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο
θυμός (Λ 407 e.a.) (‘But why does my heart consider these things?’). This formula is
always used after the speaker has been considering two possibilities. The meaning
‘consider’ may have developed from the original meaning ‘select for oneself’ or
‘enumerate for oneself’. Λέγω ‘speak’ does not yet occur in Homer. The contribution of
the preposition δια- may be the idea that the objects under consideration are set apart
from one another in order to be able to view them better. Since διελέξατο denotes a
mental activity (‘consider’) the sigmatic middle is as one would expect. However, it is not
certain whether this verb is the direct predecessor of the Classical διαλέγομαι ‘converse
with’ since the latter is most commonly considered a reciprocal (K-G, I: 89, Gildersleeve
1900-11: 66, Schwyzer-Debrunner, II: 233, Martínez Vázquez e.a. 1999: 250). This would
mean that we are dealing with a compound of the verb λέγω ‘speak’. The middle ending

²⁹⁶ This is the text from the OCT (Page). Groeneboom (1944), however, follows the codices and reads
μὴ δ’ ἐπιλεξής (‘do not consider me the wife of Agamemnon’).

²⁹⁷ Another case of the passive -ἐλογίσθην used as the middle might be present at Pl. R. 531d: Ὅμωι δὲ
γε, ἂν δ’ ἐγώ, καὶ ἂν τούτων πάντων ὄν διελεξάμεθαν μεθόδος εἶναν μὲν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀλλήλων κοινωνίαν
ὑφίκητο καὶ συγγένεσιν, καὶ κυκλοφορία ταῦτα ἦστι ἀλλήλων οἰκεῖα (...) (‘Moreover, I take it that,
if inquiry into all subjects we have mentioned brings out their association and relationship with one another
and draws conclusions about their kinship (...)’).
expresses reciprocity (‘speak to one another’), and the preposition δια- possibly conveys the notion of disagreement and mutuality.298

The question remains why διαλέγομαι, contrary to other reciprocal verbs, has a passive aorist form. A tentative explanation may be that the verb διαλέγομαι became associated formally, and perhaps also semantically, with (συλ)λέγομαι ‘gather (intr.)’ (collective motion). Διαλέγομαι ‘converse’ implies, and συλλέγομαι ‘gather (intr.)’ denotes that two or more individuals come together. As a consequence of this formal and semantic association, διαλέγομαι adopted the passive aorist form διελέχθην from (συλ)λέγομαι - (συν)ελέχθην ‘I gathered’. A strong indication in support of the association of διαλέγομαι ‘discuss’ with (συλ)λέγομαι ‘gather (intr.)’ is the anomalous perfect form δι-είλεγμα that διαλέγομαι has in common with συλλέγομαι (συν-είλεγμα). It is probable that δι-είλεγμα was created after the example of συν-είλεγμα. In the same fashion, the more recent aorist passive form διελέγην (first in Aristotle) was probably created by analogy with συλλέγομαι : συνελέγην.299

In the sections above (3.2.3.1-5), we have seen that the passive form extended sporadically to four verb classes, these being the perception verbs (e.g. οἶδα (οἶδα) ‘see’, speech act verbs (e.g. ἔλεγε οἵδεθην), mental activity verbs (e.g. ἔμελλον ψάλλειν), and reciprocal verbs (διελέχθην). These sporadical extensions are represented by dashed arrows in Fig. 2. Once more, it can be observed that the passive aorist form extends to immediately adjacent meanings.300

298 Cf. διακοντίζομαι (+ dat.) ‘contend with others at throwing the javelin’ vs. ἄκοντίζω ‘hurl a javelin’.

299 Note that λέγω ‘speak’ has the passive aorist ἔλεξθην (or ἐρρήθην) and the middle-passive perfect λέλεγμαι.

300 The expansion of the passive aorist form continues after the Classical era. For example, a passive form with reciprocal meaning μετέχεσθαι ‘fight’ occurs in Epictetus (Diss. 4.9.11). Eventually, the sigmatic middle form disappeared completely. Thus, in Modern Greek we only find ‘passive’ aorist forms, as for instance, δέχθηκα ‘I accepted’ (cf. Classical Greek εἴηδέξαμαι), εὐχόθηκα ‘I wished’ (cf. ηὐξόμην), πλύθηκα ‘I washed myself’, σκέφθηκα ‘I considered’ (cf. ἐσκεφάζημαι), συμμελεόθηκα ‘I got s.o.’s advise’ (cf. συνεμπλεύσαμαι). The Modern Greek aorist δέχθηκα may be a descendant of the isolated form ὑκόδεχθετος at E. Held. 757. Remarkably, the sigmatic middle form has been preserved in the singular middle imperative form, e.g. θεορήσοι ‘be considered, consider yourself’ (= Classical Greek θεώρησοι).
3.2.4 Root and thematic aorist

So far, the passive aorist in -η- and -θη-, and the sigmatic middle aorist have been discussed. In this section, the root and thematic aorist middle forms will be looked at briefly. Here, once again, the gradual expansion of the passive aorists in -η- and -θη- can be observed.

