

AN
OUTLINE OF
MIDDLE VOICE IN SYRIAC

Evidences of a linguistic category

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FOREWORD

The present work describes the results of a research over the semantic value and the functions of the Syriac verbal prefix *et-* and of the *et-* conjugations. Also the so-called internal passives will be taken into account, to the extent to which they complete and determine the role of the *et-* conjugations.

The aim of the research was to verify whether, in order to give an exhaustive and coherent picture of the different meanings of the verbal *et-* stems, it can be useful to introduce into the Syriac verbal system the notion of *middle voice*.

This study is subdivided into four sections:

- an introductory part, containing a description of the problem (both synchronically and diachronically), a brief status quaestionis and an overview of the general linguistic and typological theories and instruments that will be used in the course of the work (ch. 1-2-3);
- an analysis of a sample of early Syriac texts (dating between 3rd and 6th century) and a discussion of its results, also within a frame of typological comparisons (ch. 4-5);
- an excursus over the way diathesis and *et-* forms have been described in medieval Syriac grammars (ch. 6);
- a presentation of the conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis (ch. 7).

This is a doctoral thesis, which was elaborated during the three years (2005-2008) of Perfezionamento at the Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

This work has linguistic scope and is meant to be accessible not only to the experts of the Syriac language, but also to linguists in general. Therefore, all the quotations from Syriac and from other Semitic languages have been transliterated and annotated with short grammatical *glossae*.

For the same reason, attention was paid to make the root-consonants and the word's morphological structure as recognizable as possible. Thus, phenomena such as the spirantization of the consonants b, g, d, k, p, t, have not been rendered in the transliteration.

However, the texts quoted and examined in chapter 6 seemed to be exceedingly long for a full transliteration. Therefore, they are presented in the chapter in their English translation and are fully reproduced in Syriac alphabeth in Appendix 2. In transliteration can anyway be found those words that are particularly relevant for the understanding of the discussion presented in the chapter.

As far as the transliteration of the consonants is concerned, the common system of diacritics has been used, with the following exceptions:

- initial *âlaph* is omitted, every time that it is vocalized, and it is thus marked by the corresponding vowel;
- final *âlaph* is omitted: for example, the endings of the masculine singular emphatic state and feminine singular absolute state are transliterated as *â*, the ending of the masculine plural as *ê*;
- vowel followed by *mater lectionis* is indicated by a caret;
- the spirantization of the consonants b g d k p t, in specific phonetic contexts, is not indicated in the transliteration;
- consonants that are not pronounced (except for *matres lectionis*) are always transliterated, in order to preserve relevant morphological elements (such as verbal endings);
- an underline is used to mark a *linea occultans* in Syriac writing.

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SYRIAC ALPHABETH	TRANSLITERATION	IPA SYMBOL
ܘ	'	/ʔ/
ܒ	b	/b/
ܓ	g	/g/
ܕ	d	/d/
ܚ	h	/h/
ܘܘܘܘ	w	/w/
ܘܘܘܘܘ	z	/z/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘ	ḫ	/x/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	ṭ	/tʰ/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	y	/j/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	k	/k/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	l	/l/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	m	/m/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	n	/n/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	s	/s/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	'	/ʕ/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	p	/p/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	ṣ	/sʰ/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	q	/q/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	r	/r/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	š	/ʃ/
ܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘܘ	t	/t/

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Presentation of the material*

Syriac verbal system is organized around two main conjugations (or *tenses*, in many traditional accounts) characterized by a lexical root associated with a number of personal prefixes or suffixes, respectively. For this reason, one can also talk about prefix and suffix conjugations. The two conjugations differ, at least originally¹, from the aspectual point of view, being associated with *non-terminative* (imperfective) and *terminative* (perfective) aspect, respectively².

Beside these conjugations, Syriac also has a number of forms, or stems, namely morphological patterns, according to which the verbal root can be modified, in order to modify its basic lexical meaning. The difference between the basic stem and the derived ones lays mainly in the argument structure (causation, passivization, intransitivization, etc.) and, to a certain extent, in aspectual representation and actional content.

This structure is common to several Western Semitic languages from the 1st millennium b.C. onwards. Nevertheless, Aramaic (of which Syriac represents a medieval literary³ sub-

¹ For a sketch of the evolution of Aspect in Aramaic, cf. Cohen (1989). The Tense and Aspect system of Syriac is more complex than here indicated. Participles play an important role, being the main tool for expressing the Present, but also, in some context, an on-going process. Moreover, there are several compound tenses, making use of the auxiliary *hwâ* 'to be'. In this study, the values of some of the compound tenses and of the participles will be analyzed, but only to the extent to which it is relevant for the understanding of the functions of *et*-forms and inner passives.

² For the use of the couple terminative/non-terminative to refer to aspectual distinctions, cf. Bertinetto (1997) and § 2.2.1.

³ On the position of Syriac among the other Aramaic dialects, cf. Kutscher (1970). On the origin of Syriac as a

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variant), in the course of time, has developed a remarkable symmetry within its stem-system, which can be considered a peculiarity, with respect to all other Semitic languages, and which was most productive in Syriac.

Given a tri-consonantal root *p'l* ('to do'), the symmetrical stem-system of Syriac can be sketched as follows:

<i>p'el</i>	<i>etp'el</i>
<i>pa'el</i>	<i>etpa'al</i>
<i>(')ap'el</i>	<i>ettap'al</i>
<i>šap'el</i>	<i>eštap'al</i>

In the left column of this scheme are listed the basic stem and three derived ones, by means of the following derivational morphemes:

- strengthening of the second root-consonant;
- causative prefix '(a)';
- causative prefix *š*⁴.

The table also shows how, to every stem in the left column corresponds a stem in the right column, that is derived from it by means of the prefix *et-*. That is, the stems on the right column are characterized by the same morphological element as their counterpart on the left, plus the prefix *et-*.

The definition of the precise value of the prefix *et-*, of its position within the Syriac verbal system and of its relation with its etymological equivalents in other Semitic languages, has been a matter of debate throughout the history of the Syriac grammatical and linguistic

classical and literary language, cf. Van Rompay (1994). On the linguistic context in which Syriac emerged as a literary language, cf. Healey (2008).

⁴ The prefix *š* can be described, in a general Semitic perspective, as a causative marker. Nevertheless, in Syriac, it is no longer productive and its functions and origins are not clear. For a complete list of its values in the different verbal roots and on the position of this stem in the Syriac verbal system cf. van Peursen (in press).

studies⁵. If all the sources agree in indicating a meaning roughly reflexive, reciprocal or passive, it is not possible to find an real unified account. Moreover, the exceptions, such as *et-* forms with active or transitive value, are so numerous to suggest the need of further investigation.

Another morphological category that is correlated with the modification of the argumental structure and of the actional value of the verb is that of *inner passive*.

A very well known feature of Semitic languages is the so-called internal apophony, namely the modification of the basic lexical meaning of a consonantal root, by means of different vowel patterns. In Syriac, the productivity of such a phenomenon is restricted, with respect to more ancient Semitic varieties. One of its survival is in the inner passives, a number of participles related to the various verbal stems: *q̄ṭil*, *mqaṭṭal*, *maṭal*, *mšaqṭal*, etc. It is important to notice that this is a mere morphological label⁶, with only a generic reference to an actual passive meaning of such a form.

Finally, a third category that is correlated to reflexivity, and relevant for the understanding of the role of the *et-*forms, are the reflexive pronominal structures. Those are forms constituted by a preposition or by nouns like *napšā* 'soul', *qnômā* 'person', *yâtā* 'essence', followed by pronominal suffixes⁷. These suffixes are coreferential with the subject of the

⁵ An extensive overview of the literature on Syriac *et-* and Semitic *t-* affix in general will be given in Chapter 3.

⁶ One could use, for example, the alternative formulation *non-active participle*, as in Gai (2005) and Li (2008), cf. Ch. 3.

⁷ These nouns have a special status in the language system. They have a certain degree of grammaticalization, but their literal meaning can always be restored (as it is the case for the cognates of *npš* throughout the entire Semitic group). A very interesting example of the productivity of such an interchange between the grammatical and the lexical function can be found in Ephrem's Commentary on Genesis Tonneau (1955: 8), 17-18. The author is explaining the first verse of the book of Genesis, that in Biblical Hebrew is: *bore'šit bārā elohim et ha-šamaym w-et hā-āreš* "in the beginning God created the sky and the earth". Ephrem reports the entire verse, in a sort of Syriac translation-transcription that we reproduce here: *brāšit lam brā alāhā yât šmyā w-yât ar'ā*. What is interesting here is the word transcribed as *yt*. In the Hebrew text it corresponds to the direct object marker *et* (and could have been thus, in principle, translated with the Syriac equivalent *l-*). In Syriac the word *yât* exists, with the meaning of 'essence, substance'. This word is usually considered to be a cognate of the Hebrew *et* (for which cf. Farina 2005), and it was chosen here as the best rendering of the particle. But how is it then explained by Ephrem in his commentary? Does the Syriac word receive a grammatical status? This is what Payne Smith (1903: 198) seems to suggest: "archaism used like Heb. *eth* as sign of the accusative". Nevertheless, what follows in the Commentary goes in another direction and exploits differently the ambiguity: *hānaw dēn qnômeh d-šmayā w-qnômeh d-ar'ā* "and this means the essence of the sky and the essence of the earth". Here a grammatical word from Biblical Hebrew is rendered with a Syriac equivalent that has, nevertheless, prominently a lexical meaning and can be interpreted as a noun "essence" (this meaning is quite widespread, for example, in later translations of Greek philosophical and scientific

governing verb⁸.

What follows is an overview of the main possible uses of the *et*-stems and of their apparent competitors: inner passives and reflexive pronominal structures.

Middle-reflexive⁹

Et-form

1. Gen 38:14 (*Pešitta*)

<i>w-etkasyat</i>	<i>b-ardidā</i>	<i>w-eṣtabtat</i>
conj. 'and' + III f. sg. pf. <i>ethpa</i> 'al 'cover'	prep. 'in, with' + 'veil'	conj. 'and' + III f. sg. pf. <i>ethpa</i> 'al 'adorn oneself'

"She covered with a veil and adorned herself"

Int. pass.

2. Gen 37:23 (*Pešitta*)

<i>kūtīnā</i>	<i>d-peditā</i>	<i>d-lbīš</i>	<i>hwā</i>
'robe'	rel. + adj. 'with long sleeves'	rel. + part. pass. m. sg. <i>p'el</i> 'wear, be clothed'	III m. sg. pf. <i>p'el</i> 'be'

"The robe with long sleeves that he was wearing".

Refl. pron.

3. Book of the Laws of the Countries¹⁰ 46, 23

<i>tba'</i>	<i>napš-eh</i>
III m. sg. pf. <i>p'el</i> 'revenge'	'soul' + pron. suff. III m. sg.

"He revenges himself".

texts). This word is thus interpreted by means of another word (*qnômā*) that has the same status: it is potentially also a grammatical (pronominal) function, but is here used in its lexical meaning 'essence' (this is confirmed by what follows in the text).

⁸ E.g., *nezkê napšeh* 'he will justify himself'. More examples, taken from classical Syriac grammars, will be given in § 1.3.

⁹ For the moment, the generic expression *middle-reflexive* is used, to give a first sketch of the phenomenon. Further in this chapter, the exact meanings of the two terms will be discussed, and the point will be made that for *et*-forms it is more appropriate to use the label *middle*, reserving *reflexive* only for the pronominal structures.

¹⁰ The page numbers refer to the edition by Drijvers (1965).

Impersonal

Et-form

4. Ephrem's Commentaries in Genesis and Exodus 11,5¹¹

<i>etbarî</i>	<i>lhên</i>	<i>'nânê</i>	<i>halên</i>
III m. sg. pf. etpa 'create'	prep. 'to'/obj. mrk. + pron. III f. pl.	prep. 'to' /obj. mrk.+ 'clouds'	dem. adj.

"It was created those clouds".

Int. Pass.

5. Acts of Judas Thomas¹² VII, 240, 8

<i>w-btîl</i>	<i>lâk</i>	<i>'al</i>	<i>bryâtâ</i>
conj. 'and' + pass. ptc. m. sg. 'care'	prep. 'to' + pron. II m. sg.	prep. 'upon'	pl. 'creatures'

"And you are worried about the creatures".

Passive¹³

Et-form

6. Acts of Judas Thomas VI, 231, 8

<i>w-netmlê</i>	<i>men</i>	<i>tarbîteh</i>
conj. 'and' + I pl. ipf. ethp. 'fill'	prep. 'from/by'	'nourishment' + pron. suff. III m. sg.

"We will be filled by his nourishment".

Int. pass.

7. Acts of Judas Thomas V, 214, 14

<i>menneh</i>	<i>îlîd</i>	<i>ant</i>
prep. 'from/by' + pron. III m. sg.	ptc. pass. m. sg. p'el 'generate'	pron. II m. sg.

"From him you were generated".

¹¹ Text and references according to Tonneau (1955).

¹² Text and references according to Wright (1871).

¹³ The value of the term passive, for Semitic languages in general and for Syriac in particular, will be discussed in detail in ch. 3. For the moment we indicate, with this label, a verbal form the subject of which is undergoing the action described, by intervention of an agent that is expressed in the sentence, introduced by a preposition (such as *men*, *b-*, *l-*, *byâd*, ...).

Active intransitive

Et-form

8. Ex 3:5 (*Pešitta*)

<i>lâ</i>	<i>tetqarab</i>	<i>l-hârka</i>
'not'	II m. sg. ipf. <i>ethpa'al</i> 'approach'	prep. 'to' + adv. 'here'

"Do not come close" (translational motion).

Int. pass.

9. Acts of Judas Thomas I, 182, 11

<i>w-eškah</i>	<i>'ntûn</i>	<i>kad</i>	<i>îbîn</i>
conj. 'and' + III m. sg. of. 'find'	pron. II m. pl.	adv. 'when'	ptc. pass. pl. p'el 'sit'

"And he found them sitting".

Active transitive

Et-form

10. Ephrem's commentaries on Genesis and Exodus, 60,14

<i>d-lâ</i>	<i>'aryawâtâ</i>	<i>l-âbâyhûn</i>	<i>metdacrîn</i>	<i>hwâw</i>
rel. part. + neg.	'lions'	prep. 'to'/obj. mrk. + 'forests' + pron. III m. pl.	ptc. etpa. m. pl. 'remember'	III m. pl. pf. 'be'

"The lions do not remember their forests".

Int. pass.

11. Acts of Judas Thomas II, 193, 18

<i>w-aḥîd</i>	<i>hwâ</i>	<i>qeryônâ</i>
conj. 'and' + ptc. pass. m. sg. 'hold, carry'	III m. sg. pf. 'to be'	'candle'

"And he was holding a candle".

1.2 Preliminary observations

The examples presented in the previous paragraph show, on the one hand, that a certain variety of meanings can be expressed by the same morphological element. On the other hand, analogous meanings seem to be expressed by different forms.

Which is the property that binds together all these different meanings? Are all those forms mere equivalents, or is it possible to individuate for them different specializations?

In order to try to give an answer to these questions I will reconsider the distribution of *et*-forms, inner passives and reflexive markers in the light of the concept of *middle voice*.

Leading principle of my analysis will be the following statement formulated by Kemmer (1993: 4):

Recurring instances of different meanings being expressed by the same formal or structural means is an indication that the meanings in question are related. Furthermore, the more direct the semantic relationship between two meanings, the more likely they are to be subsumed under a single form of expression, both within and across languages.

The situation of Syriac is not isolated among Semitic languages. On the contrary, a morphological connection between intransitive/stative, reflexive and passive is characteristic more or less of the entire language family.

Retsö (1989) is an investigation over the historical origin of two verbal categories proper of West Semitic dialects: the causative conjugations of the type *yuqtil-h'aqtal* and the inner passive of the type *yuqtal-qutil/qatîl*. As the subtitle indicates, the book contains mainly "*a comparative morphological study*". Nevertheless, in the introductory section, as well as in various parts of the account, a number of observations are found that are relevant for the present study.

Retsö starts his analysis of the various ways of expressing passive in Semitic languages with the following remark: "all morphological devices in Semitic occurring in PC¹⁴ have other functions as well". Trying to understand the reason of such a polifunctionality, the scholar indicates an important, although very general, correlation between intransitive, stative and passive verbs:

¹⁴ Sc. 'passive construction'.

In Semitic at least *intransitive* marking is widely spread for marking passive subjects (derivative verbs with *t-* affix). The reason for this is not difficult to understand: one characteristic of the verb in a PC is intransitivization. [...] In Semitic there is another category that plays a crucial role in the PC, viz. the *stative*... It is clear that the reason for this must be a semantic feature which the subject of a stative verb shares with the subject in a PC: non-agentivity. Retsö (1989: 6).

According to the Retsö, thus, the expression of passive is realized in Semitic languages by means of an analogical extension of two properties: argument reduction, on the syntactico-semantic level, and non-agentivity, on the semantic one¹⁵.

As will be shown in the course of this study, the analogical extension of semantic and syntactic properties on the basis of metonymic and metaphoric associations, plays a very important role in the distribution of forms and functions in Syriac middle voice.

Another important contribution given by Retsö is a discussion about the nature of the passive construction in the Semitic languages that he analyses (among which is also Aramaic). A well known characteristic of Semitic languages is the fact that the agent of a passive construction is very seldomly expressed. For this reason, passivization has been viewed in these languages mainly as an agent-demotion device. Nevertheless, in many languages of the family, and certainly in all of them from the first millennium onwards, there is the syntactic possibility of expressing the agent of a passive construction by means of prepositional phrases. This second type of construction is considered as a topicalization of the object. Retsö hypothesizes the following reconstruction:

The PC, originally perhaps a device for handling the absence of agent, thus gives the languages a means for grammaticalization of topicalization. Thus the PC in Semitic should probably be seen as two different constructions, (1) deletion or absence of the semantic subject (= the "agent") for different reasons, (2) topicalization of the object. Retsö (1989): 3.

¹⁵ Cf. also Retsö (1989: 28): "It is however essential to make the distinction between syntactic and lexico-semantic categories. It is perhaps reasonable to agree that the term *stative* is apt to design a lexico-semantic category found in all languages. [...] The other terms involved here, viz. the transitive, intransitive, active and passive, should likewise be seen as primarily indicating syntactic categories connected with the phenomena of valency and diathesis".

As we will see, the overt expression of the agent is a possible criterion for classifying different construction involving the same verbal form, at least to a certain extent. If the presence of the agent is certainly not indispensable for a construction to be passive, we can consider it as an important ingredient for establishing a scale of passivity and a scale of thematic relevance, among the various passive structures.

Individuating formal and semantic criteria for classifying the different uses of the same verbal form is important, in order to identify the prototypes around which the verbal system is organized, and on the basis of which all analogical extension of forms and functions is operated.

In the following chapter, definitions will be given of reflexive and of middle, that will constitute the guidelines for the textual analysis.

1.3 Et-forms in some modern Syriac grammars

Let us briefly review what is said about the verbal forms with *et-* prefix in some of the main Western grammars of classical Syriac.

In Duval (1881) the meaning of the *et-* forms is not treated separately. Nevertheless, reference to it is made in several instances. The first instance is in § 184:

ainsi a disparu du verbe le passif interne, dont les participes et quelques noms d'action ont seuls conservé des vestiges; l'araméen lui a substitué les réfléchis. Duval (1881: 176).

