

# On the Function of the Mediopassive Perfect in the Homeric Epics<sup>1</sup>

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## §0 Summary

Depending on the level of transitivity, the mediopassive forms of the perfect stem can be divided into two groups: low transitivity verbs with middle content and high transitivity verbs with passive content. Between these two semantic poles, there is a flowing zone of transition. Summarized, one function of the mediopassive perfect stem, as was to be expected, is to express a higher level of subject relevance. In addition, a tendency to a metaphorical meaning can be observed. In Ancient Greek, the new perfect stem category ‚mediopassive‘ offers a wider range of meanings than the other temporal stems.

## §1 Preliminaries

According to the *communis opinio*, there is a certain semantic affinity between the categories of ‚perfect‘ and ‚middle‘ concerning a higher level of subject relevance or an increased affectedness of the subject. Since the opposition between perfect active and perfect mediopassive in Ancient Greek is a secondary one and the mediopassive endings are originally incompatible with the perfect stem, the question of the semantic difference between active and mediopassive perfect forms in the Homeric epics is an obvious one. Besides, the Homeric perfect stem forms are supposed to have kept the semantic value of the Indo-European perfect to a high degree.

The present study attempts to find an answer to this question by means of a contrastive analysis of all perfect forms attested both with active and mediopassive endings in ‚Iliad‘ and ‚Odyssey‘. The forms in question are the following ones:

		act.	m.-p.	notes	
1.	βεβλήκει / βέβληται ‚throws; hits‘	II	13	33 [34] <sup>2</sup>	
2.	βεβρωκός / βεβρώσεται ‚devours‘	II	3	1 <sup>3</sup>	perfect only
3.	ἐγρηγόρθασι / ἐγρήγορθε ‚awakes‘	III	1	3	
4.	ἐδηδώς / ἐδήδοται ‚eats‘	II	1	1	no aorist
5.	ἕοικα / ἥικτο ‚is alike, is similar‘	I	161	5	no aorist
6.	κατερήριπεν / ἐρέριπτο ‚tears down‘	II	1	1	
7.	κεκορηότε / κεκορήμεθα ‚satiates‘	I	1	4	
8.	λέλοιπεν / λέλειπται ‚leaves‘	II	4	16	
9.	ἔμμορε / εἵμαρτο ‚receives as share‘	II	4	3	no aorist
10.	μεμήλει / μέμβλετο ‚is matter of care‘	I	15	3	
11.	ὀρώρει / ὀρώρεται ‚gets moving‘	I	42	3	
12.	τετευχώς / τέτυκται ‚makes, manufactures‘	III	1	85 [86]	
13.	τετιηότες / τετιημένος ‚is saddened‘	I	6	8 [9]	perfect only
14.	πεφεύγοι / πεφυγμένος ‚flees‘	I	6	4	
15.	ἔφθιεν / ἔφθιται ‚perishes‘	III	1	5	

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<sup>2</sup> Atethized records in brackets.

<sup>3</sup> Only future perfect.

Total number of records:	258	175 [178]	433 [436]
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fig. 1

An analysis aiming for a functional distinction deals with the semantic content of the verbal forms. Therefore purely formal questions will not be taken into consideration.

Similarly, metrical reasons for the use of an active versus a mediopassive ending are neglected as long as functional reasons can be found. The hypothesis of metrical variations being the reason for the choice of endings [cf. latest Latacz (2000), et.al.] is quite popular, but at least for the verbs ἰδεῖν and ὀρᾶσθαι, Bechert (1964) has shown that there *is* a semantic difference between active and mediopassive endings in the Homeric epics. Yet, it must be emphasized that records of the mediopassive perfect stem in contrast with active stem forms of the same verb are quite rare and that some of these mediopassive forms are attested in the Homeric epics but not in the prose of Herodot, like μέμβλετο and ὀρώρεται. Nevertheless, they may be taken into account for this analysis, because it is hardly conceivable that Homer could create forms which are not fitting within the pattern of the voice system underlying the epic language, irrespective of their being ‚sprachwirklich‘ or not (i.e. metrically conditioned ‚Augenblicksbildungen‘).