Contrary to the sigmatic middle aorist, in Homer the root and thematic aorists do occur with a passive meaning. Take, for example, βλήτο, ἀπέκτατο, ἔσχετο, (ὁπ)ωλόμην (Schwyzer, I: 97). The first two are replaced by ἐβλήθην (Classical Greek) and ἐκτάθην (already in Homer); the latter two forms even survived through the Classical age. These middle verbs are relics of an older pattern, going back to Proto-Indo-European, in which middle aorists (including the sigmatic middle aorist) could be used in a passive meaning. This pattern was altered by the spread of the passive aorists in -η- and -θη-.

The middle root aorist occurs in almost all middle meanings. However, after Homer many root aorists disappeared.

| Passive | E.g. ἔκτατο (Hom.) 'was killed', βλήτο (Hom.) 'was hit' |
| Spontaneous process | πλήττο 'became filled', φθιμήν (Hom.) 'perished' |
| Mental process | ὄνιπτο 'benefitted from, enjoyed', ἔτην 'I endured, dared' |
| Body motion | ἀλτο (Hom.) 'jumped', ἔσπουτο (Hom.) 'moved (intr.)', ὄρτο (Hom.) 'rose up' |
| Collective motion | ἐοίμβλητο (Hom.) 'met with', λύτο (Hom.) 'dissolved (intr.)' |
| Speech act | ἐοικτο (Thebais) 'boasted, prayed' |
| Indirect reflexive | ἐθο 'sent s.o./s.th. for oneself', ἐθετο 'put s.o./s.th. for oneself', -δοτο 'give away (for oneself)' |

The thematic middle aorist occurs practically in all middle usage types, in Homeric as well as in Classical Greek.  

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301 The passive form ἔσχεθην appears only late (Arrian).

302 In Indo-Aryan, middle s-aorists with passive meaning are found, e.g. Skt. द्वोऽह्वम, Av. asrudām 'you have been heard' (see Thumb-Hauschild 1959: 305, Reichelt 1978: 298).


Passive  E.g. ἐσχόμην 'I was held'
Spontaneous process  ὠλόμην 'I perished, died', ἐγενόμην 'I was born, became'
Mental process  ἡγομόν 'I woke up', ἐλαθόμην 'I forgot', ἐπιθόμην 'I believed, obeyed', ἐπιθό-μην 'I learned, heard'
Body motion  ἀφικόμην 'I arrived', ἔτραπόμην 'I turned', ὄρετο (Hom.) 'arose', ἔπόμην 'I flew'
Collective motion  ἡγομέθεα 'we gathered (intr.)'
Perception  ἰσθόμην 'I perceived', ἀφοφρόμην 'I smelled'
Speech act  ἰόμην 'I asked', λατόμην 'I begged'
Indirect reflexive  ἠγαγόμην 'I led away for myself', ἀρώμην (Hom.) 'I acquired' (ἀρνυμαί)

The thematic middle, however, does not occur with verbs of mental activity nor with direct reflexives. With the passive and intransitive middle uses the thematic middles were often replaced by passive aorist forms. In the following, I will discuss a number of verbs that show an alternation in the aorist stem between the passive form and the root or thematic form.

ἡγομήν vs. ἡγέρθην (ἐγείρομαι)
Both the thematic middle aorist and the passive aorist form occur frequently. Both are already to be found in Homer, though the - older - thematic formation more frequently. A pattern of distribution is hard to discern. In Attic (as in epic), there is a preference for the thematic middle, whereas Herodotus and Xenophon (possibly one of his unattic features) always have the passive form.

ἐλιπόμην vs. ἐλείψθην (λείπομαι)
A priori one could interpret λείπομαι without an object either as an intransitive middle 'stay behind', or as a passive 'be left behind'. Unambiguous examples of the passive meaning, however, are extremely rare. In fact, the only example I am aware of is κατα-λειψθέντες ὑπὸ Δαρείου (Hdt. 5.1.1). In other words, it is safe to interpret instances of λείπομαι as intransitive middles, unless the passive meaning is expressed explicitly (e.g. by an agent-phrase).