In ch. 5 *Des verbes dérivés*, § 190 - 191 say:

Les dérivés du verbe simple ou radical sont au nombre de sept: trois actif pa'el aph'el et šaph'el; quatre réfléchis, formant le passif du verbe simple et des trois actifs dérivés, dont ils se distinguent par les voyelles et la particule des réfléchis ܠܐ [et]. [...]

Le passif du verbe simple ܐܬܟܬܒܐ [etkteb]. [...]

Ethp'el a encore quelquefois le sens réfléchi¹⁶, ܐܬܫܬܘܢܐ [ešt'el] *se faire prier, refuser*

¹⁶ An analogous observation is found in §193 for *etpa'al*.

παραιτέομαι. Duval (1881: 178).

Two terms are used here to refer to the *et-* forms: *réfléchi* and *passif*. No special indication is given about the way such labels should be understood. Nevertheless, it seems that the first term is used to indicate the morphological category in general and makes reference to an original function, whereas the second defines the current semantic value of the form. To understand what is exactly meant by *sens réfléchi* one can examine the examples given in §193 for ܐܦܪܐܐܠ: *se rendre intelligent, comprendre, s'étonner, admirer, se rendre compte, réfléchir* etc.

Rather than real reflexive actions (transitive events in which the agent and the patient are coreferential), they describe events experienced by the subject.

In Nöldeke (1898 [1966]: 101. §159) the stems with *et-* prefix are referred to as *Reflexiv(en)* of the respective basic or derived stem. As far as the meaning is concerned, the following remark is added: "Die *Reflexiva* haben meist *Passivbedeutung* gewonnen" Nöldeke (1898 [1966]: 102).

Brockelmann (1965: 82) gives the following general rule: "zu jedem dieser Stämme bildet es ein Reflexiv, jetzt, meist mit passiver bedeutung, mit dem Praefix ܐܦܪܐܐܠ".

Nöldeke's and Brockelmann's observations, although more synthetic, are along the same lines as those found in Duval: the *et-* prefix had an original *reflexive* meaning (whatever is meant with this term) and has subsequently developed a passive one, that has taken over the primary function.

A slightly more detailed discussion can be found in Muraoka (2005: 41-42):

The semantic or functional opposition between these six patterns is still a matter of debate. The three Eth-prefixed patterns are partly reflexive, passive or ingressive [...].

The passive voice is partly indicated by the eth-patterns.

Muraoka also gives interesting information about the relation existing between the *et-* participle and the inner passive:

Where an inner passive participle is attested side by side with an external, eth-prefixed one, the former stresses a result, the latter a process Muraoka (2005: 42).

Such an observation introduces aspectual and actional values of the form, that will be extensively dealt with in the present study.

What is important, for the moment, is to notice how all the remarks mentioned so far, although all correct in principle, are quite vague and not completely clearly related to one another. Moreover, they often apply only to a subset of the *et-* forms, from which sometimes they try to derive a general/generic rule.

Let us now focus on the reflexive value that is attributed to the *et-* forms. If one looks at the examples mentioned above, that Duval¹⁷ gives for such an usage, one is struck by the fact that very few of them actually correspond to what is generally meant with the term reflexive.

Moreover, as mentioned in § 1.1, Syriac has another way of expressing reflexivity *strictu sensu*, by means of specific pronouns or pronominal structures.

Observing some of the examples given in the various grammars for these categories, we see how they qualify as reflexive structures much better than the *et-* forms: *la-qnômhûn âmar hwâw* "sprach zu sich", *dhî mdabrâ napšâh wa-mṭaksâ l-yâtâh* "welche sich selbst führt und ordnet" Nöldeke (1898 [1966]: 168-169); *nâšê 'am yâteh* "streitet met sich selbst" Brockelmann (1965): 108; *ḥnak napšeh 'il s'étrangla' qnûmy etel* 'je me donnerai' Duval (1881: 296).

As regards the definition of reflexivity in the time of the Syriac grammars here taken into account, this is what Leonard Bloomfield says of reflexivity, in a time not exceedingly distant from the Syriac grammars here quoted:

In English we say *he washed him* when actor and goal are not identical, but *he washed himself* (a reflexive form) when they are the same person. Bloomfield (1914 [1933]).

How did then the idea of an original reflexive value of the *et-* forms originate?

I think that the answer to this question is not to be found in comparative considerations, with respect to the value of the *-t-* affix in the various Semitic languages.

On a purely hypothetical basis, one could, instead suggest a connection with a concept belonging to Arabic linguistic tradition: that of *muṭāwa'a*.

The word *muṭāwi'*, used for the first time by Sībawayhi in his *Kitāb*¹⁸, literally means

¹⁷ Brockelmann and Nöldeke do not give examples related to meaning, but only forms relevant for the understanding of the paradigm. All the examples given by Muraoka (2005) are passive.

¹⁸ Ch. 446.

'submissive, obedient'¹⁹ and refers to the verbal stems built with *ta-* and *n-* prefixes and with *-t-* infix.

According to Fleisch (1979), who gives a thorough explanation of the usage of the term by Arab grammarians, *muṭāwi'* has the following meanings:

- to underline the 'aspectual' value of certain verbal forms. In the sentence كسّره فتكسّر [kassara-hu fa-takassara] "il le brisa et il fut en pièces" Fleisch (1979: 181), the *ta-* stem expresses the result of the action of the corresponding intensive stem, with a meaning that Fleisch calls *résultatif*.
- to describe, in general, the meaning of some derived stems, with respect to their correspondig 'basic' ones: *tafa'* 'ala, *tafā'*ala, *infā'*ala, *ifta'*ala. In this case Fleisch quotes as-Sīrāfi²⁰ "le sens de notre dire مطاوعه [muṭāwi'hi] est que le complément d'objet direct revient à celui qui est en jouissance de ce que désirait l'agent". In other words, the subject of, e.g., *tafa'* 'ala is coreferential with the direct object of *fa'* 'ala.

What is important to notice, in order to understand the value of the term *muṭāwi'*, is that the two functions here described are not independent from one another, but, on the contrary, make reference to the same idea: the subject of the verb allows for an action to take place, the consequences of which it happens to undergo.

In the Western scholarly tradition, the second component of the meaning of *muṭāwi'* has been interpreted as the Arabic equivalent of Western *reflexive* (and sometimes passive). For this reason, in all the main descriptions of Arabic language, from the 19th century upto nowadays, the forms with *ta-* prefix (V and VI form, respectively) are described as the *reflexive* of the II and III form.

In the light of the previous observations, the term *reflexive* should not be considered, with respect to Arabic derived stems, in its literal meaning in Western grammatical lexicon but, rather, as a conventional rendering of the Arabic *muṭāwi'*.

Coming back to Syriac, the etymological correspondence between its *et-* prefix and the Arabic *ta-* and *-t-* affixes²¹ has been established since the very beginning of Western linguistic studies on this language. Moreover, the majority of the first important scholars of

¹⁹ Or, according to Fleisch (1979: 305) "celui qui correspond à, s'accorde avec".

²⁰ Šarḥ ms. Le Caire, Ve Partie, folio 92. 1.7, cf. Fleisch (1979: 305).

²¹ As well as with the Hebrew *hit-* of the *hitpa'el* conjugation.

Introduction

Syriac, were also great Arabists. It seems therefore possible, that, given also the high degree of symmetry characteristic of Syriac verbal system, the concept of *muṭāwiʿ* has been applied, more or less consciously, also to this language, and consequently translated with *reflexive*. Of course, it was not a random choice: the meaning of the Syriac verbal forms with *et-* prefix has some affinities with what is sometimes called *indirect reflexive*, and that could better be related to the semantics of *middle voice*. It is important to notice, nevertheless, that such a choice attains more to a terminological convention, than to a specific semantic evaluation.

CHAPTER 2

MIDDLE VOICE AND SOME LINGUISTIC CORRELATIONS

2.1 *Middle Voice*

2.1.1 *Preliminary remarks*

The importance of the category of *middle voice* was underlined in the previous chapter. Let us now give some preliminary definitions, in order to clarify the perspective of this study.

As regards voice, I refer to the following definition by Shibatani (1988: 3), in the Introduction to the book:

Voice is to be understood as a mechanism that selects a grammatically prominent syntactic constituent - subject - from the underlying semantic functions (case and thematic roles) of a clause.

Therefore, voice is a phenomenon related to the syntax-semantics interface and is correlated to what is considered to be the grammatical subject in a given language.¹

The term *middle* derives from ancient Greek grammatical tradition, in which it designated a class of verbs the meaning of which could be both active and passive, depending on the circumstances. A classic example is found in the chapter on verb (περὶ ῥήματος) of the *Téchne Grammatiké*, controversially attributed to Dionysios Thrax:

¹ The way this definition is phrased works essentially for nominative-accusative language type, to which Syriac belongs.

Outline of Middle Voice in Syriac

διαθέσεις εἰσὶ τρεῖς ἐνέργεια, πάθος, μεσότης· ἐνέργεια μὲν οἶον τύπτω, πάθος δὲ οἶον τύπτομαι, μεσότης, δὲ ἢ ποτὲ μὲν ἐνέργειαν ποτὲ δὲ πάθος παριστάσα, οἶον πέπηγα διέφθορα, ἐποίησάμην, ἐγραψάμην.²

Diathesis are three: active, passive, middle. Active is like τύπτω, passive is like τύπτομαι, middle, then, is what is sometimes expressing active and sometimes passive, like πέπηγα, διέφθορα, ἐποίησάμην, ἐγραψάμην.³

The origin of this grammatical category (μεσότης) is debated. It could be related to the stoic linguistic doctrines.⁴

From this Greek definition it is clear that, originally, middle was a semantic category, rather than a morphological one. It would be interesting to understand how and when it has become, at least in Greek, the label for an inflectional category: the verbal -μαι conjugation. Unfortunately, this goes beyond the scopes of the present study.

Two terms have been used so long in connection with middle: voice and diathesis. According to Arce-Arenals, Axelrod & Fox (1994), it is only correct to speak about middle diathesis, as opposed to active and passive voice. Middle diathesis is a syntactic and morphological way a language has of signalling the affectedness of an active subject, and is therefore a sub-product of active voice.

In modern grammar and linguistics, the term *middle voice* is nevertheless quite widespread and has retained both semantic and morphological values, indicating a specific verbal conjugation, as well as a set of semantic values that with such a conjugation are usually associated. This clearly shows, for example, in the definition of middle voice given by the Routledge Dictionary of Linguistics:

² The Greek text is according to Uhlig (1883).

³ This passage of the *Téchne* will be thoroughly examined in Ch. 6, together with its Syriac translation.

⁴ As results from some *scholia* (cf. Hilgard 1901), in some stoic linguistic doctrines, a correlation was established between the system of the noun genders and the verbal conjugations. As for the genders a tripartite scheme was found, with a masculine, a feminine and a neuter (Lat. *ne-uter*, Gr. ουjdevτερον 'none of the two') which was neither masculine nor feminine, an analogous division was established for conjugations. What was neither active nor passive, had been indicated by some scholars as οὐδέτερον, by others as μεσότης" diathesis. This account had the only aim of giving a short and general sketch of the origin of the term middle. The situation, as regards ancient Greek grammatical theories, is far more complicated and a great simplification has been operated here, for sake of brevity. For further details on the topic see, among others, Ildefonse (1997), Lallot (1989). As regards the correlation between grammatical genders and verbal conjugations, cf. Berrettoni (2002).

Verbal **voice** contrasting with **active** and **passive** which is found in **Sanskrit** and classical **Greek**. The middle voice is semantically similar to reflexive constructions in that it describes an action which is performed by the subject for his/her own benefit or in which the subject affects itself: Grk *louo* (act.) 'I wash' vs *louomai* 'I wash myself.' There is also a middle construction without an agent subject: *didasko* (act.) 'I teach' vs *didaskomai* (mid.) 'I have myself taught,' which is similar to passive in meaning. Many **Indo-European** languages developed passive from middle-voice forms (see the typological summary of Kemmer 1993).⁵

In this work middle voice is considered to be a semantic category, that has various manifestations in the Syriac language, which are related to a range of syntactic phenomena and to some morphological elements which are more appropriately definable as middle diathesis markers.

But what is it exactly meant by *middle semantics*?

In general terms, one could say that middle voice expresses the *subject-affectedness*, a certain degree of involvement of the grammatical subject in the process described by the verb⁶. This definition has been more or less assumed by all scholars that have dealt with middle voice. However, it is still quite vague, and can give raise to perplexities. Moreover, as will be shown in the course of this study, it is limited to one aspect of middle voice, but does not include a number of important semantic and syntactic features.

2.1.2 Kemmer (1993)

Among the contemporary studies on middle voice, one of the most exhaustives and well known is certainly Kemmer's (1993). This work is fundamental for a number of theoretical and methodological assumptions, as well as for the frame of semantic categories that it provides for the analysis of middle systems in the world languages. Reference to it will be often made in the present study. For this reason it is useful to shortly summarize part of its content.

The scholar conducts a systematic analysis of the middle and reflexive patterns and of the

⁵ Bussmann (1996: 306).

⁶ cf. Lyons (1969: 373), quoted in Kemmer (1993: 1).

related semantic values, in a number of different languages, belonging to various language families: Indo-European, Bantu, Turkic, Austronesian etc. Semitic languages are not represented.

A first very important point made by Kemmer is that it is necessary to distinguish reflexivity *stricto sensu* from middle voice. The two phenomena are closely related from the semantic point of view, and often also morphologically⁷, but need nevertheless to be considered separately. More precisely, there are a number of semantic values that are proper of middle voice and that cannot be accounted for by means of reflexivity.

As we saw in the Introduction, a reflexive event can be defined as a transitive two-participant event in which the agent happens to be coreferential with the patient. The difference between this type of situation and a middle one (an often intransitive event, indicating a certain degree of *subject-affectedness*) emerges clearly from the definition of *prototypical two-participant event* that Kemmer derives from Givón (1984) and from Hopper & Thompson (1980):

A prototypical two-participant event is defined as a verbal event in which a human entity (an Agent) acts voluntarily, exerting physical force on an inanimate definite entity (a Patient) which is directly and completely affected by that event. Kemmer (1993: 50).

Comparing this definition to the thematic structure and the semantics of the verbs in the Syriac examples of *et*-forms given in the Introduction, it is possible to notice that they often do not qualify as sub-types of two-participant events. As we will try to show in the course of this study, they are better described by the categories that Kemmer individuates as prototypical of middle voice.

According to Kemmer, two possible categories of languages are distinguished, as regards the relation between middle and reflexive markers (MM and RM respectively):

- 1 *one-form middle systems*, in which “the MM is morphologically identical to the reflexive marker”;⁸
- 2 *two-forms middle systems*, in which the RM is not identical to the MM. This category is further subdivided in *cognate* and *non-cognate system*, according to whether the MM and RM are morphologically (and historically) related or not.

⁷ Many languages have one and the same mark to express both reflexive and middle, and in many others the middle marker has developed from an original reflexive.

⁸ Kemmer (1993: 24).

Middle Voice and some Linguistic Correlations

Thus, for example, Italian is a *one-form* language, in which both middle and reflexive are expressed by the same marker, the clitic pronoun *si*:

α

<i>Ester</i>	<i>si</i>	<i>vede</i>	<i>nello</i>	<i>specchio.</i>
	refl. pron. III p.c.	III sg. pres. ind. 'see'	prep. 'in' + def. art.	'mirror'

"Ester sees herself in the mirror".

β

<i>Ester</i>	<i>si offende</i>
	refl. pron. III p. + III sg. pres. ind. 'get offended'

"Ester gets offended".

A *two-form non-cognate system* language, instead, is Latin, that uses the pronominal form *se* to express real reflexive, and the *-r* conjugation to express middle:

α'

<i>Dedisti-ne</i>	<i>[...] ei</i>	<i>gladium,</i>	<i>quī</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>occīderet?</i>
II m. sg. pf. 'give' + interr. prt.	dem. pron. III m. sg.	'sward'	rel. pron. abl. (arch.)	refl. pron. III p.c.	'kill'

"Did you give him the sward to kill himself?"⁹

β'

<i>Ne</i>	<i>quis</i>	<i>miretur</i>	<i>qui</i>	<i>sim</i>	<i>paucis</i>	<i>eloquar</i>
Neg. final conj.	rel.-indef. pron.	III sg. pres. subj. 'wonder'	rel. interr. pron.	I sg. pres. subj. 'be'	adj. pl. abl.	I sg. fut. ind. 'speak'

"Lest someone wonder who I am, I will talk shortly."¹⁰

The second important statement made by Kemmer is that, also for *one-form* languages, it is possible to distinguish reflexive from middle functions, on the basis of a semantic correspondence with equivalent expressions and categories in *two-forms* languages.¹¹

⁹ Plaut. *Trin.* 1.2,92.

¹⁰ Plaut. *Aul.* Prol. I,1.

¹¹ "Wherever we observe a recurrent pattern of morphosyntactic distinction where other languages, or other

The semantic scope and inner articulation of the category of middle is, at first¹², defined by Kemmer on an empirical, typological and diachronical basis: The scholar observes which are the categories that are overtly encoded by middle markers at least in some of the languages taken into account.

From this observation a number of semantic classes are individuated, on the basis of *situation types* that "were identified on the basis of typological and diachronic marking patterns" Kemmer (1993: 7). The scholar analyses each of them in great detail in the course of her work. Those categories can be used as a starting point for the study of the middle system of a given language. The most important are the following:¹³

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Emphatic domain | 9. Change of body posture |
| 2. Reflexive (and related middle) situations | 10. Other body actions |
| 3. Reciprocal domain | 11. Translational motion |
| 4. (Middle) passive | 12. Positionals |
| 5. Impersonal | 13. Emotion middle |
| 6. Facilitative | 14. Cognition middle |
| 7. Grooming | 15. Perception middle |
| 8. Non-translational motion | 16. Spontaneous events |

As this list shows, some of the semantic classes related to middle voice (1-3), are shared also by the reflexive domain, or are contiguous with it. Nevertheless, there are a number of categories (11-15) that by no means refer to transitive actions in which the agent and the patient happen to coincide.

In chapter 3 of this book the results will be presented of an analysis of a sample of early Syriac texts, conducted also in the light of these classes.

diachronic stages of the same language, make no such differentiation, we can be safe in concluding that at some level of human cognition, a distinction exists which is susceptible to linguistic coding" Kemmer (1993: 6).

¹² In the course of the analysis Kemmer develops the concept of *relative elaboration of the events*, that is considered to be the core around which reflexivity and middle semantics are articulated. For this reason, at the end of the work (§ 6.6.2), a new definition of middle is given, based on such a parameter. In the present study I will not refer specifically to *relative elaboration* of the events, as a means of explaining and describing middle voice, although it is certainly an extremely interesting and valuable perspective.

¹³ For further detail, cf. *A Checklist for Middle Semantics*, in Kemmer (1993: 267-270).

2.2 Aspectual and Actional correlations

2.2.1 Aspect

Aspect can be defined as the perspective of the speaker on the event, the way the event described by a verb is viewed.

Therefore, Aspect is not an inherent semantic feature of a verbal root, but rather a specific property of a single verbal form, or a clause, in context.

Basically, as regards Aspect, an event can be viewed from the inside, in any single phase of its development or, instead, from the outside, as a whole, irrespectively of its inner articulation. In the first case, the event is described during its taking place and, therefore, not yet completed. This is called Imperfective (or Non-Terminative¹⁴) Aspect. In the second case, the event is described as having already taken place, as being completed and is regarded from its endpoint. Traditionally the terms of Perfective (or Terminative) Aspect are used.