## §2 Analysis

In the first step, the relevant verbs were divided into two groups according to the **level of semantic transitivity** à la Hopper / Thompson<sup>4</sup>. The verbs with problematical attestation<sup>5</sup> were left out of consideration (cf. group III in fig.1, i.e. ἐγρηγόρθασι / ἐγρήγορθε, τετευχώς / τέτυκται and ἔφθειεν / ἔφθειται).

- I. active / middle opposition (verbs with which the formal opposition between active and mediopassive endings correlates with the semantic opposition between active vs. middle):  
 ἔοικα / ἦικτο, κεκορηότε / κεκορήμεθα, μεμήλει / μέμβλετο, ὀρώρει / ὀρώρεται, τετιηότες / τετιημένος and πεφεύγοι / πεφυγμένος.
- II. active / passive opposition (verbs with which the formal opposition between active and mediopassive endings correlates with the semantic opposition between active vs. passive):  
 βεβλήκει / βέβληται, βεβρωκώς / βεβρώσεται, ἐδηδώς / ἐδήδοται, κατερήριπεν / ἐρέριπτο, λέλοιπεν / λέλειπται and ἔμμορε / εἵμαρτο.

In some cases, it is difficult to decide whether the mediopassive forms reflect a middle or a passive content, since the passive is in a way an extreme case of middle content: **middle** and **passive** both show affectedness of the subject (A) by the verbal action. In the middle function [fig. 2], the subject (A) contributes more to the realization of the situation than an optional<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Hopper / Thompson (1980: 252ff.) define transitivity by the following parameters: participants, kinesis, aspect, punctuality, volitionality, affirmation, mode, agency, affectedness of the object, individuation of the object.

<sup>5</sup> For ἐγρηγόρθασι / ἐγρήγορθε no difference between ‚wakes up‘ and ‚is woken up‘ is relevant in the Homeric epics and can therefore not be classified. τετευχώς / τέτυκται has just one active attestation in the perfect stem, which has passive content as two Myc. forms (*te-tu-ko-wo-a*<sub>2</sub> PY Sa 682 and *te-tu-ko-wo-a* KN L 871.b) confirm for an earlier state. An opposition of ἔφθειεν / ἔφθειται would presuppose the interpretation of ἔφθειεν as a perfect, as proposed by García Ramón (1990: 13ff.).

<sup>6</sup> As Prof. Duhoux remarked, the participant (B) does not necessarily have to be mentioned in both cases, middle as well as passive (cf. figures).

participant (B), while in the passive function [fig. 3] an optional participant (B) has more influence on the realization [see also Hettrich (1990: 57f.)].

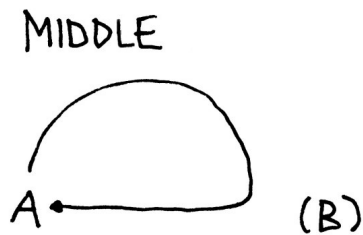


fig. 2

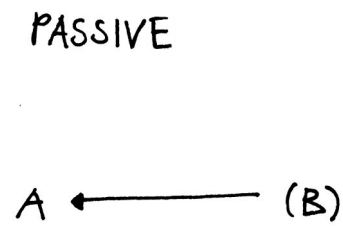


fig. 3

Voice can be presented as follows:

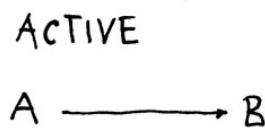


fig. 4

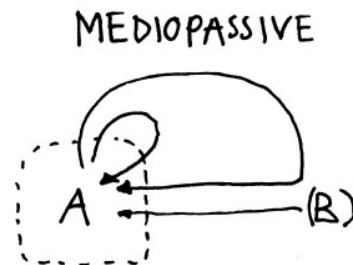


fig. 5

In order to outline the hypothesis of a semantic difference between active and mediopassive endings in the perfect stem in a short paper, I have to restrict myself to some examples. So the fact that the attestation [cf. fig.1] all in all is not very good, can not be compensated by a convincing picture of the whole in this place.<sup>7</sup>