The aorist formations ἐλιπόμην and ἐλείψθην are distributed according to a fairly clear-cut pattern. In Homer, only the thematic middle aorist is found. The passive form does not appear until Pindar. In Classical Greek the thematic middle and the passive aorist forms are divided along semantic lines. The thematic form is used as an indirect reflexive 'leave behind for oneself' (Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Antiphon, Plato, Demosthenes; not attested in Homer), while the passive form is used in the intransitive meaning 'stay behind'.

ἐπιθόμην vs. ἐπείσθην (πείθομαι)
In Homer, only the thematic aorist occurs; ἐπείσθην, which is clearly young considering its ε-vocalism, first appears in Aeschylus. Besides in poetry, the thematic form rarely occurs. In Herodotus, ἐπιθόμην occurs three times, two of which are uncertain (6.80 and 6.140.2), and the third is from an oracle. Ἐπείσθην, on the other hand, is used twice.

305 In Doric (Epicharmus [5th c. BC], Archytas [4th c. BC]), and late in Attic (Philemo, 4th/3rd c. BC), a passive form ἐγενήθην appears. However, if the passive future ἐγενήθησομαι in Plato (Prm. 141) is sound, it must have existed earlier in Attic.

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Further, ἐπίθυντο occurs in a decree from 387/6 BC (IG II² 29.14).³⁰⁶ It appears that, in Classical prose, ἐπείδηθην has replaced ἐπιθύμην in the meaning 'obey, believe'. However, it is quite possible that the opposition between middle ἐπιθύμην and passive ἐπείδηθην was very much alive in more colloquial Attic. In Aristophanes, ἐπιθύμης is used in the meaning 'obey, believe' (e.g., Nu. 73, 119, Eq. 962, V. 573), whereas ἐπείδηθην has the strictly passive meaning: 'be persuaded' (e.g., Nu 866, Pl. 507 [άνα-]).³⁰⁷

ἐτραπόμην vs. ἐτράπης/ἐτρέφθην/ἐτράψθην (τρέπομαι)
Certainly one of the most complex verbal paradigms is that of τρέπομαι. In Classical Greek, five different middle and passive aorist forms occur: ἐτρεφύμην, ἐτραπόμην, ἐτράπης, ἐτρέφθην, and ἐτράψθην. The sigmatic middle is only used in the indirect reflexive meaning (e.g. Hdt. 7.225.1 'rout'). The thematic and passive formations have the same meaning, this being, in most cases, intransitive 'turn'. There are no certain instances of τρέπομαι with a passive meaning. The single instance that actually is mentioned by LSJ and Kühner-Blass, II: 554-5 is:

(20) "Α τέ που ἔτι ζώντι δυστυχήματα ἐγένετο πολλά καὶ δεινά, ὅν καὶ τέλος ἢ πατρὶς αὐτοῦ ὅλη ἄνετραπέτο (...) (Pl. Cra. 395d)
The many terrible misfortunes that happened happened to him in his life, the last of which was that his country was completely overthrown.

Since there is no agent in the context, the middle could well be interpreted as an intransitive middle, i.e. 'turned over, fell over', instead of 'be turned upside down, be overthrown'.³⁰⁸

Ἐτράψθην appears to be restricted to Homer (o 80) and Herodotus (4.12.3, 9.56.2 ['turn, make one’s way’]; 1.7.4 [ἐπτ.: 'be entrusted with']). In Herodotus, the form could be a special Homeric feature since the form that is used most commonly in Herodotus is ἐτραπόμην ('turn'). It should be noted, however, that Herodotus shows a variant present form τράπω. Therefore, it is often unclear whether one is dealing with a form of the present stem or with one of the aorist stem. In 4.12.3 and 9.56.2, the reading is uncertain (at the former Rosen’s Teubner edition prints στραφέντες). In Attic, the common form is ἐτραπόμην. The passive aorist forms ἐτρέφθην and ἐτράπης are clearly marginal. Ἐτράψθην cannot be old (cf. ε- vocalism); it occurs in Antiphon (3x ἐπτ-), Euripides (1x), and Xenophon (4x). Ἐτράψθην occurs mainly in drama, probably as a metric alternative to ἐτραπόμην, and further in Plato (1x) and Xenophon (2x).