These two main perspectives on the event have a great number of nuances and articulations¹⁵. The most important are listed in the following table:

Terminative	Non-Terminative
Aoristic	Progressive
Perfect	Continuous
	Habitual

Here follows a brief overview of the main Syriac verbal tenses and of their functions, partly

¹⁴ The terms Terminative and Non-Terminative have been preferred to the more conventional Perfective and Imperfective, following the suggestion given in Bertinetto (1997). This terminology seems more appropriate for Semitic languages, where scholarly tradition has established terms as imperfect, imperfective, perfect and perfective for the denomination of the verbal 'tenses'. Using Terminative and Non-Terminative for aspectual distinctions, it is possible to avoid confusion with the traditional names of the 'tenses' or verbal conjugations. It is also important to notice that the term Perfect in the table given above, has aspectual meaning (is used to indicate an action viewed as concluded, but the effects of which are still relevant at the speech time), and has to be kept distinct from the perfect tense, namely the Syriac suffix conjugation.

¹⁵ For a detailed analysis of aspectual distinctions cf. Comrie (1976) and Bertinetto (1986).

according to the way they are described in one of the latest grammars: Muraoka (2005).

Syriac has two main verbal conjugations: a prefix conjugation, traditionally called imperfect, and a suffix conjugation, called perfect. It also has a number of verbal nouns: infinitive, participles, *nomina agentis* and *nomina actionis*. Among these, only participles will be examined in chapter 4 and 5.

The suffix conjugation (s.c.) expresses a Terminative event, more often in the past, but also in the future. It can also have gnomic and metacronic use.

Prefix conjugation (p.c.) indicates a future event, both Terminative and Non-Terminative. It is also often used with deontic value, to express a command or a vow in the future. It is used in dependent clauses to express an ongoing action.

Participles are formed by means of the prefix *m-* and of specific vowel patterns, depending also on the verbal stem (basic or derived, *non-et-* or *et-*). The so-called active and the *et-* participles have basically the function of a *nomen agentis* and their aspectual value depends greatly on the context (and also on the presence of verbal and pronominal auxiliaries, cf. *infra*). It can be used more often to express the various nuances of imperfectivity, but it can also be used to indicate a future action, both Terminative and Non-Terminative, or a Terminative action in the past.

The so-called inner passive participle (for which cf. Ch. 3) has rather a stative and resultative value.

Beside these three main basic conjugations, there are a number of so-called compound tenses, built by means of the auxiliary *hwâ* 'to be', appropriately conjugated:

- participle + s.c. of *hwâ*: progressive or habitual action in the past;
- sc. of *hwâ* + participle: deontic +injunctive value;
- p.c. of *hwâ* + participle: equivalent to the simple p.c. of the verb;
- s.c. + s.c. of *hwâ*: Terminative action in the past;¹⁶
- p.c. + s.c. of *hwâ*: ?

In the course of the textual analysis these correspondences will be critically examined and the aspectual values of the single verbal forms encountered will be studied anew. Nevertheless, such general indications can be helpful to have a first sketch of the situation.

Aspectual distinctions are extremely relevant for the textual analysis presented in this

¹⁶ For a thorough investigation on the values of this compound tense cf. Morrison (2005, 2008).

dissertation. For this reason it may be useful to give a few examples of them with respect to Syriac, in the light of the overview of the verbal tenses that was just given.

12. Aoristic - Mt 2:1 (Old Syriac version)

<i>mgûšê</i>	<i>etaw</i>	<i>men</i>	<i>madnhâ</i>	<i>l-ôršlem</i>
'Magi'	III m. pl. pf. 'arrived'	prep. 'from'	'East'	prep. 'to' + 'Jerusalem'

"The Magi arrived from the East to Jerusalem".

13. Perfect - Afraat, Dem. I,1

<i>egartâk</i>	<i>ħabîby</i>	<i>qablet</i>
'letter' +pron. suff. II m. sg.	'dear'+pron. suff. I sg.	I sg. c. pf. 'receive'

"My dear, I have received your letter".

14. Progressive - I Kings, 19:19 (Pešittâ version)

<i>w-eškaḥ</i>	<i>l-elīša'</i>	<i>bar šapat</i>	<i>d-dâbar hwâ</i>	<i>padânâ</i>
'and'+III m. sg. pf. 'find'	prep. 'to'/dir. obj. mark. = 'Elisha'	cs. st. 'son of'+ 'Shaphat'	rel. part. + act. ptc. 'guide' + III m. sg. pf. 'be'	'plough'

"And he found Elisha son of Shaphat that was guiding a plough".

15. Continuous - Jn 11,42 (Pešittâ version)

<i>w-anâ</i>	<i>yâda'nâ</i>	<i>da-bkôlzban</i>	<i>šâma'</i>	<i>ant</i>	<i>lî</i>
'and'+ind. pron. I sg.	act. ptc. 'to know'+pron. suff. I sg.	rel. part.+adv. 'always' (lit. 'in all the time')	act. ptc. 'hear'	ind. pron. suff. 'you'	prep. 'to'+pron. suff. I sg.

"And I know that you always hear me".¹⁷

16. Habitual - Acts of Judas Thomas V, 212, 19

<i>b-lilyâ</i>	<i>dên</i>	<i>dhîlâ'ît</i>	<i>âtê</i>	<i>hwâ</i>	<i>'aly</i>
prep. 'in' + 'night'	part.	adv. 'terribly'	act. ptc. m. sg. 'come'	III m. sg. pf. 'be'	prep. 'on' + pron. I c. sg.

"In the night, then, he was coming to me terribly".

¹⁷ The context implies a continuous interpretation, rather than an attitudinal one: Jesus is speaking to God and the entire passage Jn 11: 41-42 says: "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. And I know that you hear me all the time, but because of the people that stand by I said it".

Although in many world languages Aspect and Tense can be expressed by means of the same morphological elements, they are two different concepts and it is very important to keep them separated. In Comrie (1976) a very clear explanation of such a distinction is given:

tense is a deictic category, i.e. locates situations in time, usually with reference to other situations. Aspect is not concerned with relating the time of the situation to any other time-point, but rather with the inner temporal constituency of the one situation...Comrie (1976: 5).

Nevertheless, Tense and Aspect are constantly interacting in the description of events in a language. Looking at the Syriac examples given above, it is possible to notice that the Terminative Aspect is expressed both in 12 and 13 with a perfect, whereas the participial forms are used in correlation with the Non-Terminative Aspect (14-16). Let us now analyse in more detail another example:

17. Afraat, Dem. II, 52,11

<i>kad</i>	<i>mṭā</i>	<i>gēr</i>	<i>zabneh</i>	<i>d-nāmōsā</i>	<i>ettawsap</i>	<i>leh</i>
adv. 'when'	III m. sg. pf. 'to arrive'	conj. 'for'	'time' + suff. pron. III m. sg.	rel part. + 'law'	III m. sg. pf. etp. 'to add'	coref. dative

"... (For) when the time of the law arrived, it [i.e. the law] was added".

In this sentence two events are presented as simultaneous, or occurring immediately one after the other: the arrival of the time of law and its application to mankind. The first event is moreover described as Terminative (Aoristic), and as a precondition for the realization of the second event (also viewed as Aoristic). This relationship is established by the adverb *kad* 'when'. Thus, the entire sentence 'When the time of the law arrived' functions as a Localizer for the event 'it was added'. The Reference Time¹⁸ of the second event deictically collocates it in the past, with respect to the Speech Time, and is expressed here by the suffix form (pf.) of the *etp* 'el form *ettawsap* 'it was added'¹⁹. The first event is collocated in the past, with respect to Speech Time, but also in a relation of precedence with respect to the second event, representing a condition for the realization of the latter. Also in this case the suffix form (pf.) is used, this time of the basic stem: *mṭā* 'it (lit. 'he') arrived'. In this sentence the function of the suffix conjugation appears to be on the one hand to locate the events in the past

¹⁸ For Localizers, Speech Time, Reference Time cf. Reichenbach (1947 [1966]) and Bertinetto (1986).

¹⁹ For the value of the coreferential dative *leh* here, cf Chapter 5.

(Reference Time and Tense), on the other hand to describe them as Terminative and Aoristic (Aspect).

The correspondence between perfect tense and Terminative on the one hand, and participles and imperfect tense and Non-Terminative on the other, is a general trend within Syriac, and other related languages²⁰. Nevertheless the picture for every single language is more complex, and in the Syriac verbal system other factors (syntax, semantics, genre, position in the discourse) influence and determine the use of the tenses. So, for example, it is common to find and imperfect with Aoristic value, or, in some contexts, a perfect used imperfectively.²¹

2.2.2 Actionality

Actionality (or *Aktionsart*) indicates a set of semantic properties of the event. The main distinctions within the domain of Actionality are traditionally traced back to those individuated by Vendler (1967). From the point of view of Actionality, events can be categorized as: states, activities, accomplishments, achievements. Each category is characterized by the following semantic features: [\pm durative], [\pm telic], [\pm stative]. The distribution of categories and features can be subsumed in the following table:

states	[+ durative]	[-telic]	[+stative]
activities	[+durative]	[-telic]	[-stative]
accomplishment	[+durative]	[+telic]	[-stative]
gradual completion verbs ²²	[+durative]	[>telic]	[-stative]
achievements	[-durative]	[+telic]	[-stative]

The first feature [\pm durative] regards the fact that a verb can describe a process in which the

²⁰ Cf. Cohen (1989).

²¹ For a description of the uses of the Syriac verbal tenses cf. Nöldeke (1898 [1966]: §255 ff.). See also Morrison (2005) and Morrison (2008) for the use of *q̄tal hwā*.

²² I have derived this category from Bertinetto & Squartini (1995) It refers to verbs that indicate a gradual approach to a goal, that is more or less determined and fixed, according to the pragmatic context. These verbs, as shown by Bertinetto & Squartini (1995), are a subclass of accomplishments, although they have a hybrid behaviour with respect to a number of features. This category proves to be particularly appropriate for a number of derived stems from stative bases indicating a quality or a condition: the derived stems sometimes seem to indicate that the subject gradually assumes such a condition. Moreover this seems to apply also to some active causative verbs.

starting point and the endpoint coincide (like 'to sneeze'), or a process that lasts longer in time (like 'to walk'). The second feature [\pm telic] indicates the presence or absence of an endpoint that needs to be reached for the action described by the verb to be really performed. Thus 'to walk' is [-telic], because if one says 'John was walking, but then he met a friend and he sat on a bench', it can still be said that John has walked. On the other hand 'to write a letter' is [+telic] and if one says 'John was writing a letter, when suddenly the phone rang', it cannot be said that John has actually written the letter. In other words, when a telic verb is conjugated in an imperfective Tense, no hypothesis can be made about the actual conclusion of the event. Finally, the feature [\pm stative] regards the compatibility with continuous Tenses and the Imperative. A stative verb, such as 'to be tall', cannot be used in a continuous Tense: *'John is being tall', nor can it be ordered to somebody *'be tall!'.

More subtle distinctions within the various classes can be found in Bertinetto (1986) (where a thorough description of the properties of each class is given) and will be occasionally used in the course of this study.

Like observed above for Tense and Aspect, also the categories Aspect and Actionality interact constantly with each other, but are nevertheless distinct and operate at different levels within a language. Aspectual distinctions relate to the morphological specifications of the various languages, whereas Actionality is to be conceived mainly as a lexical property of the single verbal stems.

The syntactical context or the aspectual value of the Tense in which a verb is used can often have an important influence on its position with respect to Actionality.

This fact is crucial for the analysis of Syriac verbs, because of the great influence (although maybe not general prominence) of Aspect in the use of the Tenses. Let us, for example, consider the verb *lbeš* 'to wear, to put on', in the following sentences:

18. Gen 38:19 (Pešittā version)

<i>w-lebšat</i>	<i>lbûšê</i>	<i>armlûtâh</i>
'and' + III f. sg. pf. 'put on, wear'	'garments'	'widowhood' + pron. suff. III f. sg.

"And she put on the clothes of her widowhood".

19. Gen 37:23 (Pešittā version)

<i>kûtînâ</i>	<i>d-pedîê</i>	<i>da-lbîš hwâ</i>
'tunic'	rel. part. + 'long sleeves'	rel. part. + pass. ptc. ²³ + III m. sg. pf. 'be'

"The tunic with long sleeves that he was wearing".

In 18 *lbeš* is used at the perfect tense, with Aoristic value. The verb is there [+durative], [+telic] and [-stative], thus an accomplishment. In 19 on the other hand, the verb is used in the compound tense *qtîl hwâ*, with imperfective continuous value. The verb appears here to be [+durative], [-telic] and [+stative], thus a state.

Situations like the one just analysed are frequent in Syriac and the different forms of the verb, together with the Tenses constantly interact with Actionality.

In this study particular attention will be devoted to the aspectual and actional value of the forms with *et-* prefix and of the inner passives.

2.3 Unaccusativity

In traditional grammar and linguistics, verbs are usually divided into intransitive, which only have one argument (the grammatical subject of the clause) and transitive, which have at least two arguments and prototypically express an action performed by an agent on a patient.

Intransitive verbs can be either unaccusative²⁴ (when they express a state, or an event on which the subject has low control) or unergative (when they express an action). For example, in 'John walks', the English verb 'to walk' is intransitive and unergative, the grammatical subject has control on the action he performs. On the contrary, in 'the vase broke' the grammatical subject undergoes the event described by the verb; the verb 'to break' (used intransitively) is unaccusative and its grammatical subject can be considered an object in the deep structure of the sentence.

Unaccusativity can surface in different ways in languages. In Italian, for example, unaccusative intransitive verbs receive a different auxiliary (*essere* 'to be') from unergative intransitives (which take *avere* 'to have'). Moreover, the unergative verbs have the same

²³ The label 'pass. ptc.' (as well as 'act. ptc.' used above) only refers to the morphological pattern (in this case *qtîl*), without any implication of voice. In this case, for example, the participle has active-stative meaning.

²⁴ See Perlmutter (1978).

auxiliary received by active transitive verbs (such as *mangiare*, ‘to eat’), while unaccusatives take the same auxiliary which is used to express the passive. This vicinity to the passive shows how the subject of unaccusative verb is considered to undergo an action or a process, just like the subject of a passive verbs. Both subjects are objects at a deeper level of analysis. The situation of Italian can be exemplified as follows:

Italian *partire* ‘to leave’ vs *camminare* ‘to walk’

<i>a.</i>	<i>Letizia</i>	<i>ieri</i>	<i>sera</i>	<i>è</i>	<i>partita</i>
		adv. ‘yesterday’	evening	III sg. pres. aux ‘be’	past part. f. sg. ‘leave’

"Yesterday evening Letizia left".

<i>β.</i>	<i>Letizia</i>	<i>ieri</i>	<i>sera</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>camminato</i>
		adv. ‘yesterday’	evening	III sg. pres. aux ‘have’	past part. m. sg. ‘walk’

"Yesterday evening Letizia walked²⁵".

Italian *mangiare* ‘to eat’

<i>α’.</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>mela</i>	<i>è</i>	<i>mangiata</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>Letizia</i>
	def. art.	‘apple’	III sg. pres. aux. ‘be’	passive part. f. sg. ‘eat’	prep. ‘by’	

"The apple is eaten by Letizia".

<i>β’.</i>	<i>Letizia</i>	<i>ha</i>	<i>mangiato</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>mela</i>
		III sg. pres. aux ‘have’	past part. m. sg. ‘eat’	def. art.	‘apple’

"Letizia has eaten the apple".

Another counterpart of the correlation here exemplified is that unaccusative and unergative predicates behave differently in participial constructions.²⁶ Thus, α'' and β'' are possible, while γ is ungrammatical in Italian:

<i>α''.</i>	<i>Mangiata</i>	<i>la</i>	<i>mela,</i>	<i>Letizia</i>	<i>tornò</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>cantare</i>
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²⁵ With a Terminative Aoristic interpretation.

²⁶ Cf. Haspelmath (1994: 157). This article will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

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passive part. f. sg. 'eat'	def. art. f. sg.	'apple'		III sg. simple past 'go back'	prep. 'to'	inf. 'sing'
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"Eaten the apple, Letizia went back singing".

<i>β</i> " <i>Partita</i>	<i>Letizia,</i>	<i>spensero</i>	<i>tutte</i>	<i>le</i>	<i>luci</i>
past part. f. sg. 'leave'		III pl. simple past 'turn off'	'all'	def. art. f. pl.	'lights'

"When Letizia left [lit. left Letizia] they turned of all the lights".

γ ** <i>Camminata</i>	<i>Letizia,</i>	<i>spensero</i>	<i>tutte</i>	<i>le</i>	<i>luci</i>
past part. f. sg.		III pl. simple past 'turn off'	'all'	def. art. f. pl.	'lights'

**"Walked Letizia, they turned off all the lights".

From these examples it can be concluded that the grammatical subject of an unaccusative verb shares, in the deep structure, some properties with the subject of a passive construction: both of them are considered as patients. On the other hand the subject of an unergative verb shares some properties with the subject of a transitive verb: both are considered as agents²⁷.

Unaccusativity is related to a number of syntactical properties of the verb and its arguments, among which the possibility of using a differential object marker (when available in a given language) to introduce the subject of unaccusative verbs, in order to underline its low volitionality and low control on the action, as it is the case for the following Biblical Hebrew sentence:

2 Kings 6:5

<i>wa-yəhi</i>	<i>hā-ehād</i>	<i>mappil</i>	<i>ha-qqorāh</i>	<i>wə-et</i>
and +III m. sg. ipf. narr. be	art.det.+num. one	part. att. caus. fall	det. art. + rafter	and + <i>nota</i> <i>accusativi</i>
<i>ha-bbarzel</i>	<i>nāpal</i>	<i>el</i>	<i>ha-mmāyim</i>	
det. art. + iron axe	III m. sg. pf. fall	prep. 'towards'	det. art. + water	

"And one was cutting down a rafter and the iron axe fell into the water".

In this example the *nota accusativi*, which is normally used in Biblical Hebrew to introduce a determined direct object, precedes instead the subject of a verb. The verb considered here: *nāpal* 'to fall' is unaccusative, its subject is not prototypically agentive and has low control

²⁷ The concepts of *patient* and *agent* are here viewed as innerly articulated categories.

on the event (is an object in the deep structure of the sentence). This fact has been stressed by the use of the particle *et*, the direct object marker²⁸.

2.3.1 *Unaccusativity, Aspect, Actionality and Middle Voice*

In many ancient Indo-European languages (such as Latin, Greek, Vedic, Hittite) there is a verbal diathesis, usually called ‘middle’, which covers several different values, including reflexive, reciprocal, passive ones and many others²⁹. It is not easy to determine its original and core function, but in the historical languages middle diathesis is clearly opposed to the active voice, so that, for the majority of verbs, to every active form and meaning, a middle one corresponds, with either reflexive or passive value. In all the languages mentioned above there is also a number of verbs, the so-called *media tantum*, that do not allow for an active counterpart. In the same way, also *activa tantum* exist, namely verbs that only have active diathesis.

Many scholars³⁰ in the course of time have argued that the original core of middle verbs was represented by these *media tantum*, but they did not agree on the function and the values of Indo-European middle endings. Benveniste (1966) also understood that the ancient distribution of verbal endings in Indo-European was lexical, so that every verbal root could only have one series of endings (either active or middle). Only during the time a symmetry was developed in the single-languages verbal systems, so that each verb could have both active and middle diathesis.