In the heterogeneous group I, each analyzed verb expresses a different kind of subject relevance depending on the meaning of the verb as well as on the choice of the temporal stem and the verbal ending. Therefore two verbs have been chosen (μεμήλει / μέμβλετο and ὀρώρει / ὀρώρεται) to illustrate the similarities as well as the differences [cf. (1) – (7) and (8) – (13)]. As already mentioned, the semantic difference between the forms with active and mediopassive endings is sometimes hard to find within group I. Nevertheless, a (minimal) opposition can be detected in an increased amount of subject relevance. With the verbs of group II on the other hand, a (maximal) opposition between active and mediopassive endings can be identified in active versus passive usage. One well-attested verb (βεβλήκει / βέβληται) will suffice to demonstrate this [cf. (14)ff.]. The examples chosen are also meant to illustrate the flowing transition between the groups. A strict division is not possible [cf. fig. 5]. The whole range of voice may be represented by the following figure:

FORM:	active	mediopassive	
CONTENT:	active	middle	passive

.....▶

<sup>7</sup> The analysis of all verbs in question is available at <http://www.uni-koeln.de/phil-fak/ifs/institut/alexandramagist.pdf>

I. Active / middle opposition:

I.1. μεμήλγει (15x) / μέμβλετο (3x)<sup>8</sup>

In the Homeric epics, three different constructions are attested for μεμήλγει vs. μέμβλετο.

I.1.1. Active perfect stem

(A) The perfect stem has an impersonal active construction in common with the present and future stem. The subjects are *unspecific*<sup>9</sup> neuter plural forms in all cases attested (like τόσσα, τὰ πάντα, ταῦτα, ἔργα, ἄλλα); the experiencer can optionally be added in the dative:

- (1) οὐ χρὴ παννύχιον εὔδειν βουληφόρον ἄνδρα,  
ὅτι λαοί τ' ἐπιτετράφαται καὶ τόσσα μέμηλεν.  
,It is not right that a counselor sleeps the whole night through  
whom a host is entrusted to and who has to care for so many things.' (B 24-25)
- (2) τὰ δ' ἐμῆ φρεσὶ πάντα μέμηλεν.  
,But all this does worry me in my heart.' (ζ 65)

(B) The second group is made up of three attestations of a personal participle construction (active). Here, the experiencer is the subject. This construction appears only in the perfect stem:

- (3) βῆ δὲ μετ' Ἴδομενῆα, μέγα πτολέμοιο μεμηλώς.  
,... and followed Idomeneus, thinking a lot of battle.' (N 297, N 469)
- (4) ὅς ῥ' ἐν Ἵλῃ ναιέσκε μέγα πλούτοιο μεμηλώς,  
,... who lived in Hyle, taking great care of his wealth.' (E 708)

I.1.2. Mediopassive perfect stem

(C) Yet another construction is attested in the perfect stem only three times. Here, the impersonal middle construction has a *specific subject* in the singular:

- (5) ἦ νύ τοι οὐκέτι πάγχυ μετὰ φρεσὶ μέμβλετ' Ἀχιλλεύς;  
,Don't you [Athene] care no more in your thoughts of Achill? (T 343)
- (6) μέμβλετο γάρ οἱ τεῖχος εὐδμήτοιο πόλης,  
,... for he was worried about the wall of the well-built city ...' (Φ 516)

<sup>8</sup> Attestation:

Perfect active: μέμηλε 3x (B 25, B 26, μ 116), μέμηλεν 5x (E 876, I 228, T 213, ε 67, ζ 65), μεμήλη 2x (Δ 353, I 359); perfect participle active: μεμηλώς 3x (E 708, N 297, N 469); past perfect active: μεμήλγει 2x (B 614, α 151); perfect mediopassive: μέμβλετ'(αι) 1x (T 343); past perfect mediopassive: μέμβλετο 2x (Φ 516, χ 12); present stem: -e/-o-present (30x active, 1x mediopassive); future stem: s-future (14x active, 1x mediopassive).

<sup>9</sup> The terminology *unspecific* vs. *specific* is not very well chosen. Having to deal with the records I just didn't come up with a better classification. On the other hand, the fact that the *unspecifics* are always neuter plural forms while the *specifics* appear in the singular supports my interpretation.