To conclude, there is a tendency for thematic middle aorists to be replaced by passive aorist forms. This tendency can be observed in two instances: in the case of ἐπιθύμην, the

³⁰⁶ In Gorgias’ Helen (Fr. 11.76), Blass conjectured πιθέσθαι, probably because of the coordinated aorist infinitive συναντέσοι. The mss. have πείθεσθαι. Blass’s conjecture is not very attractive since it would constitute the sole instance of the thematic aorist in Attic prose.

³⁰⁷ This semantic opposition is also found in the future stem. Middle πείσομαι means ‘I will obey, believe’, whereas πείθομαι is strictly passive ‘be persuaded’ (see also ch. 4).

³⁰⁸ The passive of the compound ἐπιτρέπω ‘to entrust s.th. to s.o.’ (+ dat. and acc.) is always expressed by a passive aorist form, never by a thematic middle, e.g. Hdt. 1.7.4, Antiphon 4.β.4, 4.γ.5, 4.δ.3.
common form in Homer, that is replaced by ἐπείσθην, the common form in Classical Greek, and with intransitive ἐλπίσθην (Homer), which is replaced by ἐλείψθην (Classical). Remarkably, this tendency is not general since ἠγοράσθην and ἐτραχύσθην do not appear to give way to ἠγοράθην and ἐτράπηθην/ἐτράφηθην. Language change, as we know, is unpredictable.

3.3 The Abstract Meaning of the Passive and the Sigmatic Middle Aorist

In the previous sections, the polysemous ('low-level') structure of the passive aorist was dealt with. The question remains to be answered whether or not it is possible to formulate a more abstract ('high-level') characterization of the meaning of the passive aorist form. In traditional Greek grammars, no attempts have been made to pin down the meaning of the passive aorist form. Schwyzer (I: 756) only notes that there is no sharp division between the passive use of the aorist in -η- (e.g. ἔγραψθην) and the original intransitive use (e.g. ἔρρη), and that the aorist in -θη-, too, has both an intransitive and a passive meaning. What these two meanings have in common exactly is given no further elaboration. Additionally, in what respect the passive aorist differs semantically from the sigmatic middle aorist also remains unclear. The aim of this section will be to try to fill the gap left by the Greek grammars to date in that I will try to establish the abstract meaning (or in Langacker’s terms abstract schema) of the passive aorists in -(θ)η-. Naturally, the sigmatic middle aorist form will also be dealt with, since the passive aorist is in complementary opposition to the sigmatic middle aorist.309

In section 1.3.1, it was argued that the passive aorist form cannot be explained as a detransitivizing strategy, mainly because many passive aorists do not have active transitive counterparts (sometimes called ‘passiva tantum’). Therefore, I have opted for a purely semantic explanation that is independent of the existence of an active form. Now let us first consider the state of affairs in Homer.

In section 3.1.1, it was shown that the aorists in -(θ)η- occur in the following meanings: passive, spontaneous process, the mental process meaning, the body motion, and the collective motion. The question, subsequently, arises as to how the abstract schema subsuming these meanings should be defined. I would like to suggest that the abstract meaning of the passive in -(θ)η- can best be characterized in relation to the notion of prototypical patient. In section 1.1.2, the prototypical patient was defined, citing Langacker 1991: 285, as "an inanimate object that absorbs the energy transmitted via externally initiated physical contact and thereby undergoes an internal change of state". In other words, the essential properties of the prototypical patient are:

- Inanimacy
- Non-volitionality
- Presence of an external initiator
- Internal change of state.

309 I will not go into the abstract meanings of the root and thematic aorists. As we have seen in section 3.2.4, unlike the sigmatic middle and passive aorists, they can be used in all meanings. In this respect they are no different from the middle voice of the present stem. Hence, the abstract meaning of the middle voice in the present stem and the middle root and thematic aorist are identical, this being subject-affectedness.
Now consider the following table (from section 2.2):