Bakker (1994) examines the correlation between ancient Greek middle diathesis, Aspect and Aktionsart. The scholar considers middle diathesis as an encoding of *subject affectedness*, which, in its turn, is put within the frame of scalar transitivity, as defined by Hopper & Thompson (1980). Bakker identifies the degree of transitivity of an event as determined by the following semantic parameters: Volitionality, Agency and Causation (in this order). Aspectual opposition is considered by Bakker as far as the opposition between aorist and imperfective verbal bases are concerned. By Aktionsart Bakker essentially means the opposition durative vs punctual. Bakker shows that Aktionsart interacts with Aspect in

²⁸ Cf. Farina (2005) for a detailed discussion.

²⁹ For a list of the main values of middle diathesis see Kemmer (1993), Lazzeroni (1990).

³⁰ Such as Delbrück (1897), Benveniste (1966).

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determining whether a given verb is basic in the aorist and derived by means of suffixation in the imperfect (with punctual roots) or vice versa (in durative roots). On the other hand, the selection of aspectual morphology, such as the aorist markers *-sa-* and *-the-*, depends also on the degree of transitivity of the event, namely on the distribution of the above mentioned parameters.

Bakker has examined a number of ancient Greek verbs according to a series of event-types individuated through the transitivity continuum, classifying them on the basis of the presence/absence of some parameters: the possibility of middle morphology, the affectedness of the subject, the possibility of the aorist morphemes *-sa-* and *-the-*. I reproduce here the table in which the results are summarized:

Event-type	Middle	Inherent aff. of s	<i>-sa-</i>	<i>-the-</i>
1-participant events	-	-	-	-
Objective states	-/+	-	-	-
Physical processes	+	+	-	+
(E)motion, cognition	+	+	-	+
+/- volitionality	+	+	+	+
Inherent reciprocals	+	+	+	-
Affectedness and agency	+	+	+	-
2-participant events	+	-	+	+
causatives	+	+/-	+	+
Patient-directed activity	+	+	-	+
'Kill'	-	-	-	-

The event-types are very close to the categories individuated by Kemmer as relevant for the selection of middle voice (cf. 2.1.2).

The conclusion is that "middle voice may occur in all but the event-types that are lowest

and the highest in transitivity" ³¹. The *-sa-* morpheme is associated with the events that are higher in volitionality, while the *-the-* one "occurs where affectedness takes the aspectual value of inherent duration"³². The analysis shows that both aspectual morphology and diathesis vary according to the same parameters, which are connected with the inherent semantics of the events.

What has not been developed by Bakker is the internal articulation of Aktionsart as a category, which the scholars considers exclusively in terms of +/- duration and which therefore does not appear clearly in all of the transitivity continuum.

Introducing also telicity and stativity in the equation, the dynamics of the correlation with diathesis are more clearly explained.

In Lazzeroni (1990) and Lazzeroni (2004) some interesting hypothesis are made about the original distribution and function of Indoeuropean middle verbal endings. The scholar analyses the list of Indoeuropean *media tantum* given by Delbrück (1897), among which are verbs meaning:

to be born, to die, to follow, to walk, to own, to lay down, to seat, to enjoy/benefit, to meditate, to abandon, to lose, to be/get warm, to be sad, to feel ashamed, to feel pain etc.

All these verbs have a stative or eventive value. Nevertheless, these values of the *media tantum* do not explain by themselves all the values that middle voice conveys in historical languages. The solution proposed by Lazzeroni (1990) is to conceive original middle voice as a scalar category, built around a prototype.

It can be said that the original value of Indoeuropean middle verbs was stative, if stative and eventive verbs can be seen as part of a single prototypical category defined by some features:

	agentivity	processuality
Statives	-	-
Eventives	-	+
Agentive statives	+	-

³¹ Sc. 1-participant events and verbs of the type 'to kill'. Bakker (1994: 42).

³² Bakker (1994: 44).

Another important feature of some *media tantum* is the so-called inner diathesis: They sometimes describe a process that involves the subject and is referred to it (as in ‘to wash’ or ‘to wash one's hands’). To this feature are related also the reflexive and the reciprocal values. Finally, passive value is secondarily derived from both subjective and unagentive values. An original Indo-European passive construction is not reconstructed, but passive is always a single language development: “La categoria del medio si è, dunque, costituita in seguito all'estensione metonimica delle proprietà del prototipo”.³³

An important contribution in the same direction is given by Romagno (2002). An analysis of the main categories, in which Indo-European *media tantum* can be classified, shows that the hypothesis of a stative prototype is not completely adequate. A number of motion verbs is in fact included in the original core of middle verbs (such as Greek *oikhomai* ‘to leave’, *néomai* ‘to come back’, *érchomai* ‘to go’, and Sanskrit *gāhate* ‘to plunge’, *násate* ‘to come back’, *vartate* ‘to turn’ etc.). Examining the semantic and syntactical properties of *media tantum*, Romagno concludes that the prototype of ancient Indo-European middle verbs was more likely represented by intransitive unaccusative verbs. Unaccusativity must here be considered as a scalar category characterized by a number of features, among which the notion of state was prominent, but not unique. Also low control and low volitionality of the subject must have had an important role in the structure of ancient *media tantum* class. On the one hand, also some verbs of motion may have the notion of state in their logical structure (for example telic verbs of motion like ‘arrive’ or ‘come back’ can be considered from the point of view of the state resulting from the event they describe) and subsequently belong to the category of *media tantum*. On the other hand, as was mentioned above, the subject of unaccusative verbs share some property with the direct object of a transitive clause and can be considered as an object in the deep structure. This fact accounts for the extension of middle endings to reflexive and passive values,³⁴ expressing an action that the subject either performs on himself or undergoes.

In Lazzeroni (2004) further steps are made in the comprehension of the original structure of the Indo-European verbal system. The scholar focuses on the Vedic verbal suffix *-ya*, originally combined only with active endings, to express intransitive, reflexive, reciprocal and passive meaning, covering a semantic area analogous to the one originally covered by middle endings. Moreover, middle endings and *-ya* derived seem to be in complementary distribution to express the same semantic values: a verb could have either middle endings

³³ Lazzeroni (1990: 14).

³⁴ The same can be said also for all the other values of middle voice, such as reciprocal, benefactive etc.

(*medium tantum*) or form a *-ya* derivative (in that case it was an *activum tantum*). Lazzeroni then concludes that the original value of the *-ya* suffix was to give to the *activa tantum* a medial value, namely an anticausative³⁵ value, in a time when middle endings were lexically selected. Of course, this suffix could be added only to transitive verbs, but not to unergative verbs.

On the other side, the Vedic verbal system had also some affixes to express causative meaning: *-aya*, *-n-*. The range of application of those affixes follows the same criteria individuated for *-ya* suffix.

The *-n-* infix, denoting high transitivity and high telicity, is limited to a class of verbs that express a change in state. As noticed by Lazzeroni, this class also systematically uses the *-ya* suffix with anticausative function. All the other verbal classes can express causation either lexically (pure transitive verbs) or by means of the suffix *-aya*.

The distribution of verbal diathesis in Vedic, as described by Lazzeroni (2004) can be described as follows: two cores of *activa* and *media tantum* lexically selecting different series of endings. A core of verbs denoting change in state, that use the affixes *-ya* and *-n-* to express respectively the anticausative and the causative. A series of intransitive (unaccusative) and not highly transitive verbs using the *-aya* suffix to express causation.

From ancient Greek, Vedic and Latin data, it can be concluded that the lexical selection of active and middle endings, in ancient Indoeuropean, was a surface morphological display of split intransitivity. There were, moreover, a number of morphological devices to modify the argumental structure of the predicate, according to its original semantic value. Into the single-language developments, the selection and the extension of the various morphological elements has followed the pattern of metonymic association along the scale of prototypical categories.

2.4 Formulation of the working hypothesis

As mentioned in § 2.1.2, Kemmer (1993) does not include any Semitic language. If one tries to apply the definitions of middle and reflexive markers given above to Syriac, some problems arise.

³⁵ Anticausative is a process represented as spontaneous or internally caused, independent from an external cause. For example ‘the house burns’ vs ‘John burns the house’, or ‘the vase breaks’ vs ‘John breaks the vase’.

The reflexive marker is defined as follows:

A reflexive marker is a productive grammatical device that is used obligatorily to mark direct reflexive contexts in at least the third person³⁶.

[...]

Faltz³⁷ found no languages in his sample of 30 which had more than one reflexive marker [...]. If this limitation is not an absolute universal, it is certainly a universal tendency, and thus I will refer to a reflexive marker in a given language as *the* reflexive marker for that language³⁸.

Having to point at '*the* reflexive marker' in Syriac one would probably have some hesitation. In the case of Syriac (but the same could be said also, for example of Biblical Hebrew) one can at best talk about a specific reflexive construction, a pattern that associates a preposition or a noun referring to 'soul', 'body', 'person', etc. to a coreferential pronominal suffix.

Moreover, Syriac can hardly be classified as either *one-form* or *two-forms* language type. There is not a single morpheme or structure expressing both reflexivity and middle, but there is also not a dichotomy of forms and functions. As shown in § 1.1, there are at least three structures concurring in the expression of reflexive and middle values.

Nevertheless, I believe that applying Kemmer's distinction between pure reflexivity and middle semantics can still be fruitful, as well as making use of the semantic classes individuated by the scholar, provided that some other linguistic categories and factors are added in the analysis.

As I tried to show in the preceding paragraph, stativity and unaccusativity are the two features that some scholars have considered as prototypical for ancient Indoeuropean middle voice. The existence of a scalar continuum between the two features explains the use of a unique series of endings to convey both values.

Nevertheless one can also imagine to group such features differently and to formally distinguish, for example, between a state or permanent property and an action undergone or on which the subject has low control: This is the structure that I propose to use in the description of Syriac middle voice.

Combining the results of a number of general linguistic studies in the field of middle voice,

³⁶ Kemmer (1993: 47).

³⁷ Faltz (1977).

³⁸ Kemmer (1993: 47).

such as Kemmer (1993), Lazzeroni (2004), Romagno (2002), but also to more general works on phenomena that are closely related to it, such as Perlmutter (1978), Bossong (1998), Bertinetto (1986), Bertinetto & Squartini (1995), Cennamo (1998), I will try to sketch a distribution of forms and functions for Syriac verbal system.

More specifically, I will argue that key-concepts for the understanding of the value of the *et*-forms are :

- a unaccusativity, according to the formulation given by Perlmutter (1978), but also to its applications to various indoeuropean languages by Kulikov (2006), Lazzeroni (2004), Romagno (2002);
- b the scalar articulation of semantic categories such as transitivity, as introduced by Hopper & Thompson (1980).

On the basis of the above mentioned scientific works and of a detailed analysis of a sample of early Syriac texts³⁹, I will try to reconstruct the following organization of morphological and syntactical material, with respect to middle voice and reflexivity:

reflexive (and reciprocal) (co-referentiality of agent and patient)	(prep.) + pron. suff. noun 'body' / 'soul' + pron. suff. (depending on the degree of emphasis required by the context)
middle - stative [- process]	inner passive
middle - unaccusative [- control] [- volition] [- agentivity] [+ affectedness]	external affixation: <i>et</i> - stems

The functions indicated in the scheme correspond to the semantic values that are prototypical for each structure. As it will be shown in the course of this study, such values undergo various kinds of drifts and extensions, by means of metonymic and metaphoric associations, giving rise to the variety of meanings that are traditionally attributed to *et*-stems and inner passives.

³⁹ On the criteria for the selection of the sample, see ch. 4 § 1.

CHAPTER 3

ET- FORMS AND INNER PASSIVE IN SEMITIC STUDIES

3.1. *A survey of Semitic verbal t-forms: status quaestionis*

3.1.1 *Inventory of forms and main functions*

The basic function commonly indicated in traditional studies for the Semitic (-)*t*- affix is *reflexive* marker. In addition, this morpheme can express *reciprocal* and *passive* meaning. The latter can also be conveyed by the *n*- prefix and by internal apophony. The (-)*t*-morpheme is either prefixed to the root (in that case it is usually preceded or followed by a vowel, because most Semitic languages do not allow the sequence CC at the beginning of a word), or infixes after the first root-consonant. When the first root-consonant is dental, the (-)*t*- affix, if unvocalized, is assimilated.

This affix is not uniformly represented in the various Semitic languages. In Akkadian and Ugaritic it is widespread and can be used with almost all verbal stems (except for N). In Arabic three *t*-stems exist: one is built upon the basic stem and the others upon derived ones. In Aramaic the (-)*t*-morpheme is widely productive and has progressively specialized in the expression of passive meaning, together with the disappearance of the inner passive. Thus a system of oppositions has developed, in which a *t*-passive corresponds to every verbal stem.

In Western Neo-Aramaic the *t*-forms have been preserved, whereas in Eastern Neo-Aramaic, by the influence of the Iranian adstratum, *t*-forms have been almost completely lost, at least as a productive derivational process. They are nevertheless preserved in participles employed in the construction of the periphrastic passive.

Reflexive value

1. Biblical Hebrew - 1K 20:22

<i>wa-yyo'mer</i>	<i>l-ô</i>	<i>lek</i>	<i>hitḥazzaq</i>
conj. 'and'+III m. sg. impf. conv. 'say'	prep. 'to'+pron.III m. sg.	ipv. qal III m. sg. 'go'	ipv. hitp. III m. sg. 'be strong'

"And he said to him: strengthen yourself!".

qal (basic stem) - *ḥāzaq* 'to be strong';

pi'el (intensive/causative stem) - *ḥizzaq* 'to make strong';

hitp'a'el (reflexive of the *pi'el* stem) - *hitḥazzeq* "to strengthen oneself".

2. Classical Arabic

<i>tanaššafa</i>	<i>bi-tawbi-hi</i>	<i>l-ḡadīdi</i>
III m. sg. pf. V form 'dry oneself'	prep. 'in, with' + 'garment' + suff. pron. III m. sg. 'his'	det. art.+ adj. 'new'

"He dried himself with his new garment".

fa'ala - *našafa* 'to soak, to become soaked';

fa''ala (intens./ caus. stem) - *naššāfa* 'to dry';

tafa''ala (*muṭāwi*¹ of the II form) - *tanaššafa* 'to dry oneself'.

3. Akkadian²

<i>šamnam</i>	<i>iptašaš-ma</i>
acc. m. sg. 'oil'	III m. sg. pret. 'anoint' (+ ventive)

"He anointed himself with oil".

G stem (basic) - *pašāšu* 'anoint';

Gt stem - *piššušum* (< * *pitšušum*) 'to anoint oneself'.

¹ For the concept of *muṭāwa'a* cf. ch.1 § 1.2.

² The example is taken from Huenergard (2005: 397).

Passive value:

4. Classical Arabic

<i>ğa'ala</i>	<i>la-kumu</i>	<i>l-nuğūma</i>	<i>li-tahtadū</i>
III m. sg. pf. 'create'	prep. 'to' + suff. pron. II m. pl.	det. art. + 'stars'	prep. 'to'+ II m. pl. ipf. VIII f. 'to guide'

"He created the stars for you to be guided".

fa'ala - *hadā* 'to guide';

ifta'ala - *ihtadā* 'to be (well) guided'.

Reciprocal value:

5. Biblical Hebrew - Gen 42:1

<i>lāmmāh</i>	<i>titrā'ū</i>
why	II m. pl. impf. hitp. 'see'

"Why do you look at each other?".

qal - *rā'āh* 'to see';

pi'el - not attested;

hithpa'el - *hithrā'eh* 'to look at each other'.

3.1.2 *History of the (-)t- affix: some hypothesis of reconstruction*

The (-)t- affix has different forms and positions in the various dialects. It must be added that variation occurs also inside the single languages, depending on whether the morpheme attaches to the basic stem or to a derived one. While Biblical Hebrew has only one prefixed *t*-form, built upon the D-stem, Akkadian has several *t*-forms, all constructed by infixation. By contrast Classical Arabic has both prefixed and infixed *t*-forms, according to the stem.

The problems related to the origin and history of the (-)t- affix involve basically two topics: *a.* the spreading and extension of use in the various dialects; *b.* the position of the morpheme (prefixed or infixed).

In Diem (1982) both topics are thoroughly discussed, and the conclusions are broadly shared by the scholars. Diem analyses the situation of the following languages: Aramaic, Hebrew, Phoenician, Classical Arabic, Ugaritic, Early South Arabian, Ethiopic, Akkadian and Modern South Arabian.

Aramaic, Hebrew and Phoenician are characterized by the so-called *Metathesisregel*, a process in which, in roots beginning with a sibilant, the (-) *t*- affix is infixated after the first root-consonant. Otherwise it is always prefixed. This phenomenon is usually explained as due to the general tendency of Semitic languages to avoid the sequence DS. In the remaining languages (except for Ethiopic), there is a complementary distribution of the forms respectively with prefixed and infixated (-) *t*-: the infix is selected by the basic stem, the prefix by all other stems.

Most scholars have considered the metathesis - which in Aramaic, Hebrew (and Phoenician) is limited to a subset of the lexical roots - as the source of the infixated -*t*- forms in the various languages. Proto-Semitic would have formed derived stems only by means of prefixes (*n*-, *š*-, *h*-, *t*-, '); in the roots beginning with a sibilant, the *t*- morpheme would have undergone a metathesis. Subsequently this phenomenon would have been extended to all other roots, creating the stem with infixated -*t*-.

As noticed by Diem (1982), this reconstruction is not completely satisfactory, mainly because it does not explain the presence of both infixated and prefixed (-) *t*- in several languages. According to Diem, the distribution of the morpheme in the various dialects is related to other phonetic changes. The basic elements of his reconstruction are the alternation of (-) *t*- and *ta*- and the alternation of prefix and infix forms. Diem observes that, while -*t*- can be both prefixed and infixated, *ta*- can only be prefixed to the verbal root. Therefore, he supposes that the (-) *t*- affix derives from a reduction of an original *ta*- in particular contexts, i.e. after a CV structure, as in **yataqatil* > **yatqatil*.

In roots beginning with a sibilant, however, this reduction would have generated a DS sequence, which would subsequently have undergone metathesis. Finally, in some dialects, the *Metathesisregel* would have been extended to all roots, regardless of the nature of the first root-consonant.

In Stempel (1999) there is a significant objection to Diem's reconstruction. The Arabic VIII form, with infixated -*t*- (corresponding to the Akkadian structure) seems to be older than the ones with prefixed *ta*-. In the first one the imperfect is vocalized according to the rules of apophony (*iqtatala* - *yaqtatilu*), while in the others it simply follows the vocalization of the perfect (*taqattala* - *yataqattalu*).

To this objection a few more may be added. The Metathesis-Theory presupposes, for Proto-Semitic verb, a highly regular derivational system, in which all derived stems were built by means of prefixes. A sort of *de-regularization* would then have occurred, with the creation of an infixated -*t*- stem. Another problem is the hypothesis that the infix forms derive from the

generalization of a process, that in the beginning was (and in some languages, like Hebrew, remained) conditioned by the presence of a sibilant, as first root consonant. Although they are quite frequent, their number does not justify the dragging of the entire lexicon.

Lipiński (1997) seems to reconstruct an original position of the (-)t-affix after the first root-consonant, and not outside the root.