- (7) **φόνος** δέ οἱ οὐκ ἐνὶ θυμῷ  
μέμβλετο.  
 ... death though was not in his thoughts.' (χ 11-12)

The middle construction (C) differs from the active construction (A) - well-attested in all temporal stems - mainly in the *quality of the subjects*: **Achilles** in (5), the **wall** (decisive for life and death) in (6) and **death** itself in (7) are consistently different from the unspecific neuter plural subjects of construction (A) [cf. (1) and (2)]. The experiencer affected by the verbal action is added in the dative.

The participle construction (B) differs from both (A) and (C) in that it maps the experiencer onto the subject, whereas in (A) and (C), the subject role is carried by the stimulus, the experiencer being demoted to the status of a dative adjunct:

- (B): subject = experiencer  
 (A), (C): subject = stimulus  
 indirect object = experiencer

In comparison to the other temporal stems, the perfect stem possesses a wider range of possible constructions. This results in a wider range of usage: While (B) allows a change of focus compared to (A), the difference between (A) and (C) is not only marked by the ending chosen, but also in the quality of the subject. Thus, the middle construction implies a *higher level of subject relevance*.

	act.	med.pass.
pres. } fut. }	(A) impersonal standard construction [μέλει (μοι)]	—
perf.	(A) impersonal construction with unspecific subject cf. (1), (2)  (B) pers. participle constr. cf. (3), (4) [μεμηλώς]	(C) impersonal construction with specific subject cf. (5), (6), (7) [μέμβλετο (μοι)]

fig. 7

## I.2. ὀρώρει (42x) / ὀρώρεται (3x)<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Attestation:

Perfect active: ὀρώρε 3x (H 374, H 388, Λ 658), ὀρώρεν 8x (B 797, Γ 87, Λ 530, M 384, M 361, N 122, O 400, Ω 107), ὀρώρη 6x (I 610, K 90, Λ 477, Π 633, X 388, σ 133); past perfect active: ὀρώρει 1x (Σ 498), ὀρώρει 24x (B 810, Δ 436, Δ 449, Θ 59, Θ 63, I 573, Λ 500, M 177, M 289, N 169, N 540, Π 267, P 384, P 397, Σ 493, Ω 512, ε 294, θ 380, ι 69, κ 122, λ 600, μ 315, ω 48, ω 70); perfect mediopassive: ὀρώρεται 2x (τ 377, τ 524); ὀρώρηται 1x (N 271); present stem: *nu*-present (12x active, 48x mediopassive); future stem: *s*-future (1x active), asigmatic future (1x mediopassive); aorist stem: *s*-aorist (69x [70x] active, 13x middle), reduplicated aorist (7x active), root aorist (59x middle).

The diachronic unity of the mediopassive forms (like ὀρώρεται) and the active ones (like ὀρώρει) was discussed by Rix (1965), who analyzed the mediopassive forms as a perfect stem of ὀρίνω and no longer - like the active perfect stem forms - as belonging to ὄρνυμι. In his view, ὄρνυμι describes a rotation, while ὀρίνω points to a translational movement. But even though this diachronic analysis seems to be quite fitting for the Homeric corpus, the forms in question synchronically display an opposition of active and middle content. The choice between active and mediopassive endings depends on how much the subject is involved into the verbal action, as shown by the following analysis:

### I.2.1. Active perfect stem

(D) The intransitive meaning in the present, future and aorist stems is expressed by mediopassive endings, while it is the active endings that perform this function in the perfect stem. The subjects of all these constructions belong to the semantic fields of ‚war‘ and ‚noise‘, but also ‚night‘ and ‚dust‘ occur:

- (8) μῦθον Ἀλεξάνδροιο, τοῦ εἵνεκα **νεῖκος ὄρωρεν**.  
 ‚... the word of Alexander, because of whom the fight has arisen (and is here now).‘ (Γ 87, Η 374, Η 388)
- (9) οἱ δ’ ἄλλοι μάρναντο, **βοή δ’ ἄσβεστος ὀρώρει**.  
 ‚But the others were fighting (on) and inextinguishable cry (had arisen and) was there.‘ (Ν 169 u.a.)