Table 3: The middle uses: semantic feature analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aorist form</th>
<th>Subject = Animate</th>
<th>Subject = Volitional</th>
<th>Subject = Beneficiary</th>
<th>Subject = Experimenter</th>
<th>Subject = Patient</th>
<th>Subject undergoes Change of State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>ἐκοινωθην</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous Process</td>
<td>ἐτὰκαν</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Process</td>
<td>ἐφοβηθην</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Motion</td>
<td>ἔγερθην</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Motion</td>
<td>ἀφρηθην</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocal</td>
<td>ἔμαχεσάμην</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Reflexive</td>
<td>ἔλυσάμην</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>ἔγνωσάμην</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Activity</td>
<td>ἔλογοσάμην</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Act</td>
<td>ἐλοιδρησάμην</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect Reflexive</td>
<td>ἐκοινοπαθην</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the table it can be observed that the passive forms have subjects which are prototypical patients, or which have a semantic feature in common with the prototypical patient. Especially the subjects of passives and the spontaneous processes are, or are at least similar to, prototypical patients. Their subjects are non-volitional and, in most cases, physically affected. Spontaneous processes always involve an internal change of state; the passive may, but need not, involve a change of state. Furthermore, the passive has an external initiator and the spontaneous process meaning typically has an inanimate subject. Recall that, in section 3.2.1, I claimed that, in an earlier stage of the language, the formation in -θη- only occurred in the passive meaning and the spontaneous process meaning. These meanings can, therefore, be considered the source uses of the category. The remaining meanings of the passive form have subjects that diverge from the prototypical patient. Nevertheless, they have one or more semantic properties in common with the prototypical patient. The mental process meaning is non-volitional, and the collective motion middle has a reduced volitionality. With the exception of certain passives, the one feature which their subjects all have in common with the prototypical patient is that they undergo a change of state (see table above).

310 E.g., ἔτακαν denotes a change of state: ‘melted (intr.)’ (spontaneous process) or ‘be melted’ (passive). On the other hand, the passive ἐκοινωθην ‘I was seen’ does not denote a change of state of the subject.

311 However, the notion of prototypical patient remains highly important to the semantic organization of the aorist in -θη-, considering the enormous preponderance of the tokens with passive meaning in the frequency figures. Out of 90 occurrences of the aorist in -θη-, 54 had a true passive meaning (see Table 4). It is therefore justified to consider the passive as the prototypical meaning of the category.

312 It should be noted that, in the present stem, mental process middles denote a (transitory) state, e.g., φοβέωμα ‘I am afraid’. In de aorist stem, however, these verbs designate a change of state, e.g., ἐφοβηθην ‘I became afraid’.

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Now whereas the various meanings of the passive aorist cluster around the prototypical patient, the sigmatic middle aorists are oriented towards the other extreme: the prototypical agent. In Homer, the subjects of the various sigmatic middle aorists were all animate and volitional with the exception of mental processes such as χόλωσα 'became angry'. In Classical Greek, however, sigmatic middle aorist are volitional without exception (cf. also Rijksbaron 1994: 141, 144, 155).

I would like to address one final issue here. The intriguing question remains to be answered why the active-middle-passive trichotomy is restricted to the aorist stem. I would suggest that the prototypical transitive model can provide us with an explanation. One of the crucial features of the prototypical transitive is telicity (Hopper & Thompson 1980, and see section 1.1.1). Telicity - here viewed as a semantic property of the entire clause - enhances the cognitive saliency of the action. This enhanced saliency is to be explained in the following manner:

(21) Affectedness of the patient: "The more completed an event is, the more likely it is that the patient in fact registers to the full the effects of the action" (Givón 1984: 157)

In other words, telicity increases the degree of affectedness of the patient. The present stem is, therefore, associated with a relatively low degree of affectedness, due to its non-completed (imperfective) semantics, whereas the aorist stem involves a high degree of affectedness as it involves a completed event. Above, I argued that the passive aorist in -ω- marked that the subject is, or is at least very similar to, a prototypical patient. This explains why the passive form occurs exclusively in the aorist stem rather than in the present stem. The meaning of the passive forms in -ω- (resemblance of subject to prototypical patient), and the meaning of the aorist (completedness of event), are strongly associated. For example,

Middle Present: ἐτήκετῳ 'it was melting' (non-completed change of state)
Passive Aorist: ἐτάκη 'it melted' (completed change of state: high subject-affectedness)

Middle Present: ἐφοβετόμην 'I was afraid' (mental state)
Passive Aorist: ἐφοβήθην 'I became afraid' (completed change of state: high subject-affectedness)

In these examples, the subjects of the passive aorists are more highly affected than those of the middle presents because they refer to a completed change of state.

In this section, I have explained the abstract meaning of the various aorist formations with reference to the notion of prototypical patient. It was argued that the subject of the formations in -η- and -ωθη- shared one or more - depending on the historical stage - crucial semantic feature with the prototypical patient. The occurrence of the passive form in the aorist stem was explained by stating that the completedness of the event increases the degree of subject-affectedness.

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313 Note that, with regard to body motion verbs such as ἐκλίνωθην 'I lay down' and ὁρμήθην 'I started off' the patient aspect is apparently construed as being more salient than the agent aspect, considering that they have a passive aorist form.