3.1.3 *The expression of reflexive in Semitic languages*

As mentioned above, Semitic languages use different strategies to express reflexive meaning. Besides (-)t-affix, they use other affixes and various nominal periphrasis.

a. The *n*-prefix

It is a prefix that, as (-)t-, can have both passive and reflexive meaning. It only attaches to the basic stem. In Akkadian it is also vocalized according to the vocalization of the basic stem, which does not occur for the other derived stems. Moreover, the reflexive meaning is rare in Akkadian. It has to be noticed that Semitic languages tend to avoid the expression of the agent, in a passive structure. Therefore the distinction between reflexive and passive meaning is often unclear.

Passive value

6. Biblical Hebrew - Ruth 1:17

<i>ba-ašer</i>	<i>tāmūtī</i>	<i>āmūt</i>	<i>wə-šām</i>	<i>eqqāber (*e-n-qaber)</i>
prep. 'in' + rel. pron.	II f. sg. ipf. 'die'	I sg. ipf. 'die'	'and' + adv. 'there'	I sg. ipf. nif'al 'bury'

"Where you will die I will die, and there I will be buried".

qal - qābar 'to bury';
nif'al - niqbar 'to be buried'.

Reflexive value

7. Biblical Hebrew - 2S 20:10

<i>wa-'amāsā</i>	<i>lō</i>	<i>nišmar</i>	<i>ba-ḥereb</i>
'and'+ Amasa	not	III m. sg. pf. nif'al 'watch'	prep. 'in, with' + 'sword'

"And Amasa did not protect himself from the sword...".

qal - *šâmar* ‘to watch, to keep’ ;
nif'al - *nišmar* ‘to be on one’s guard’.

The *n*-prefix is also used, in Post-Biblical Hebrew, in *nitpa''el* forms, in which the *n*- is prefixed to the derived stem with prefixed *t*-.

8. Mishnaic Hebrew - ‘Erubin V i, 53a

<i>bnê</i> pl. constr. st. ‘son’	<i>yəhūdāh</i> Judah	<i>še-hiqpîdû</i> rel. + III m. pl. pf. hif'il ‘care for’	<i>'al</i> prep. ‘on’
<i>ləšôn-âm</i> ‘language’ + pron. III m. pl.	<i>nitqayyāmāh</i> III f. sg. pf. nitpa'el ‘to stand’	<i>tôrât-âm</i> ‘law’ + suff. III m. pl.	<i>bə-yād-âm</i> prep. ‘in’ + ‘hand’ + suff.pron. III m. pl.

"The Judeans who cared for their language, their law was preserved in their hands".

qal - *qûm* ‘to stand, to stand up’;
hitpa'el - *hitqayyêm* and *nitpa''el* - *nitqayyêm* ‘to be established, to be preserved’.

Siebesma (1991) analyses Hebrew *nif'al*, also in its relationship with the other passive and reflexive stems. He concludes that it is not possible to formally distinguish between passive and reflexive function, in Biblical Hebrew. This is due to the tendency to leave the agent unexpressed: “One may ask to what extent Biblical Hebrew allows for the distinction reflexive/passive for the *ni*”³. He notices that, in the Biblical Text, *nif'al* forms to be translated with a passive are much more frequent than the ones to be translated with a reflexive. This result contrasts with the assumption of Jouon (1965), that the original meaning of the *nif'al* is reflexive of the basic stem, and that only in some cases it can have passive meaning⁴.

b. Periphrastical structures

Several Semitic dialects have nominal periphrasis that convey reflexive meaning. They are usually built with nouns indicating ‘body’, body parts, ‘soul’, followed by a pronominal suffix referring to the subject. For example:

³ Siebesma (1991: 34).

⁴ Jouon (1965: §51c).

- Akk. *ramān* ‘body’: *ramaš-šu ipaṭṭar* ‘he will redeem himself’;
- Classical Arabic *nafsun* ‘soul’: *qatala nafsa-hu* ‘he killed himself’;
- Mišnaic and Medieval Hebrew *ešem* ‘bone’: *wa-tippol ‘āšmā-h min ha-ssûs* ‘and she threw herself from the horse’ (*Mishle Sendebār*, l. 525 ed. Epstein 1967).⁵

c. Akkadian *-tan-* infix

The Akkadian *-tan-* is a morpheme that has no parallel in any other Semitic language. E.g.: *aštanappar* ‘I sent you regularly’, *aktanarrabakkum* ‘I continuously pray you’.

According to Kuriłowicz (1972) the presence of a nasal element in this morpheme is due to a re-interpretation of a second geminated root-consonant. In Akkadian a CC sequence can be interpreted as C+C or as *n*+C. A D stem *uparris* has a Dt reflexive *uptarris* in preterite tense, *uptarras* in the present. Analysing *-rr-* as <*-nr-, a form like **uptanris* can be reconstructed, to which is given a correspondent *uptanarras* in the present. From the latter, a *-tan-* suffix is derived, with an independent meaning, mainly iterative or habitual (Huenergard: “The Gtn and other *-tan-* stems have an iterative force; they express repeated, habitual or continuous action”⁶).

A different reconstruction of the link between frequentative *-tan-* and reflexive *-t-* (using data from Libico-Berber and Ugaritic) found is in Lipiński (1997: 411-413).

It is finally important to notice that a Ntn stem exists: the *-tan-* infix can be applied to an N stem, which is not possible for infixed *-t-*.

3.1.4 *Reciprocal*

In Semitic languages (but also in many other languages not belonging to the Semitic group) the expression of the reciprocal is closely related, on the morphological level, to that of the reflexive. In several Semitic languages, the reciprocal can thus be expressed by means of a (-)*t*-affix.

Classical Arabic expresses the reciprocal by means of two stems, the III (*fā’ala*) and the VI

⁵The structure *ešem* + pronoun with reflexive meaning is often preceded by the *nota accusativi*: *ên âdâm mešîm et ‘aşmô râšâ* ‘a man cannot make himself guilty’ (Yeb. 25b).

⁶Huenergard (2005: 411).

(*tafā'la*). The second stem is derived from the first one adding the prefix *ta-*. The two stems differ in meaning, because of the point of view from which the reciprocity is described. The III stem expresses a reciprocal action on the side of the grammatical subject: *qataltu zaydan* 'I killed Zaid', *qātaltu zaydan* 'I fought with Zaid'. The VI form, instead, expresses reciprocity in itself, from the point of view of both elements involved: *taqātala* 'to fight one against the other'.

8. Classical Arabic

α

<i>nāšara</i>	<i>l-muḥibbu</i>	<i>l-maḥbūba</i>
III m. sg. pf. III 'help o.s. with'	det art.. + nom. m. sg. 'lover'	det art.. + acc. m. sg. 'beloved'

Lit.: "The lover helped himself together with the beloved".

β

<i>tanāšara</i>	<i>l-muḥibbu</i>	<i>wa-l-maḥbūbu</i>
III m. sg. pf. VI 'to help each other'	det art.. + nom. m. sg. 'lover'	'and' + det art.. + nom. m. sg. 'beloved'

"The lover and the beloved helped each other".

Like the reflexive, the reciprocal can be expressed with a nominal periphrasis, in most cases using the root **ḥw* 'brother'.

3.1.5 Other meanings of *t*-forms in Semitic languages

So far reference was made to the main values that (-)*t*-affix, in its various shapes, assumes in Semitic languages. Nevertheless there are many other possible uses of this morpheme, and the relationship between them is often hard to recognize.

In descriptions of the various Semitic languages, about *t*-forms, beside the values somehow related to reflexivity, we frequently find labels such as: durative, continuous, frequentative, habitual, iterative. In many cases it is also difficult to clearly distinguish the meaning of the *t*-stem from that of the basic stem.

9. Moabite - Meša Stele (IX sec. a.C.), lines 14-15

<i>w-y'mr</i>	<i>l-y</i>	<i>kmš</i>	<i>lk</i>	<i>'hz</i>	<i>'t</i>	<i>nbh</i>	<i>'l</i>	<i>yšr'l</i>
conj. 'and'+III m. sg. impf. 'say'	prep. 'to' + pron. I sg.	Kamoš	ipv. qal III m. sg. 'go'	ipv. basic III m. sg. 'take, lift'	<i>nota</i> <i>accusativi</i>	Nebo	prep. 'on, to'	Israel
<i>w-'hlk</i>	<i>b-llh</i>	<i>w-'lthm</i>	<i>b-h</i>					
'and' + I sg. impf. 'go'	prep. 'in' + 'night'	'e' + I sg. impf. pref- <i>t-</i> 'fight'	prep. 'in, with' + pron. III m. sg.					

"And Kamoš said to me: go, make Nebo rise up against Israel! And I went during the night and I fought against him (scil. Israel)...".

'lthm: basic root **lhm* 'fight'⁷.

3.1.6 Biblical Hebrew *hithpa'el*

In Hebrew we find several *hithpa'el* forms that, as in the example given above, have a meaning quite similar to the one of the basic stem. Often it is also difficult to relate the meaning of such forms to the idea of reflexivity. Scholars have tried to give various explanations of this phenomenon, pointing to analogies between Hebrew and other Semitic languages. Common to the different theories is the assumption that in the unique *t*-stem of Hebrew have merged many Semitic stems (i.e. with infixed *-t-*, with prefixed *t-* derived from the basic stem and from derived ones etc.).

Speiser (1955) compares some Biblical Hebrew *hithpa'el* forms with some Akkadian *-tan-* forms. He argues that, in some cases, the Hebrew form is what remains of an ancient *-tan-* form, in which the *-n-* element has been lost, but the original semantic value - defined "durative" - is still preserved. Thus he explains a number of biblical *hithpa'el* forms that seem neither to have reflexive nor passive meaning, but rather "iterative" or "habitative". Speiser refers to the following verbs: *ābal* 'to mourn', *ānap* 'to be/to become furious', *gā'aš* 'to quake', *nāḥal* 'to inherit', *ātp* 'to be/become weak', *šā'ah* 'to observe', *hālak* 'to go'. A link with the Akkadian form is suggested not only by the analogy in meaning, but also by the presence of parallel structures in several expressions with the root **hlk* 'to go'. In the following example the root is used with the meaning of 'walk together with':

⁷ In Biblical Hebrew this verb is attested mostly in the *nif'al* stem, with the meaning 'to fight'. cf. 2S 12:27: *nīḥamtī bə-rabbāh* 'I fought with Rabbah'. The basic stem is attested, but always in the book of Psalms and only three times: once in the imperative (Ps 35:1) and two times in the participle (Ps 35:1, Ps 56:2).

10.

a. Akkadian

<i>il-šu</i>	<i>itti-šu</i>	<i>ittanallak</i>
‘god’+ suff. pron. III m. sg.	prep. ‘with’ + pron. III m. sg.	III m. sg. pres. Gtan ‘go’

"His god will walk with him".

b. Biblical Hebrew - Gen 5:22

<i>wa-yyithallek</i>	<i>hanôk</i>	<i>et-hâ-elohîm</i>
‘and’+III m. sg, ipf. hitp. ‘go’	Enoch	prep. ‘with’ + det. art. + ‘God’

"And Enoch walked with God".

Dombrowski (1962), instead, explains some *hithpa’el* forms (more or less the same examined by Speiser) by means of some Classical Arabic V forms with ‘durative’, ‘iterative’ or ‘frequentative’ value. The scholar comes to a conclusion close to Speiser’s one: in Biblical Hebrew different *t*-stems would have merged, with different functions.

As mentioned above, Siebesma (1991) compares uses and meanings of *nif’al* with the corresponding *hithpa’el* forms. Thus he concludes:

the hitp. expresses the active performance of an action or an emphasis which is placed more on the active action than on the undergoing of the action. The hitp. may be translated as active, reflexive, reciprocal, but rarely as passive.⁸

Siebesma also studies the relationship between *hithpa’el* and corresponding *qal*, noticing that:

The hitp. can express a nuance in meaning that may be best described as ‘to behave oneself in a certain way’. [...] Therefore, these forms may at times adopt a metaphoric sense. [...] In this respect the hitp. differs from the qal.⁹

All the observations discussed so far are, to a large extent, correct. Nevertheless they seem

⁸ Siebesma (1991: 168).

⁹ Siebesma (1991: 168).

not to be able to describe the core meaning of *hithpa'el* as a whole. At least two main points can be stressed in any case:

- *hithpa'el* does not typically express passive;
- *hithpa'el* in some cases does not express a meaning totally different from the *qal*, concerning the diathesis.

In my opinion more attention should be paid to the meaning of the basic stem. In most cases in which *hithpa'el* does not have a reflexive-passive meaning, the *qal* is intransitive or used intransitively. It might be that, for such basic stem, the translation in common western languages has somewhat shadowed their semantic and syntactic value in Biblical Hebrew.

3.1.7 Aramaic *t*-forms

According to Garr (1984 [2004])¹⁰ in the Aramaic of the ancient inscriptions both prefix and infix *t*- forms are attested for the basic stem. Nevertheless, the infix form is limited to Tell Fekheriyeh inscriptions. In Samalian there is only one possible example of a *t*-form, but the interpretation is doubtful. In Deir Alla inscription, finally, prefix *t*- form of the basic and of the D stem are attested. The meaning, as results from Garr's translation, is mainly passive - tollerative: *yt'hzh* 'it can be seen', *yt'sm* 'it can be heard', *yt'hz* 'it is closed' and *ygtzr* 'may it be cut off'¹¹. In Deir Alla inscription also examples of a *nif'al* stem have been found (e.g. *n'nh* 'it moans', with intransitive value), which is not the case for Ancient Aramaic nor Samalian¹². Finally in Samalian also inner passive is attested, in a passive participle *qatilt* (*qatiltāt*) 'killed'¹³.

Tsereteli (1995) indicates also the existence of a sort of *-tan-* form, found in Bar-Rakib inscription (8th century b. C., 2nd half): *htn'bw*, interpreted as 'they requested for themselves', from the root *y'b*. This form, according to Tsereteli, is a double reflexive, constructed with both *t*- and *n*- prefix.

¹⁰ Garr (1984 [2004]: 119).

¹¹ Respectively Sf. I A 28, Sf I A 29, Nerab 2:4, Fekh. 23.

¹² Cf. Garr (1984 [2004]: 121).

¹³ Cf. Garr (1984 [2004]: 130).

Outline of Middle Voice in Syriac

In Biblical Aramaic¹⁴ both inner passive and *t-* forms are attested¹⁵. So the conjugation system is structured as follows:

basic stem	pe'al	pē'il	hith/'ithpe'al
D stem	pa'el	-	hith/'ithpa'el
H stem ¹⁶	haph'el	hu/hoph'al	-

Looking at the table given above, one might suppose that there is a sort of complementary distribution between *t-* forms and inner passive, respectively with D and H stem. Nevertheless the corpus of Biblical Aramaic is too restricted, for such a claim to be certain.

In any case, this situation represents an intermediate step in the spreading of *t-* forms through the evolution of Aramaic verbal system.

Another step is witnessed by Palestinian Aramaic verbal system, where every verbal stem has a corresponding *t-* form, but remains of inner passive are still found.

basic stem	pe'al	itpe'el
D stem	pa'el	ithpa'el
H stem	ap'el	ittap'el

As indicated in Stevenson (1924): “The stems having preformative *it* are reflexives, which serve also as passives”¹⁷.

Finally it is interesting to observe that, unlike the others *t-* forms, *ittap'al* forms do not undergo metathesis before sibilant, nor regressive assimilation before dental. This could be an argument in favour of the secondary role of this stem inside the Aramaic verbal system, that I suggested above. This stem has an interesting shape, with an intervening vowel between the prefix and the root (which is not found in the others *t-* stems), and with redoubling

¹⁴ Cf. Rosenthal (1961).

¹⁵ Inner passive forms are attested for the perfect, but not for the imperfect.

¹⁶ An *hitap'al* might be attested in E 4:13, but the reading is uncertain. In Biblical Aramaic there are also residual *šap'el* forms, with causative meaning (close to that of *hap'el*) and related residual *t-* forms *hištap'al*.

¹⁷ Stevenson (1924: 44). A number of *šap'el* and *'ištap'al* forms are still found.

of the *t*- prefix. The scholars consider the redoubling of the *-t-* as due to an assimilation of the *alef*, characteristic of the causative stem. So Duval (1881)¹⁸, referring to Syriac *ettaph'al*, says:

Aph'al et èttaph'al suivent la conjugaison de pa'al et èthpa'al; ils ont [aleph] comme caractéristique, au lieu du redoublement, mais au passif aleph formatif se confond avec le préfixe du réfléchi [’et], dont le *taw* redoublé est écrit deux fois...

In Syriac¹⁹ the spreading of *t*-forms is complete. Three *t*-stems with reflexive and passive meaning correspond to three active conjugations.

p'al	etp'el
pa''el	etpa''al
ap'el	ettap'al

Scattered remains of other conjugations are also to be found: *šap'el* (limited to around fifty verbs), *eštaph'al* and the inner passives *pu''al* and *hop'al* (only in participles). Nevertheless all these forms are left outside the system, and often lack a corresponding symmetrical form.

Ettap'al stem is rarely used and many verbs express the reflexive of the *ap'el* by means of other *t*-forms²⁰.

3.1.8 *The Akkadian perfect*

In Akkadian the *-t-* morpheme is also specialized in the expression of a real verbal tense. It is a form usually translated as a present perfect and expresses an action in the past, as related to another action (or series of actions) expressed before or implied by the context. In such a sequence, the perfect indicates the core event.

This form is typical of Akkadian and, even if there are some traces in the oldest Akkadian

¹⁸ Duval (1881: 182). An analogous explanation is given in Thackston (1999: 119).

¹⁹ Cf. Nöldeke (1898 [1966]: 100-104), Pazzini (1999: 52-53).

²⁰ Cf. Nöldeke (1898 [1966]: 102), Pazzini (1999: 53).

dialects, it has greater productivity and diffusion in Old Babylonian. A typical example of the use of perfect can be found in legal texts, collections of model-situations followed by appropriate judgements. Their structure is of the *protasis-apodosis* type. The *protasis* is introduced by the particle *šumma* ‘if’. The core event of the *protasis*, on which the judgement in the *apodosis* is based, is expressed by either a preterite or a perfect. If in the protasis a sequence of actions or situations is given, only the last one can be a perfect, whereas the others are preterites.

11. Old Babylonian - Laws of Hammurapi²¹

<i>šumma</i> ‘if’	<i>awīlum</i> nom. sg. ‘man’	<i>alpam</i> acc. sg. ‘ox’	<i>īgur-ma</i> III sg. pret. G (+ vent.) ‘rent’
<i>ilum</i> nom sg. ‘god’	<i>imḥassū-ma</i> III m. sg. pret. + suff. pron. III m. sg. + vent. ‘strike’	<i>imtūt</i> III m. sg. pf. ‘die’	

"If a man rented an ox and a god struck it, and it has died...".

More generally, the Akkadian perfect indicates the anteriority of an event, sometimes with a value closer to the one of a real perfect.

In Kuriłowicz (1972)²² there is an interesting explanation of the reason why the reflexive *-t*-morpheme has spread, in Akkadian, to the expression of a verbal tense and aspect. This scholar compares the internal development of Akkadian with what happened in other languages, such as Romance languages and German. Here the passive of a transitive verb and the perfect of an intransitive verb are expressed by the same structure (Kuriłowicz says there is a “structural identity”): fr. *il bat : il est battu = il meurt : il est mort*. According to him “In Akk. the form *iptaras* functioned originally as a passive with relation to trans. *iprus, ipris, iparras*, as a perfect with relation to intrans. verbs”. Subsequently the perfect would have been extended to all verbs, both transitive and intransitive, because of a semantic shift “from state resulting from previous action to previous action”. This change also implies the shift of *t*-forms from the derivational to the inflectional status.