(E) A special case of the active perfect stem usage has the subject ‚knee‘. Five examples like the following are attested:

- (10) ὄφρ’ ἂν ἐγὼ γε  
 ζωοῖσιν μετέω καὶ **μοι φίλα γούνατ’ ὀρώρηι**.  
 ‚... so long as I am  
 among the living and my knees are moving.‘ (Χ 387-388)

In contrast to (D), an experiencer is involved in the verbal action. The dativus (in)commodi<sup>11</sup> μοι as well as φίλα, functioning as a possessive pronoun, point to the affectedness of the experiencer. The obviously increased subject relevance would expect the use of a mediopassive ending, but these examples seem to belong to a zone of transition, where both, active and mediopassive endings can be used.

### I.2.2. Mediopassive perfect stem

There are just three attestations of the mediopassive perfect stem. Despite this, two (different) cases of the middle perfect usage are attested:

One example (F) occurs with the subject νεῖκος πολέμοιο (Ν 271):

- (11) ἀλλὰ μετὰ πρότοισι μάχην ἀνὰ κυδιάνειραν

<sup>11</sup> An interpretation as genitive is also possible, cf. Meier-Brügger (1986).

ἵσταμαι, ὁπότε **νεῖκος ὀρώρηται πολέμοιο.**  
 ‚But among the first in man-honouring battle  
 I take my stand, each time a battle's fight has arisen (and is there).‘  
 (N 270-271)

It can be contrasted with examples including the simple subject νεῖκος like (8), which is always constructed with active endings as grouped under (D). This comparison shows that the subject νεῖκος πολέμοιο in (11) expresses an intensification or concretization caused by the genitive. The syntactic iteration initiated by ὁπότε has to be mentioned in this context, too. All in all, this special case of middle perfect shows a higher level of subject relevance in terms of iteration/intensification. Since the subject is neither animated, nor in a special way characterized, this example semantically seems to be, on a semantic scale, somewhere between the scope of active and mediopassive endings.

(G) Finally, two examples are attested with the subject θυμός (τ 377 and τ 524):

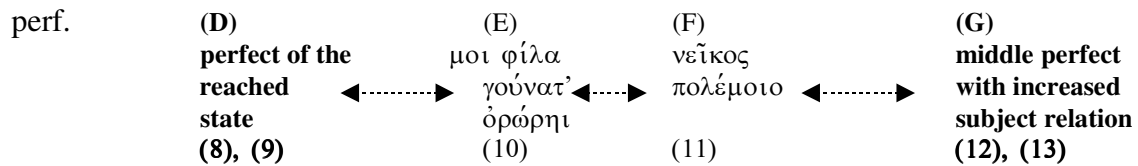
(12) ἐπεὶ μοι ὀρώρεται ἔνδοθι **θυμός**  
 κήδεσιν.  
 ‚... for my heart inside is stirred by sorrow ...‘ (τ 377-378)

(13) ὧς καὶ ἐμοὶ δίχα **θυμός** ὀρώρεται ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα,  
 ‚... so my heart, too, is twice moved to and fro (in doubt) ...‘ (τ 524)

As already mentioned above, in the case of μέμβλετο, the middle perfect adds the experiencer in the dative and is characterized by an increased subject relevance.

When these four groups of examples are arranged along a scale, the opposite poles are occupied by (D) and (G): the active perfect stem with low subject relevance in (D) and the mediopassive perfect stem with high subject relevance. Between these poles, (E) and (F) constitute a zone of transition, i.e. the choice of the active ending in (E) and the mediopassive ending in (F) seems optional. The functions of ‚perfect‘ and ‚middle‘ are overlapping.

	act.	med.pass.
other temporal stems	tr.	intr.



*zone of transition between  
,perfect' and ,middle'*

fig. 8

As the figure shows, the intransitive mediopassive of the non-perfective temporal stems semantically covers the whole range of the perfect stem. Due to its greater morphological variety, the perfect stem offers the possibility of further differentiation (cf. also *μεμῆλει* vs. *μέμβλετο*): The mediopassive set of endings (depending on the quality of the subject) expresses a *higher level of relevance to the subject*. Again a pronoun in the dative represents the one being affected by the verbal action.