A somewhat different explanation is found in Lipiński (1997), although expressed

²¹ The example is taken from Huenergard (2005: 157).

²² Kuriłowicz (1972: 61-63).

cursorily. To establish a link between perfect and reflexivity, the author uses the label of *effective*²³ “in the sense that a state is produced in someone or in something, wheter it be caused by another or by himself/itself [...] perfective originally conveys involvement of the acting subject, while preterite marks the simple past”²⁴.

3.1.9 *The point of view of Arabic grammar*

As I said before, Arabic has various stems built up by means of the (-)*t*- morpheme, with different functions, depending on the stem to which it attaches and also on the semantic value of the lexical root. In can be interesting to examine the classification and terminology of Arabic grammar, concerning verbal classes and stems.

In Classical Arabic the transitive verb is called *muta'addī* ‘going beyond’, while the intransitive verb is called *lāzim* ‘bound’. The two terms are quite close, also in literal meaning, to western ones. The *t*-stems (but also the *n*- stem), that western terminology calls reflexive or passive, are called in Arabic *muṭāwi*²⁵ which literally means ‘amenable’, from the verb *tā'a* ‘to obey’: something closer to our *tollerativum*. It has to be noticed that verbs such as *dahaba* ‘to go’, *labisa* ‘to wear/to get dressed’ both belong to the *lāzim* category. This distribution reveals a point of view slightly but significantly different from the western one.

In an Arabic grammar for Arabophones²⁶ we find the following definition for *muṭāwi* verbs:

The derived predicates indicating *muṭāwa'at*²⁷ determine a reduction of the number of arguments of their basic verbal stem, and this happens by means of the suppression of its first argument (i.e. subject), by omission or by the introduction of a preposition²⁸

²³ This term had already been used by Wright (1859 (1977)), as related to *t*- forms.

²⁴ Lipiński (1997: 346).

²⁵ cf. Ch. 1 § 1.3. For this concept in Classical Arabic grammar cf., among others, Sībawayhi (1881: ch. 446); Zamaḥṣarī (1859: § 486); Fleisch (1979: 180-181, 306-321).

²⁶ Cf. *al-Luġat*: 177.

²⁷ I.e. the fact of being *muṭāwi*’, the ‘amenableness’ .

²⁸ In Classical Arabic the agent of a passive verb is not expressed, but it is possible to indicate the inanimate cause/instrument with prepositional phrases.

So the *muṭāwa'at*, from a mechanical point of view, is a process which implies the reduction of the verbal valency, as from its basic stem.

Comparing the definition quoted above with the literal meaning of the term *muṭāwi'* it can be assumed that Arabic *t*-forms are not intended to express actions performed by the agent on himself, or that the agent undergoes from another entity, but rather to denote situations in which the subject has lower control on the event and lower dynamicity. For example:

12. Classical Arabic, from the *Risālatun min taḥta l-mā'i* by Nizar Qabbāni

<i>ištaqtu</i>	<i>'ilay-ka</i>	<i>fa-'allim-nī</i>	<i>'an</i>	<i>lā</i>	<i>aštāq</i>
I sg. pf. VIII 'desire'	prep. 'to' + pron. II m. sg.	'and' + ipv. II m. sg. + pron. I sg.	conj. 'that'	not	I sg. <i>mağzūm</i> VIII 'desire'

"I have desired you, but teach me not to desire".

fa'ala - šāqa 'to make rejoice, o make desire'

ifta'ala - ištāqa 'desire'.

3.2. West Semitic and Aramaic inner passives

3.2.1 West Semitic general data

Inner passive is a derivational process typical of some Semitic languages: the passive is in that case characterized by a specific vowel pattern, that is generally reconstructed as *u-a* (e.g. Ar. *qatal*, *yuqtal*).

Not all Semitic dialects possess (or show traces of) an inner passive system. On the contrary, it seems to be a characteristic of a subset of West Semitic languages. According to Retsö (1989), where a survey of the distribution of the structure is given, inner passive is found in Biblical Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, Modern South Arabian. Moreover, traces of it can be found in Amoritic, Ugaritic, Eblaite, Phoenician and Ancient South Arabian.²⁹

In his study over the origin of West Semitic causative and passive markers system, Retsö connects inner passives of the *yuqtal* (*/yiqtal*) type to an original stative/intransitive basic stem, represented for several roots in various Semitic languages. This original stative would

²⁹ Retsö (1989: 20-21).

have been used as passive counterpart for stems having *i* as root vowel (**yaqtil*). At a second stage, these *yaqtil* stems would have been re-interpreted as causatives and thus re-employed as imperfects (prefix conjugations) of the causative conjugation (having *h'* prefix in the perfect/suffix conjugation as characteristic mark). Therefore, also the *yuqtal* stative-passive would have been used as passive of the causative.³⁰ In the light of such a reconstruction, Retsö describes the position of the inner passive in West Semitic languages as follows:

There exists in Western Semitic a use of imperfects with the theme vowel *a* as PM in the G-stem and in the CCj. The prefix vowel may be *a*, *i* or *u*, thus *yaqtal/yiqtal/yuqtal*. These imperfects are also used as intransitives with or without stative meaning. To a larger extent these imperfects have a *yaqtil* as a true causative. Retsö (1989: 140).

As far as the suffix conjugation is concerned, different patterns can be found in the various West Semitic languages.

Biblical Hebrew and Classical Arabic have the forms *qatal* and *quttal*, from an original nominal pattern indicating the result of a transitive action, found in almost all Semitic languages (including Aramaic, for which cf. Retsö 1989: 170-171). Such *qatal* nouns often have, moreover, close synonyms with a *qatīl* pattern.³¹ Next to this, a pattern *qutil* is found (e.g. in Arabic passive of the causative). All these forms, as will be shown in next paragraph, are marginal in Aramaic. Therefore, I will not go into further details, but I refer to Retsö (1989: 166-178) for a hypothesis over the origin and distribution of both *qatal* and *qutil* types.

3.2.2 Aramaic inner passive

Inner passive is quite marginal in Aramaic dialects, if compared with Classical Arabic, where it has developed into a full system. As was shown, the passive is expressed in Aramaic mainly by means of the *et*-forms.

As regards prefix conjugation, the forms that Retsö calls *a*-imperfects are used as basic

³⁰ As a matter of fact, in Classical Arabic, there is no difference between the passive of the basic stem and that of the causative, being both *yuqtal*.

³¹ cf. Diem (1970).

intransitives, but not regularly as passive markers.³²

As far as the suffix conjugation is concerned, the inner passive in West Semitic languages, was shown to have most frequently nominal origin. In the case of Aramaic, the perfect and the participle *qtīl* derive both from the nominal pattern *qatīl*, still well represented in the different dialects and stages, among nouns and as adjectives³³. They derive, therefore, from a different morphological pattern from the one that has originated inner passive perfect and participle in, e.g., Arabic and Biblical Hebrew. Here follows the reconstruction given by Lipiński:

The passive participle of the basic stem goes back to the nominal patterns CaCīC and CaCūC. [...] Aramaic *kətib*, "written" goes back to the CaCīC pattern, attested as such by cuneiform transliterations of Aramaic names (e.g. *Za-bi-i-ni*, "bought", "redeemed"). Lipiński (1997: 428-29).

As will be shown in the next paragraph, this is also associated with a difference in the basic meaning of the inner passive participles in these two languages, with respect to Aramaic.

3.2.3 Semantics of the inner passive participle

The inner passive of the s.c. is no longer present in Syriac, where only the passive participles can be found. For this reason I will focus here only on this category.

As far as the semantic value of the so-called inner passive is concerned, it is first of all important to keep in mind that the term passive is here used as a mere label, derived from the tradition of Semitic studies.

In practice, in the various Semitic languages, the morphological categories that are referred to as inner passives (and that Retsö has shown having different origins) can have meanings ranging between intransitive, stative, passive and sometimes even active transitive.

³² Retsö (1989: 146 n. 24) gives an indication of a few possible exceptions.

³³ Cf. also Retsö (1989: 165-166) and Stempel (1999: 108). This phenomenon is quite common cross-linguistically and has been discussed by Haspelmath (1994: 167): "participles are formed with productive adjectival affixes that come to be used so often that the deverbal adjective can be called a participle".

Of course, there are rules and criteria with which it is possible to organize this variety of functions, and there are some prototypical values, around which all the others are distributed.

Because the present study focuses on Syriac and because Syriac inner passive is limited to the system of participles, I will deal only with the semantics of this category.

According to the traditional grammars the inner passive participle expresses a state, related to the event described by the verbal root.

Another observation that is sometimes found is that the stative or passive value of the inner participle depends on the actional value of the root: from an intransitive stative root a stative adjectival participle is derived, while processive and transitive roots are associated with passive inner participles. Thus, for example, with the verb *dhel* 'to fear', characterized by an intransitive vowel pattern CCeC, is associated the inner stative adjective *dahil* 'fearing', whereas to the verb *'bad* 'to do', is associated the inner passive participle *'bīd* 'made'. This is certainly true to a certain extent, and corresponds to the original adjectival value of the C(a)CīC forms. Nevertheless, the situation is more nuanced, and sometimes, as will be shown in the textual analysis in chapter 4, it is not possible to clearly establish the basic semantic value of the verbal root.

As far as the correlation between the inner non-active participle and the corresponding *et*-stem participle is concerned, in Muraoka (2005: 42) we find the following observation: "Where an internal passive participle is attested side by side with an external, *eth*-prefixed one, the former stresses the result, the latter a process...". This would seem to suggest that, while inner participles (when they are not mere adjectives) are associated with a Terminative aspect, the *et*-participles would have Non-Terminative aspect. This appears to be in keeping with the hypothesis made by Li (2008) for the Aramaic of the book of Daniel. Nevertheless the results of the textual analysis that are discussed in the next chapter do not seem to confirm this observation. Moreover, also the interpretation that Li gives of various Aramaic passages is problematic, as is shown in § 3.2.4.

Gai (2005) gives an overview of the values of what he calls *non-active* participles in some Semitic languages. An important fact underlined by the author is that in languages as Arabic and Biblical Hebrew the *non-active* participle has most frequently passive meaning, whereas in Aramaic (and especially Syriac), it is basically stative. It is also interesting to see how, in Tannaitic Hebrew, the stative *non-active* participles are more numerous, maybe also under Aramaic influence. In the light of his results the author suggests that Syriac participle should be labelled as *stative*, rather than *passive*, as done by the main classical Syriac grammars. As we will see, this general remark made by Gai is confirmed also by the results of the textual analysis on early Syriac documents (cf. ch. 4).

In Goldenberg (1992), a study over Aramaic perfect, an analysis is found of the value of the inner passive *qtîl* as regards Aspect³⁴. The forms, isolated as well as in different compounds with the preposition *l-*,³⁵ are considered as mainly *resultative perfects*³⁶. In the next chapter, when our analysis of the aspectual value of inner passive in early Syriac will be presented, this observation will be confirmed and corroborated by further data.

3.2.4 *Non-active participles in Biblical Aramaic*

Li (2008) analyses the uses and functions of the Aramaic so-called *passive* or non-active participles and of the *t*-stem participles in the book of Daniel. Because some of the observations found in that study are meant as describing *in nuce* phenomena that will further develop in Aramaic and especially in Syriac, it may be useful to discuss them in detail, also in order to observe in practice the function of some of the general linguistic categories that have been described in Ch. 2.

The aim of the author is to demonstrate that:

at the diachronic stage of the language attested in the Aramaic of Daniel, the so-called passive participle is primarily a verbal adjective that is developing into a resultative participle, whereas the *t*-stem participles are the true passive (and reflexive) counterparts of the active participle Li (2008: 112).

Here the term *passive* refers to a certain morphological pattern and not to a semantic value. I will here adopt the expression *non-active*, used by Li and Gai (2005), in order to avoid possible confusion between morphological structures and functions.

³⁴ The author actually speaks of Aktionsart, but referring in practice to aspectual distinctions ("In this connexion 'perfect' does not stand for a morphological category [...] but for the formally discernible 'resultative Aktionsart':113).

³⁵ The compound forms are the coreferential dative (i.e. the participle followed by the prep. *l-* and by a pronominal suffix coreferential with the subject of the participle, cf. ch. 5), and the *ktîb lî* type (the passive participle followed by the prep. *l-* and a pronominal suffix indicating the agent of the action).

³⁶ Namely, as terminative actions the results of which are considered as still present and relevant at the speech time. Cf. Goldenberg (1992: 117-119).

After a brief preliminary discussion on voice and on the values traditionally attributed to *t*-stem and to non-active participles (reflexive-passive and resultative-stative, respectively), the author focuses on the values of the *non-active* participle.

According to Li, in the Book of Daniel, the *non-active* participles have essentially an attributive function: They almost never serve as verbs³⁷ and, being derived from adjectival patterns, still preserve a lot of their original value.

Li argues partially against the thesis, proposed, among others, by Goldenberg (1992) and, for Syriac, by Nöldeke (1898 [1966]) that Aramaic *non-active* participles express essentially a resulting state.

Li observes that, in the Aramaic attested in the book of Daniel, the grammaticalization process that has led to the resultative participles, is still at a very early stage. For this reason most *non-active* participles function as adjectives³⁸. This is certainly very well demonstrated by the interesting list of examples given by Li.

Nevertheless, there is no need to see a contradiction between the general assumption that *non-active* participles express a state³⁹ and their adjectival function. An adjective indicates a permanent or temporary quality of the noun it modifies.

A state verb also indicates temporary or permanent qualities or conditions of the subject⁴⁰. Therefore, the passage of a de-verbal adjective to the status of participle expressing a state is not difficult to understand.⁴¹

What is important to notice is that, quite often, it is the interpretation given in the translation in other languages that makes one or the other function emerge as predominant.

The author groups the *non-active* participles in the book of Daniel, according to the following functions:

³⁷ “The vast majority of the possible 33 instances of passive participles/verbal adjectives in the Aramaic of Daniel are clearly non-verbal in function”: Li (2008:121).

³⁸ “The attested resultative instances suggest that the so called passive participle is in the process of developing from verbal adjective to a resultative participle, but, given the fact that non-resultative instances outnumber resultative instances, the resultative function is still in the early stages of development, and will be more pronounced in later Aramaic” Li (2008:120).

³⁹ Participles of the *qtīl* pattern, in Syriac, express a resulting state, or anyway a state associated with the semantic value of the basic stem. The actional value of the great majority of participles is that of *state*. They are also most frequently associated with an imperfective aspect.

⁴⁰ In English one can say *the beautiful girl*, but one can also imagine another language in which a verb ‘to be beautiful’ exist (cf. Syriac *špar*, Arabic *ḥasuna*) and where the same sentence would sound *the girl that is/was being beautiful*.

⁴¹ Cf. Haspelmath (1994) quoted in n. 33.

- resultative, 9 out of 33 occurrences. All the examples listed by Li⁴² are from transitive verbs;
- denoting “potential or habitual/customary situations” Li (2008:118). These, according to Li, are all derived from transitive verbs;
- stative/adjectival. These are both from intransitive and transitive verbs.

Examining the example chosen by Li (the ones that are not labeled as ‘debatable’ by the author himself), one can see that sometimes the border between the resultative and the stative/adjectival function is not so clear.

Dan 3.23

<i>nplwn</i>	<i>lgw'</i>	<i>'twn</i>	<i>nwr'</i>	<i>yqdt'</i>	<i>mkptyn</i>
III m. pl. pf. 'fall'	prep. 'inside'	cs. st. 'oven'	'fire'	act. ptc. f. sg. 'to burn'	pass. ptc. <i>pa'el</i> 'bind, tie'

“They fell down *bound* into the furnace of burning fire”⁴³.

mkptyn ‘bound’ is considered by Li as a resultative participle. What is not entirely clear, from this example, is in which sense the fact that *mkptyn* expresses a state, resulting from a previous action, would differentiate it from the participles that Li calls stative/adjectival. In Dan 3.23 *mkptyn* has an adjectival function, it expresses a circumstance under which the main event of falling takes place and it could be replaced by expressions such as ‘unhappy’, ‘afraid’, ‘together’ etc.

The difference seems to be, instead, more in the basic value of the verbal roots from which the various participles stem. The resultative meaning is unlikely to be associated with stative non-processual roots, such as *'sb* ‘to be grieved’, *nqy* ‘to be clean’ etc. the non-active participles of which Li lists among stative/adjectival ones (Li 2008:119).

From this perspective, the difference between the two non-active participles can be re-connected to the general observation mentioned above, that intransitive verbal roots usually have a stative *non-active* participle, whereas transitive verbal roots (or stems!) have a passive/resultative *non-active* participle.

In this respect it is very important also to take into account the stem from which the *non-active* participles are built: *mkptyn* is a *pa'el*, intensive-causative stem, while *'syb* ‘sad’ (Dan

⁴² Li (2008:118).

⁴³ Li (2008:118).

6.21) and *nq* 'clean' (Dan 7.9) are built on the basic stem.

Li's observations on *t*-stem participles are a bit more problematic than those on *non-active* participles. *T*-stem participles have mainly a verbal function, but can also be used adjectivally. According to the author, such participles should be considered as "the true passive (and reflexive) counterpart of the active participle" Li (2008:125). Moreover, Li maintains that the *t*-stem participle, when used as a finite verb, has an imperfective value⁴⁴.

Li does not discuss the traditional theory according to which Aramaic *t*-stems express passive and reflexive/reciprocal voice. Moreover, he does not give any morphological, syntactic or semantic definition of passive, reflexive and reciprocal, respectively.

On a general perspective, he finds that all the *t*-stem participles in the book of Daniel fit into one of these categories.

I will try here to give two very simplified definitions of passive and reflexive respectively, that may serve as guidelines in the analysis of the biblical passages involved.

It is a well known fact that the languages of the world express passive in many different ways (when they express it) and that passive morphology is very unstable and often problematic. Nevertheless, it is important to make reference to a shared definition, when it comes to evaluating whether a structure is or not to be considered a passive.

I refer to the observations on passive made by Shibatani (1988):

in the prototypical passive form a patient functions as a subject and an agent is syntactically unencoded (or, even if it is encoded, its grammatical prominence is marginal). [...] The typical active-passive opposition shows a semantic contrast as well in that in the active form, the subject acts upon others or affects others, while in the passive form, the subject is affected or undergoes the effect. Shibatani (1988), *Introduction*: 3-4.

Shibatani also considers the correlation existing between the middle and the passive voice, which share the property of having a subject in the role of undergoer. Nevertheless, Shibatani points at an important difference between passive and middle voice, that is crucial for the evaluation of the examples examined by Li:

The active-middle and active-inactive oppositions, however, are characteristically different

⁴⁴ Since I argue elsewhere that the active participle in the Aramaic of Daniel expresses primarily an imperfective aspect when functioning as a finite verb, the *t*-stem participle is a passive/reflexive imperfective" Li (2008:125).

from the active-passive opposition in that they do not involve a change in the subject status of the nominal arguments involved. Shibatani (1988), *Introduction*: 4.

As regards reflexive domain, I refer to the definition given by Kemmer (1993: 24):

Most languages have a special marker to indicate that the Agent and the Patient (or analogous semantic roles) in an event ordinarily involving two such roles are the same entity. Such markers, which are translationally equivalent to himself in the English sentence He saw himself, are called reflexive markers (RM).

Therefore, for an action to be reflexive, there has to be a specific RM and the agent and the patient of a transitive action must coincide.