The transition between the active perfect stem with a weak subject (D) and the mediopassive perfect stem with a strong subject (F) is a flowing one. In the zone of transition [(E), (F)], the functions of ,middle' and ,perfect' are quite similar.

## II. Active / passive opposition:

The third and well-attested example, *βεβλήκει* (13x) / *βέβληται* (33x),<sup>12</sup> represents the group of verbs in which a morphological opposition of active versus mediopassive is combined with a semantic opposition of active versus passive content.

The verb *βάλλω* has two constructions: *βάλλω*1 ,throw' with the accusative of ,missile' and a local specification and *βάλλω*2 ,hit' with the accusative of ,target' and the dative of ,missile'. According to Luz Conti (1996), both refer to one single reality.<sup>13</sup> As the meaning of *βάλλω* she proposes ,alcanzar por lanzamiento'.

### II.1. Active perfect stem

(H) The active perfect stem *βεβληκ-* is only attested with the meaning of *βάλλω*2 ,hit' with the accusative of ,target' and the dative of ,missile' in a concrete-martial meaning:

- (14) τὸν μὲν Μηριόνης, ὅτε δὴ κατέμαρπτε διώκων,  
βεβλήκει γλουτὸν κατὰ δεξιόν.  
 ,Him Meriones, when he - running after him - caught up,  
 hit his right buttock.' (E 65-66)

<sup>12</sup> Attestation:

Perfect active: *βεβληκοι* 1x (Θ 270); past perfect active: *βεβλήκει* 11x (Δ 108, Δ 492, E 66, E 73, E 394, M 401, Ξ 412, P 606, χ 258, χ 275, χ 286), *βεβλήκειν* 1x (E 661); perfect mediopassive: *βέβληται* 3x (E 284, Λ 380, N 251), *βέβληται* 5x (E 103, Λ 660, Λ [662], Π 25, Π 27), *βεβλήαται* 3x (Λ 657, λ 194); mediopassive perfect participial: *βεβλημένος* 6x (Λ 592, Λ 809, Λ 822, N 212, λ 535, τ 69), *βεβλημένον* 7x (Λ 475, Λ 612, Λ 650, Λ 664, M 2, Ξ 63, Π 819), *βεβλημένοι* 4x (Λ 659, Λ 826, N 764, Π 24), *βεβολημένος* 2x (I 9, κ 247); past perfect mediopassive: *βέβλητο* 1x (μ 423), *βεβλήατο* 2x (Ξ 28, η 97), *βεβολήατο* 1x (I 3); present: *-n*-infing present (73x active, 46x mediopassive); future: asigmatic future (7x active, 1x mediopassive); aorist: thematic aorist (356x active, 22x mediopassive), root aorist (37x passive).

<sup>13</sup> With her paper she rejects the suggestion of de Boel (1986, 1987, 1988) to separate both constructions.



- (15) Τληπόλεμος δ' ἄρα μηρὸν ἀριστερὸν ἔγχει μακρῶι  
βεβλήκειν,  
 ,And Tlepolemos hit upon the left thigh [of Sarpedon] with his long  
 spear, ...' (E 660-661)

Concrete-martial meaning of βάλλω2 ,hit' is also attested for the active present stem (τῶι δ' ἐπετοξάντο  
 κάρη κομόωντες Ἄχαιοί | ἰοῖσίν τε τιτυσκόμενοι λάεσσί τ' ἔβαλλον Γ 79-80) and for the active  
 thematic aorist Μηριόνη, τάχα κέν σε καὶ ὀρχηστὴν περ ἔοντα | ἔγχος ἐμὸν κατέπαυσε διαμπερές,  
 εἴ σ' ἔβαλον περ Π 617-618).

## II.2. Mediopassive perfect stem

The mediopassive perfect stem, on the other hand, has a larger scale of usage than the active  
 one.

- (I) The perfect stem βεβλη- is attested with a concrete-martial meaning of βάλλω2 ,hit'.  
 It is obviously used as a passive:

- (16) βέβληται δὲ καὶ Εὐρύπυλος κατὰ μηρὸν ὀιστῶι·  
 ,Eurypylos is hit too, with an arrow in the thigh.'  
 (Λ 662, Π 27)

Concrete-martial meaning of βάλλω2 ,hit' in passive usage is also attested for the present participles (τῶν δὲ  
 τάχ' ἀμφὶ πύλας ὄμαδος καὶ δοῦπος ὀρώρει | πύργων βαλλομένων· I 573-574) and for the root aorist  
 [βλήτο γὰρ οὐ τι κάκιστος ἀνὴρ μετὰ Μυρμιδόνεσσιν (Π 570)].

- (J) The perfect stem βεβλη- is further attested with the meaning of βάλλω1 ,throw' with the  
 accusative of ,missile' and a local specification. It is used in a transferred but still concrete  
 way:

- (17) ἔνθ' ἐνὶ πέπλοι  
 λεπτοὶ ἐύνητοι βεβλήατο, ἔργα γυναικῶν.  
 ,... and to them [to the seats] were thrown robes of soft fabric,  
 cunningly woven, the handiwork of women.' (η 96-97)

The passive meaning of these difficult examples can be shown by active examples like the  
 following:

- (18) ἔν τε θρόνοις εὐποιήτοισι τάπητας  
βάλλετε πορφυρέους·  
 ,... and on the shapely chairs  
 throw coverlets of purple!' (υ 150-151)

Transferred-concrete meaning in passive usage appears only in the mediopassive perfect stem of βάλλω1  
 ,throw'. Active usage of βάλλω1 is attested for the active present stem [cf. (18)] and for the thematic aorist  
 forms (ἀμφὶ δὲ ποσσὶ πέδας ἔβαλε χρυσείας N 36).

- (K) A second mediopassive perfect stem is attested in βεβολη-. All records display a  
 metaphorical meaning of βάλλω2 ,hit', i.e. human ἦτορ or κῆρ are affected by πένθει or  
 ἄχει, cf. Strunk (1976: 392):

- (19) πένθει δ' ἀτλήτωι βεβολήατο πάντες ἄριστοι.

,And with grief intolerable were all noblest stricken.' (I 3)

βεβόλη- seems to be semantically restricted to the psychological depression after a misfortune. Apart from the undoubtable passive function, an additional meaning seems to be triggered by the middle function, which the mediopassive endings are also able to express (cf. I.1. and I.2.). A higher level of subject relevance is obvious in these cases.

Metaphorical-abstract meaning of βάλλω2 ,hit' in passive usage is unique in the mediopassive perfect stem. Within the other temporal stems a metaphorical-abstract meaning is only attested for βάλλω1 ,throw'. Active usage can be found in the active present stem (ἀλλά μοι αἰγίοχος Κρονίδης Ζεὺς ἄλγε' ἔδωκεν ἴός με μετ' ἀπρήκτους ἔριδας καὶ νείκεα βάλλει B 375-376). Reflexive usage (never attested in the perfect stem of any of the analyzed verbs) is expressed by the finite forms of the mediopassive present stem (ὃ πόποι, ἦ ῥα καὶ ἄλλοι ἐυκνήμιδες Ἴχαιοι ἰέν θυμῶι βάλλονται ἐμοὶ χόλον Ξ 49-50) and the mediopassive forms of the thematic aorist (ὡς ἔφατ', αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ περὶ μὲν ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον ἰῶμοιιν βαλόμην, μέγα χάλκεον, ἀμφὶ δὲ τόξα· κ 261-262).

	act.	mid.	pass.
pres.	<b>meaning: ,throw'</b> a) concrete b) <u>transferred-concrete</u> c) <u>metaphorical-abstract</u>  <b>meaning: ,hit'</b> <u>concrete-martial</u>	<b>meaning: ,throw' (rfl.)</b> <u>metaphorical-abstract</u> → finite forms	<b>meaning: ,hit' (pass.)</b> <u>concrete-martial</u> → participles
them. aor.	<b>meaning: ,throw'</b> a) concrete b) <u>transferred-concrete</u> <b>meaning: ,hit'</b> <u>concrete-martial</u>	<b>meaning: ,throw' (rfl.)</b> a) <u>transferred-concrete</u> b) <u>metaphorical-abstract</u>	
root aor.			<b>meaning: ,hit' (pass.)</b> <u>concrete-martial</u>
perf.	<b>meaning: ,hit'</b> <u>concrete-martial</u> cf. (14), (15)		<b>mean.: ,throw' (pass.)</b> <u>transferred-concrete</u> , cf. (17)  <b>meaning: ,hit' (pass.)</b> a) <u>concrete-martial</u> [βεβλη-], cf. (16) b) <u>metaphorical-abstract</u> [βεβόλη-], cf. (19)