The four *t*-stems that are classified as passive by the author (2.13, 5.6, 5.9a,b) are built from the following verbal roots: *qtl* "to kill", *šry* "to loosen", *bhl* "to be troubled" (basic stem not attested), *šbš* (basic stem not attested) "to confuse". I will first list all the passages in which such forms occur and then analyze both their syntactical context and their semantic value.

Dan 2.13

<i>w-dt'</i>	<i>npqt</i>	<i>w-ḥkymy'</i>	<i>mtqṭlyn</i>
conj. 'and' + 'decree'	III f. sg. pf. 'go out'	conj. 'and' + adj. pl. 'wise'	ptc. m. pl. <i>etp'el</i> 'kill'
<i>w-b' w</i>	<i>dn 'yl</i>	<i>w-ḥbrwhy</i>	<i>l-htqṭlh</i>
conj. 'and' + III m. pl. pf. 'seek, pray'	'Daniel'	conj. 'and' + 'friends' + pron. suff. III m. sg.	prep. 'to' + inf. <i>etp.</i> 'kill'

"And the decree went out, and the wise men *would be killed* and sought Daniel and his friends to be killed".

Dan 5.6

<i>w-qṭry</i>	<i>ḥrṣ-h</i>	<i>mštryn</i>
conj. 'and' + pl 'knot, joint'	'loin' + pron. suff. III m. sg.	ptc. <i>etp.</i> m. pl. 'loosen'

"And the joints of his hips were loosened".⁴⁵

⁴⁵ The expression is metaphoric and describes the reaction of fear of the king.

Dan 5.9a-b

'dynmlk'blš' šr	sgy'	mtbhl [...]	w-rbrbnwhy	mštbšyn
conj. 'then"king'Bal shazzar	adv. 'greatly'	ptc. etp. m. sg. 'to be troubled'	conj. 'and' + pl. 'noble' + suff. pron. III m. sg.	ptc. etpa. m. pl. 'to confuse'

“Then the king Balshazzar feared greatly [...] and his nobles were confused”.

The *t*-stem participles involved are:

- *mtqtlyn*: participle plural masculine of the Gt stem of the verbal root *qtl*;
- *mštryn*: participle plural masculine of the Gt stem of the verbal root *šry*;
- *mtbhl*: participle singular masculine of the Gt stem of the verbal root *bhl*;
- *mštbšyn* : participle plural masculine of the Dt stem of the verbal root *šbš*.

Qtl is a highly transitive verbal root. The agent has high volitionality a high control on the action. Nevertheless, no agent is explicitly mentioned in the sentence, nor is it relevant for the development of the action. The focus of the discourse is on the order given that the wise man must be put to death.

Šry in the basic stem means 'to loosen' and in the Gt-stem means 'to be loosened, untied'. In Dan 5.6 the *et*-stem participle is used to describe the fear of the king, whose legs are shaking and whose face becomes pale. The *t*-stem describes therefore a spontaneous event, involving a body part and cannot be considered as having a passive function. It does not express in any way that the subject is undergoing an event by the intervention of an external causer.

Bhl is not attested in the basic stem. The *pa* ‘‘el means 'to trouble', the Gt-stem means 'to be frightened'. The *et*-stem participle is used in Dan 5.9 to express an emotion, a feeling. There are no indications that the subject here undergoes an action.

Šbš in the basic stem is not attested; the *pa* ‘‘el means 'to confuse', the Dt 'to be confounded'. Again, the *t*-stem expresses the state of mind, the emotions of the subject and does not make reference to any passive event: there is no mention of an agent/causer.

Of the four examples given by Li of a 'passive' function of the *t*-stem participle, only one appears to have actually passive meaning. Moreover, such a meaning seems to depend more on the semantics of the verbal root, than on the syntax of the clause.

The remaining three *et*-stem participle express body actions and emotions, that are experienced by the subject and not provoked by any explicitly mentioned external agent. The

events described by such participles cannot be classified as reflexive either, because they do not involve the use of any reflexive marker and are not performed by their subjects on themselves. They are experienced by their subjects. From the semantic point of view, they belong to categories that are typically related to middle voice, according to the study by (Kemmer 1993).

In the light of what has been observed in this paragraph, it is not possible to conclude, with Li, that the instances of *t*-stem participles analyzed are “definitely passive” (Li 2008: 126) and, more in general, that the *t*-stem participle is simply the true passive counterpart of the active participle in the Aramaic of Daniel.

As regards the statement that *t*-stem participles have an imperfective value, the interpretation given by Li of the biblical passages needs to be discussed. Li’s assumption is based on Dan 2.13 and on Dan 3.3. The author translates Dan 2.13 as “The decree went out, and the wise men were about to be killed, and they sought to have Daniel and his friends killed” (Li 2008:126). The translation of the participle *mtq̄tlyn* “were about to be killed” is an interpretation and does not correspond literally to the Aramaic text. The participle here expresses the content of the decree, namely that the wise men ‘will be killed’. If one wants to give the sentence a modal value, to respect a bit more the rules of English syntax, one can say ‘would be killed’, but by no means does the Aramaic express an imminent/impending value, as Li maintains (Li 2008: 127).

Moreover, even if this would be the case, it would not allow for an imperfective interpretation of the participle.

Let us examine the reasoning that leads Li to conclude for an imperfective value:

In the above example [scil. Dan 2.13], the *t*-stem participle is either imminent/impending, i.e. it denotes an action soon to take place or tendential i.e., it denotes an attempted but not (yet) completed action. These are imperfective functions, since actions are viewed before completion Li (2008: 127-128).

We have here a confusion between two different functions: the modal and the aspectual one. Being logically related to the noun *dt* ‘decree’ and expressing an intention, the participle *mtq̄tlyn* has a modal volitive value. In this sense one could consider it as “tendential” in Li’s words. From the aspectual point of view, nevertheless, the action is described as already accomplished, is considered as a whole and not *during* its taking place. The future tense is not preferentially related to imperfectivity, just because it describes events that still have to

take place. On the contrary, often a future event is viewed by the speaker as completed⁴⁶. Let us consider the following sentences:

1. Tomorrow at five I will buy you a rose.
2. Tomorrow at five, when you will read these lines, I will be buying you a rose.

In 1 the aspect is perfective, in 2 imperfective. In both cases we have the description of an event that still has to take place, an intention of the speaker.

The aspect is a point of view on the action, not necessarily corresponding to the actual position of the speaker with respect to such action (if this would be the case, all past events should be described as perfectives).

The other passages that Li quotes as a prove of the imperfective value of the *t*-stem participle is Dan 3.3:

Dan 3.3				
<i>b'dyn</i>	<i>mtknšyn</i>	<i>...w-q'myn</i>	<i>lqbl</i>	<i>šlm'</i>
conj. 'then'	ptc. etp. m. pl. 'gather'	conj. 'and' + ptc. act. 'stand'	adv. 'in front of'	'statue'

“Then...[the officials] were being gathered and were standing before the statue” Li (2008):128.

In this case we have a confusion between the iteration of a series of events and the single events that compose such a series. The process of gathering is a durative action that is both iterative (repeated many times) and distributive (it applies to every single official). If the general process of gathering all the officials is viewed imperfectively, the single events that constitute, all together, the iterative sequence, are nevertheless not imperfective but perfective. The participle *mtknšyn* ‘were (being) gathered’, being personal and referring to the officials, is distributive. The fact that the action of gathering is viewed as a completed process in its single phases is actually demonstrated by the presence of the participle *q'myn*: in spite of what Li maintains, the order of the events is that the single persons are *first* gathered and *then* stand before the statue.

On the basis of what has been argued so far, I believe that there is no reason to maintain that *t*-stem participle in the Aramaic of Daniel (and in Aramaic in general) has an imperfective value.

⁴⁶ For the aspectual value of the future cf. Bertinetto (1986: 483-510).

To sum up, at least in the light of the analysis of the examples used by Li himself, it does not seem to be possible to conclude that *t*-stem participles are limited, in the Aramaic of the Book of Daniel, to the expression of passive and reflexive meanings. On the contrary, it would seem opportune to introduce, for this morphological category, the concept of middle voice. The great majority of the *t*-participles that Li classifies as passive, and also many of those that the author considers reflexive (such as 6.4 *mtnšh* 'excelling', 6.12 *mthnn* 'praying', 6.15 *mštdr* 'to struggle' etc.), appear to describe states of mind, emotions, conditions of the subject and other events that belong to the semantic area of middle.

Finally, as far as the aspectual value is concerned, the hypothesis that *t*-stem participles have an imperfective value has to be rejected on the basis of the evidence given by Li.

CHAPTER 4

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS 1: MIDDLE SEMANTICS

4.1 *Presentation of the sample*

In this chapter the use of the *et-* stems and the inner passives occurring in a number of Syriac texts will be analysed. More specifically attention will be paid to their syntactic behaviour and their semantic value, as far as Voice, Aspect and Actionality are concerned.

The sample chosen is represented by some of the earliest Syriac texts, dating from the IIIrd up to the VIth century A.D. All the texts are in prose and have been originally composed in Syriac (and are not translations from Greek or Biblical Hebrew, as it is the case for example of the Scriptures). Here follows a brief presentation of the various texts.

1 The Book of the Laws of the Countries¹ (or Dialogue on Fate, from now on BLC) is a Syriac text, composed by a disciple of Bardaisan (II-III century A.D.). The topic of the text is a confutation of the theory that man's life, attitude and destiny are governed by Fate (Syr. *helqā*). The author reports a dialogue between Bardaisan and his disciples, in which the wise man analyses uses and habits of various peoples of the world. The aim of the overview is to show that man's behaviour is determined by the laws and conventions of his own land and people, and not by the positions of the stars, or by the destiny. Nature and Fate have an influence on vital functions and on some aspect of life, but man's free will and the uses of the various communities are responsible for man's actions.

¹ I will make reference to the edition of the text by Drijvers (1965). For a general overview of the work, cf. Duval (1907); for further bibliography on this text, cf. Brock (1996), Lund (2007) and Bakker (2007), among others.

2 The Act of Judas Thomas² (AT) are an apocryphal text that is usually considered to have been composed in the IVth century. The text is an account of the deeds of the apostle in India and of the evangelization of that land. The most complete text of the Syriac version is found in the ms British Library add 14. 645 dated to 936 A.D., which is also the source of Wright's edition, that has been used for the present study. However, a palimpsest³ was found which contains some of the Acts of Thomas dating to the Vth or VIth century. The differences between the two texts are usually of minor importance. The content, anyway, shows an earlier stage of the textual tradition, because it lacks some parts that have been added in the text of the BL for doctrinal purposes. There is also a Greek version of the text (witnessed by 21 mss, only one of which has the complete text), the relation of which with the Syriac one is difficult to establish. The main mss date from 11th to 13th century. The Syriac version seems to be the original. Nevertheless, in several instances the Greek text has preserved a reading or a passage that have been erased or modified in the later Syriac revision contained in the BL ms.⁴ Here is presented the analysis of the first seven chapters of the text.

3 Aphrahat's *Demonstrationes* are a collection of twenty-three doctrinal texts, composed in the first half of the IVth century. They contain an exposal of the foundations of Christian faith, illustrated monographically in every single Demonstration. They have a strong rhetorical framework and they contain several apologues, but also some short narrative sections. The text has been translated into Armenian, Arabic (only partly), Georgian and Ge'ez. The edition that has been used for the analysis is Parisot (1894). In this chapter only Demonstration 1 (On Faith), 8 (On the resurrection of the dead) and 16 (On the peoples that have substituted the People) have been taken into account, whereas the textual analysis presented in chapter 5 refers to all the 23 *Demonstrationes*.

4 Ephrem's *Commentaries on Genesis and Exodus* were composed in the second half of the IVth century. They contain sections of the first two books of the Pentateuch followed by exegetical commentary. The biblical text sometimes is literally translated (or quoted from

² The text used in this work follows the edition and the translation by Wright (1871a, b). Another important edition of the text is . For a modern translation, textual criticism and for a comparison with the Greek text cf. Klijn (2003).

³ Palimpsest Siani 30.

⁴ Cf. on this matter Klijn (2003: 3): "We suppose that the Acts were written in a bilingual environment in which both the Syriac and the Greek versions originated simultaneously".

an extant translation) and sometimes simply summarized. The narrative sections are quite broad. The edition that has been used here is Tonneau (1955). Of the text, in this chapter, were considered only the following sections: pp. 3-10; pp. 38,28 - 48,9; pp. 95 - 102; 122 - 128. The sections have been chosen on the basis of their content, in order to select narrative parts out of the commentary and of the doctrinal text. In chapter 5, instead, reference will be made to the entire text.

4.2 *Methodology of the analysis*

4.2.1 *General remarks*

In my analysis I have examined all the *et*-stems occurring in the texts. I have also taken into account the inner passives, but only when they appeared to have a verbal function: I have left aside all the participles that are listed autonomously as nouns and adjectives in Payne Smith (1903), and the participles that were used as mere adjectives in the context.

In a first phase of the work, I have examined the value of the forms in terms of voice: I have tried to classify them as active, passive, middle, reflexive. As far as reflexive and middle are concerned, I have also tried to specify the semantic areas to which they referred, according to the classification given in Kemmer (1993).

The semantic categories used in this analysis are based on the *Checklist for Middle Semantics* given in *Appendix A* of Kemmer (1993: 267-270), that have been presented in chapter 2.

The second part of the research has been devoted to the aspectual and actional values of the verbal forms⁵. I have examined the value of the *et*-stems and of the inner passives within their context, and I have confronted it with the value of their corresponding active basic stems⁶. The aim of this analysis is to find out whether there is a special correlation between *et*-forms and inner passives on one hand, and some aspectual and actional properties on the other. The reference works for the classification have been already indicated and discussed in chapter 2.

⁵ The forms analysed have been the same for both phases of the study.

⁶ For the *et*-stems related to derived stems (such as *etpa'ʿal*, *ettapʿal* etc.), the reference point has been the corresponding derived stem (namely *paʿʿel*, *apʿʿel* etc.).

It is important to notice that the data presented are *tokens*. They can give a general idea of the distribution of the semantic functions of the *et-* prefix and of the inner passive. The number of roots, represented in the forms taken into account, is big enough for the analysis to be meaningful.⁷ Nevertheless, in some instances, the higher or lower frequency of a given verbal root can influence the results. This is the case, for example, in the BLC, for *sîm* 'put, placed', the 'passive' participle of the verb *sûm* 'to put, place', that occurs very frequently in the text, almost always with a stative function.

As was explained in the preceding paragraph, the sample texts belong essentially to two literary genres: the apologetic and the narrative one. For this reason, in evaluating the analysis of the verbal forms that they contain, one should keep in mind such genre differences. Aphrahat's *Demonstrationes* (especially 1 and 16), as well as the *Book of the Laws of the Countries*, are basically doctrinal and philosophical texts and therefore they contain several general statements, precepts etc., but a limited amount of narrative sections and narrative verbal forms. On the contrary, the *Acts of Thomas* and the sections of *Ephrem's Commentaries* that have been selected are basically narrative and contain as a whole a much more relevant amount of narrative verbal forms, than the first two text do.

4.2.2 Notes on the semantic classification

As regards the semantic classification related to voice, the verbal forms have been given a label A (active) / M (middle) / P (passive) / I (impersonal), according to their semantic value and syntactical function. Moreover, the forms classified as M have been fit into the categories listed in Kemmer (1993), with some adjustment.

Passive, middle and reflexive are being here considered as a scalar categories, each of them being constituted by a nucleus of prototypical instances, around which are distributed the less prototypical values. The extreme ends of each category are connected with each other, the classification of the more peripheral values can vary according to the context. Passive domain is thus viewed as a continuum, within which it is possible define a core area and a periphery. As far as morphosyntax is concerned, I have distinguished between a stronger and a weaker

⁷ The roots that have been examined in the sample texts are 268.

passive structure. The stronger type represents the prototype of passive, whereas weaker structures distribute all around, according to their decreasing resemblance to the core⁸.

Semitic languages have a tendency to leave the agent of a passive verb unexpressed. In Syriac, the expression of the agent, although possible and certainly more used than in other related languages, is relatively rare. I have considered as strong passives, the forms inserted in a structure involving also an agent, an instrument or a cause, expressed by means of the prepositions *men-*, *b-*, *l-*, such as BLC 32.4 *metnatpînan b-hên* 'we are dragged by them'.

On the other hand, I have classified as weaker passives the forms in which the meaning of the root, the semantic and the syntactical context necessarily imply that the subject has lower control on, or undergoes the action described, but no agent is overtly indicated. This latter category I have considered to better correspond to the group 4 (middle-passive) of Kemmer's classification. Nevertheless, also within this weaker passives, there appears to be a scalar variation, with different degrees of 'passivity'. For example, in BLC 46.15 *metqaṭlâ* 'killed' implies certainly a higher degree of passivity, with respect to BLC 46.12 *metildan* 'generated' or to BLC 30.4 *methazyâ* 'seen/appeared'. For this reason it is also not always easy to decide whether a verb has to be considered as a weaker passive or, instead, a spontaneous event (of the type 16). The correlation between the passive without agent and the event described as spontaneous is very important, on the other hand, and is one of the main reasons for which the distinction between stronger and weaker passives have been made here. For example, I have chosen to classify the *et-* form of *îled* as a middle form and as a spontaneous event and not as a passive, because the involvement of an agent is never taken into account. Throughout the entire sample, not a single instance of the *et-* form of *îled* followed by an agent or a causer has been found. On the contrary, the generation of human beings is mentioned only as a natural event, a first step in the biological history of individuals, analogous to growth and death.

4.3 Voice

I present here the results of the analysis of the semantic values of the *et*-forms and of the inner passives, according to the criteria of classification given in Kemmer (1993: 267-270).

⁸ For this concept cf. among others Fici Giusti (1998), Lazzeroni (2004), Romagno (2002), Cennamo (1998).

Outline of Middle Voice in Syriac

	<i>et-</i> forms	inner passives
tot	221	76
M	144	44
P	68/9	33
P+	15	
M/P	9	1
I	1	-

Book of the Laws of the Countries

	<i>et-</i> forms	inner passives
tot	310	107
M	183/5	66
P	83/5	21
P+	38	10
M/P	2	-
I	3	2
A	1	8

Acts of Judas Thomas (7)

	<i>et-</i> forms	inner passives
tot	100	35
M	65	16
P	32	16
P+	3	2
I	-	1

Aphrahat's Demonstration 8

	<i>et-</i> forms	inner passives
tot	53	8
M	23	1
P	29	7
P+	1	-

Aphrahat's Demonstration 16

	<i>et-</i> forms	inner passives
tot	289	37
M	101	20
P	162	13
P+	21	4
I	5	-

Ephrem's Commentaries

class	<i>et-</i> forms	inner passives
self preservation	1	-
self control	30	3
readiness	1	-
2 (indirect middle)	4	2
3 (reciprocal)	9	2
3 (group action)	9	-
4	69 ⁹	25 ¹⁰
5	1	-
7	3	2
8	3	-
11	6 ¹¹	-
12	3	26
13	9	6
14	19	1
15	1	-
16	58 ¹²	6 ¹³
passive + agent	15	8

Book of the Laws of the Countries

⁹ Of which one could also be classified as 11, three also as 16.

¹⁰ Of which one could also be classified as 16.

¹¹ Cf. n. 10.

¹² Cf. n. 10.

¹³ Cf. n. 11.