fig.9

As figure 9 illustrates, the mediopassive perfect stem has a much wider range of usage than the active perfect stem: with two different perfect stems the mediopassive perfect stem can express different semantics. In contrast to the active perfect stem, attested only in the concrete-martial usage of βάλλω2 ,hit', the mediopassive perfect stem functions as a kind of *semantic reservoir* for meanings that in the other temporal stems are restricted to certain inflectional forms:

- The passive of the concrete-martial usage of βάλλω2 ,hit' (apart from perfect stem attestation, cf. (16)) is restricted to the present participle and the root aorist.

- The meaning of βάλλω1 ‚throw‘ in the transferred-concrete usage (apart from perfect stem attestation, cf. (17)) is limited to the active finite present stem forms and the thematic aorist.
- βάλλω1 ‚throw‘ in its metaphorical-abstract usage occurs (besides the attestation of the perfect stem βεβολη-) only in the active present stem and in the middle forms of the present and aorist stems with reflexive meaning, which is never attested for the perfect stem.

### §3 Conclusion

The functions of the mediopassive perfect stem forms, as seen in the case of the lexems dealt with above, can be summarized as follows:

1. The *communis opinio* that mediopassive forms of middle content express a **higher level of subject relevance/affectedness** can be confirmed for the mediopassive perfect stem in contrast to the active perfect stem.<sup>14</sup>

cf. μεμήλει vs. μέμβλετο: (5), (6), (7)  
 ὀρώρει vs. ὀρώρεται: (12), (13)

In these cases, a certain **affinity to the dative** was found. This fact that has already been mentioned by Bechert (1964) should be further examined. The low grade of transitivity of the mediopassive perfect forms with middle content seems to be connected with it.<sup>15</sup>

cf. μεμήλει vs. μέμβλετο: (5), (6), (7)  
 ὀρώρει vs. ὀρώρεται: (12), (13)

2. In addition, an obvious **tendency** of the mediopassive perfect **to encode a metaphorical meaning** has been stated. This tendency can be confirmed by other investigated verbs as well as by verb 3 of this paper, as well as by other verbs.<sup>16</sup>

cf. βεβλήκει vs. βέβληται: (19)

3. Finally, the mediopassive perfect stem functions as some kind of **semantic reservoir**. As stated for 2. above, it might be explained by the secondary entry of the mediopassive endings into the perfect stem. The younger set of endings offered the possibility to express new semantic facets that other temporal stems were not able to express.<sup>17</sup>

cf. βεβλήκει vs. βέβληται: (16), (17), (19)

The question, whether this thesis can be confirmed by other perfect stem forms in the Homeric epics which are attested only with active or only with mediopassive endings, demands further research. It is to be hoped that this paper has shown the necessity of a careful

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<sup>14</sup> also: ἔοικα vs. ἦικτο, τετιηότες vs. τετιημένος, πεφεύγοι vs. πεφυγμένος

<sup>15</sup> also: ἔοικα vs. ἦικτο, τετευχώς vs. τέτυκται

<sup>16</sup> also: βεβρωκώς vs. βεβρώσεται, ἐδηδώς vs. ἐδήδοται, κεκορηότε vs. κεκορήμεθα

<sup>17</sup> also: τετευχώς vs. τέτυκται

analysis, because the meaning of each verb is a combination of root meaning, temporal stem meaning and the meaning of voice, but the ultimate result cannot be predicted.

Note: Worth mentioning is the book of Rutger J. Allan 'The Middle Voice in Ancient Greek. A Study in Polysemy'. Published in Amsterdam in 2003, it unfortunately was not possible to incorporate it.

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