Textual Analysis 1: Middle Semantics

class	<i>et-</i> forms	inner passives
self preservation	2	-
self control	20	5
readiness	-	2
2	2	7
3	21	3
3 (group action)	2	-
4	83	21
5	3	2
6	5	-
7	4	2
8	17	2
10	11	1
11	10	2
12	1	14
13	35	8
14	19	1
15	11	2
16	27	18
ambiguous	4	-
passive + agent	38	10
undetermined	2	8

Acts of Judas Thomas (7)

class	<i>et-</i> forms	inner passives
self control	1	-
readiness		-
2	1	-
3	1	1
4	65	13
8	2	-
10	3	-
11	5	-
12		3
13	7	3
14	3	-
15	1	-
16	6	5
passive + agent	15	-

Aphrahat's Demonstration 1

class	<i>et-</i> forms	inner passives
2	3	-
3	4	-
4	32	16
5	-	1
6	-	1
8	3	-
11	1	5
12		1
13	14	3
14	13	1
15		2
16	27	3
passive + agent	3	2

Aphrahat's Demonstration 8

Outline of Middle Voice in Syriac

class	<i>et-</i> forms	inner passives
self preservation	1	-
2	4	7
3	4	-
4	29	-
6	1	-
8	3	-
10	1	-
13	5	-
14	1	-
16	3	1
passive + agent	1	-

Aphrahat's Demonstration 16

class	<i>et-</i> forms	inner passives
self preservation	8	-
self control	7	-
readiness	2	1
2	8	2
3	5	-
4	164	13
5	5	-
7	2	2
8	3	-
10	2	3
11	3	-
12		3
13	25	1
14	14	2
15	4	6
16	16	-
passive + agent	21	4

Ephrem's Commentaries

The first series of tables reproduces the general distribution of voice among *et*-forms and inner passives. In the BLC and in the AT there is a predominance of middle forms over the passive ones (including both stronger and weaker passives). In the three Demonstrationes and in Ephrem's Commentaries, instead, passive forms are more numerous. The expression of the agent is relatively frequent in BLC and AT, whereas it is very rare in Aphrahat and Ephrem's samples. Impersonals are overall very scarcely represented.

The categories individuated by Kemmer seem to apply also to Syriac verbal system. Beside elements related to some of the 16 main classes, instances of *et*-forms and inner passives, expressing self control, readiness and self preservation, have also been found¹⁴. It is noteworthy that all the instances of both *et*-forms and inner passives could fit into one of Kemmer's classes.

¹⁴ These values are listed by Kemmer (1993: 270) among "Verb meanings attested with light marking in two-form languages, and/or which are reflexive in one-form languages. These may be a starting point for development of middle-system from a reflexive source".

The most represented category, both among *et*-forms and inner passives, is what I have called weaker passive, indicated in the tables as 4. Agentless passives, on the contrary, are generally few. Among the other categories of middle, motion verbs (8,11), positionals (12), emotion middle (13), cognition middle (14), spontaneous events (16) are more or less equally represented. Verbs referring to grooming, body care, body actions are rarer. Impersonals and facilitatives are almost absent. An overview of the proportions in which the various classes are represented is given in the charts on pp. 80-82.

Here are some examples of *et*-forms for each category (omitting passives and impersonals):

self preservation	<i>eṭṭašî</i> 'to hide, conceal', <i>estatar</i> 'to be sheltered, concealed', <i>šawzeb</i> 'escape', <i>etn̄tar</i> 'to preserve oneself, abstain'
self control	<i>eštama'w</i> 'to obey', <i>etdabbar</i> 'to behave', <i>etraḥaq</i> 'to abstain', <i>eteb'eš</i> 'to do evil, misbehave', <i>etklî</i> 'to restrain, refuse to do'
readiness	<i>eṭṭayyab</i> 'to be ready/to prepare oneself'
3 (reciprocal and group actions)	<i>eštawtap</i> 'to mingle with, to join', <i>etknaš</i> 'to gather together', <i>etkattaš</i> 'to fight, to contend', <i>ethallaṭ</i> 'to mix, to take part'
7	<i>eṭḥappî</i> and <i>etkassî</i> 'to cover, to veil, to hide'
8	<i>etpnî</i> 'to turn', <i>ethpek</i> 'to turn, tur round (e.g. in bed)', <i>estmek</i> 'to reclime', <i>etptaḥ</i> 'to open', <i>etmakkak</i> 'to lie down'
10	<i>etptaḥ pûmeh</i> , <i>etptaḥ</i> 'the mouth, the eyes opened', <i>etmakkak</i> 'to lie dow, to behave humbly', <i>estaybar</i> 'to feed, to sustain oneself', <i>ettnîḥ</i> 'to relieve oneself' (cf. also emotion)
11	<i>ettrîm</i> 'to rise, to go up', <i>etqarab</i> 'to come closer', <i>etkarak</i> 'to go around', <i>etqaddam</i> 'to precede, go forward', <i>etqrem</i> 'to spread', <i>estleq</i> 'to go up'
13	<i>ešt'î</i> 'to relate, narrate', <i>etnabbî</i> 'to prophesy', <i>ethannan</i> 'to rejoyce', <i>etbassam</i> 'to be pleased', <i>etdammar</i> 'to wonder, to be amazed', <i>etraḥam</i> 'to have mercy, compassion', <i>etpallag</i> 'to doubt', <i>ethammaš</i> 'to blush, to be ashamed'
14	<i>etr'î</i> 'to reckon, think, estime', <i>ezdkar</i> 'to remember', <i>ettpîs</i> 'to believe, let oneself be persuaded', <i>estkal</i> 'to understand', <i>eštawda'</i> 'to know, recognize, understand'
15	<i>eṭḥzê</i> 'to appear' (cf. <i>infra</i>), <i>etglî</i> 'to reveal oneself'
16	<i>eṭḥled</i> 'to be born', <i>etrabbî</i> 'to grow', <i>ett'îr</i> 'to wake up', <i>eštleḥ</i> 'to cease, to be exhausted'

Some of the verbs in this table can fit into more than one category, depending on the context and on whether they are used literally or metaphorically. Thus, for example, *etmakkak* can mean simply 'to lie down' and thus be classed under 8, but can indicate also 'to prostrate' in the sense of a gesture of humiliation, and then rather be considered as 10.

It is interesting to notice that no positionals were found expressed by *et*-stems, but several by inner passives, such as *sîm* 'put, placed', *ḥdîr* 'being around something', *nqîp* 'stuck, joined', *ḥbîšân* 'enclosed', *qrib* 'being close', *mkîk* 'lying down' etc. Some of these verbs are

classified as positionals in their inner passive, whereas they are achievements and express movements in their *et*-stems: the participle of the verb *mak*, *mkîk*, is a positional, but in its *etpa* 'al, as we saw above, is a motion verb.

As was said above, it is not always easy to tell a weaker passive form from a spontaneous event, or from another semantic category. To the existence of a scale of passivity are connected some problematic instances of the *et*-stems of two verbs: *hza* 'to see'¹⁵ and *pûs* 'to convince'.

The *etp'el* of the verb *hza* has a value that ranges between 'to appear', 'to show oneself' and 'to be seen', with a variable degree of volitionality and affectedness of the subject. From the point of view of Kemmer's classification, I believe that it should be considered as a perception middle (15), and in most cases I have classified it accordingly. Perception can be described both as experiencer-based and as stimulus-based.¹⁶ The basic stem of *hza* describes the event from the point of view of the experiencer. The corresponding *etp'el* seem to offer both perspectives, depending on the contexts. The verb is often followed by a dative, namely by the preposition *l-* followed by a pronominal suffix. However, the functions of such a preposition are multiple in Syriac. It can be used to express a real dative, thus the recipient or beneficiary of a given event, it can introduce a direct object, but it can also express the agent of a passive verb.

Let us examine a few examples from the Acts of Thomas. In IV, 209, 11-12 a permanent property of God is described: "And, through you, we sadden your sublime Father..." *d-lâ methzê* "that cannot be seen". The focus is on God's feature of being invisible, and the event of being seen can be described as volitional and source-oriented, the recipient being left unexpressed. In I, 182, 21 a woman is declaring her adhesion to Christian faith, after a meeting with "the incorruptible groom..."

1.

<i>d-ethzî</i>	<i>lî</i>	<i>b-lilyâ</i>	<i>hânâ</i>
rel. part. + III m. sg. pf. etp. 'to see'	prep. 'to' + suff. pron. I sg.	prep. 'in' + 'night'	demonstr.

"who has appeared to me in that night".

¹⁵ For which cf. also § 4.5.

¹⁶ Cf. Kemmer (1993: 136).

Here the dative marks the recipient, the experiencer of a perceptive event that is, nevertheless, still presented from the point of view of the source, a voluntary act of the "incorruptible groom". Finally, in VI, 223, 3 God is described as the one who cannot be seen through men's bodily eyes:

2.

<i>hû</i>	<i>da-b-hâlên</i>	<i>'aynîn</i>	<i>d-pagrâ</i>
pron. III m. sg. 'he'	rel. part. + prep. 'in,with' + dem. 'these'	'eyes'	rel part. + 'body'
<i>hšâ</i>	<i>lâ</i>	<i>methzê</i>	<i>lan</i>
adv. 'now'	conj. 'not'	part. m. sg. etp. 'to see'	preo. 'to' + suff. pron. I pl.

"He, who now by means of our bodily eyes cannot be seen by us".

In this case, the presence of the expression "by means of our bodily eyes" clarifies the perspective on the event: the sentence expresses a limit of men and indicates that God cannot be perceived by them. Here, unlike in IV, 209, 11-12, the focus is not so much on the source of the perception, as on the experiencer. Therefore, here the dative *lan* has to be interpreted as an agent of a real passive structure.

A similar situation occurs for the verb *pûs* 'to convince, to persuade'. In this case the verb does not belong to the perception middle category, but rather to the emotion or cognition one. In the *et*-stem *ettpîs* it can mean 'to be in the situation of being persuaded', 'to have been persuaded' or simply 'to believe, to obey'.¹⁷

Within the class of emotion middle, Kemmer (1993: 133) individuates a sub-class of emotive speech actions. These are actions that are related to cognitive events and that presuppose a certain degree of affectedness of the experiencer. Kemmer mentions, among others, the following examples: Latin *queror* 'complain', Classical Greek *mémphesthai* 'to blame', German *sich beschweren* 'complain'. In the Syriac texts analysed a relevant number of verbs fitting into this category has been found: *ešta'î* 'to recount (from personal experience)', *etnabbî* 'to prophesy', *etkaššap* 'to pray in a low voice', *eštawdî* 'to promise', *etkrez* 'to be proclaimed', *eštahar* 'to boast, to glorify oneself'. It is also noteworthy that all the verbs just listed (with the exception of *etkrez* which is a passive) are derived from intensive or causative stems, such as *pa'el* and *šap'el*.

¹⁷ Cf., as an example, in the Acts of Thomas I, 172, 14 vs I, 181, 19 vs I, 182, 5.

4.4 Aspect

The distribution of aspectual and actional values in the various texts analysed can be deduced from the corresponding charts at the end of this chapter (p. 83-84).

Among the *et*-forms as well as among the inner passives one notices a clear predominance of the Terminative values. The proportion is slightly different in the BLC and in Aphrahat's Demonstration 1, due to a relevant amount of gnomic forms. This is explained with the nature of the two texts that, as was said in § 4.2, are doctrinal and contain apologues and precepts, which are more often expressed gnomic and metachronic form. This is not so much the case for Demonstrations 8 and 16, which were chosen for their larger proportion of narrative parts.

Among Terminative forms, Aorist is in general more frequent than Perfect in the *et*-forms (with the exception of the AT), whereas in the inner passives Perfects are predominant.

Examples of the most frequent type of construction are:

3. Aph. Dem. I, 37, 24

<i>abâhayn</i>	<i>kol</i>	<i>meddem</i>	<i>da-'badw</i>	<i>b-haymânûtâ</i>	<i>etnaššaḥw</i>
'fathers' + suff. pron. I pl.	'all'	'thing'	rel. part. + III m. pl. pf. 'to do'	prep. 'in, with'	III m. pl. pf. etp. 'to be glorified'

"Our fathers for all the things they did for their faith, they were glorified".

The verb *nšah* in the basic stem means 'to be shining' or 'to be well known'. In the intensive-causative *pa'el* it means 'to celebrate' and in the corresponding *et*-stem, used in the passage above, it means 'to be celebrated, glorified' and, thus 'to be known'.

4. Eph. Comm. 10, 10

<i>meṭṭul</i>	<i>dên</i>	<i>d-kôl</i>	<i>d-etbrî</i>	<i>en</i>
conj. 'because of'	conj. 'thus'	rel. part. + 'all'	rel. part. + III m. sg. pf. etp. 'create'	conj. 'if'
<i>ktîbâ</i>	<i>brîteh</i>	<i>w-en</i>	<i>lâ</i>	<i>ktîbâ</i>
pass. ptc. f. sg. 'write'	'creation' + suff. pron. III m. sg.	conj. 'and' + cong. 'if'	not	pass. ptc. f. sg. 'write'

"because of everything that was created, whether or not its creation is written".

In this case it is also interesting to notice the resultative value of the passive participle *ktîbâ*. Ephrem is here maintaining that everything existing in the world has been created, even when nothing specific is said about it in the Scriptures. Therefore, the participle 'written' receives a rather stative interpretation: It indicates something that, having been written, can be found by the faithful in the Scriptures

Interestingly enough, in the BLC and in the AT, the disproportion between Terminative and Non-Terminative inner passives is less evident than in the other texts analysed. However, in a global evaluation, it is possible to say that the value of resultative Perfect that traditional grammars and contemporary studies have attributed to Syriac inner passive participles is fully confirmed.

To have an idea of the general aspectual difference between the *et*-stems on the one hand and the inner passive participles on the other, let us consider two occurrences of the same verb *smak* 'to recline', in the Acts of Thomas, at close distance from one another.

5. AT I, 175,7

<i>ihûdâ</i>	<i>ba-mša'tâ</i>	<i>estmek</i>
'Judas'	prep. 'in' + 'midst'	III m. sg. pf. etp. 'recline'

"Judas took place (reclined) in the middle".

6. AT I, 175, 9

<i>mareh</i>	<i>b-dûqtâ</i>	<i>hartâ</i>	<i>smîk</i>	<i>hwâ</i>
'lord' + suff. pron. III m. sg.	prep. 'in' + 'place'	'other'	pass. ptc. m. sg. 'sit'	pf. III m. sg. 'be'

"His master was sitting in another place".

In the first passage a terminative aoristic event is described: Judas takes place at a banquet. A few lines after, the same event (referred this time to Juda's master) is described as a state resultig from an action. The passive participle, with resultative perfect value, combined with the auxiliary 'to be'¹⁸ expresses an ongoing state in the past.

A series of couplets of *et*-perfects and participles from the same root, found in Aphrahat's first Demonstration (I, 8, 23 - I, 8, 25), deserves particular attention. A series of events is described, each one of which is a precondition for the other. For sake of brevity I will

¹⁸ Cf. chapter 2 § 2.2.1 for Syriac compound tenses.

reproduce here the passage in English translation, indicating only the *et*-forms where they occur.

And when [man] hopes he is justified (*mezdaddaq, etpa‘‘al* ptc.), and when he has been justified (*ezdaddaq, etpa‘‘al* s.c.) he is completed (*metgmar, etp‘el* ptc.). And when he has been completed (*etgmar, etp‘el* s.c.) he is consumed (*meštaklal, eštapa‘al* ptc.).¹⁹

From the actional point of view, the verbs in the quoted passage are all achievements or accomplishments: All of them are telic, some have duration and some others do not have it. From the aspectual point of view, the suffix conjugation forms are perfects. They describe a completed event the consequences of which are relevant at the speech time, or better, here, at the reference time represented by the subsequent event. As regards the participles, they can receive either an aoristic or a gnomic interpretation. They do not have, in any case, a Non-Terminative value. On the contrary, they depict the event as necessarily being completed, as is confirmed by the corresponding suffix conjugations from the same root.

However, looking at the charts related to Aspect, both for *et*-stems and inner passives, one notices that Non-Terminative values are not completely absent. On the contrary, all the main sub-types of imperfectivity are represented, although to a variable extent in the different texts. As we will see in § 4.6, Non-Terminative is with striking regularity combined with states and activities and occurs more often with semantic verbal classes closer to the prototype of middle than to the passive.

With respect to *et*-stems, I will first of all focus on all the Non-Terminative aspects that presuppose, in various manner, a repetition of a given event: Habituals, Attitudinals, Iteratives. Looking at the passages in which an *et*-form occurs in one of these functions, it appears that, in every instance, the single events constituting the series are terminatives. Here some examples follow:

¹⁹ Cf. also the translation given by Parisot: "cum sperat iustificatur, et quando iustificatus est perficitur, cumque perfectus est consummatur".

7. AT VII, 242, 13 "Jesus, who are preceded by your Apostle in every place and every town..."

<i>w-beh</i>	<i>meštabbah</i>	<i>w-beh</i>	<i>metîd'a</i>	<i>l-kolhôn</i>
conj. 'and' + prep 'in, with', + suff. pron. III m. sg.	ptc. <i>etpa'al</i> m. sg. 'to be glorious'	conj. 'and' + prep 'in, with', + suff. pron. III m. sg.	ptc. etp. m. sg. 'to know'	prep. 'to' + 'all' + suff. pron. III m. pl.

"...and by him you are glorified and through him you are known to all of them"

8. Eph. Comm. 46, 16 "And it was also not fair..."

<i>hayê</i>	<i>m'danê</i>	<i>b-ar'a</i>	<i>lawtâtâ</i>	<i>netyahbûn</i>	<i>hwâw</i>
'lives'	adj. 'pleasant'	prep. 'in' + 'earth'	'curses'	III m. pl. ipf. etp. 'give'	III m. pl. pf. 'to be'

"...that merry lives would be given on an cursed earth".²⁰

Another case in which the *et*-participles have Non-Terminative value, is in the compound tense with the suffix conjugation of the verb *hwâ*. This compound has generally the power of directing the value of the participle into the expression of an on-going process or state, irrespectively of the verbal stem. Therefore, many of the *et*-participles and certainly the great majority of the inner passives are, in this compound, progressive. This is a well known feature of Syriac language. However, in the portion of Ephrem's Commentaries that was analysed, some instances were found in which the compound is Terminative: 47,19; 97, 17; 126, 13; 126, 26; 128, 8; 128, 26.

9. Eph. Comm. 47, 18-19

<i>ak</i>	<i>qûrbânâ</i>	<i>d-aîhûh</i>	<i>d-metqabbal</i>	<i>hwâ</i>
conj. 'as'	'offer'	rel. part. + 'brother' + suff. pron III m. sg.	rel part. + ptc. <i>etpa'al</i> m. sg. 'received'	III m. sg. pf. 'to be'

"As the gift of his brother that had been accepted".

As regards inner passives, in the compound tense with *hwâ*, the generic value of resultative perfect is modified into the expression of an on-going state contemporary to the narrated events. Thus, in the example 4 above, the presence of the auxiliary indicates that the state, the position of the master is described as concomitant to the main scene of Judas partaking to a feast. This is the case for all intransitive verbs, such as *lbeš* 'to wear, to put on': Aph. Dem.

²⁰ Here reference is made to the God's repeated act of creating men's lives, after the original sin.

VIII, 369, 11 *lbîš hwâ* "he was wearing".

4.5 *Aktionsart*

As regards the actional value of the *et*-forms, the majority of the verbs in all the texts examined are achievements.

However, the ratio between the values of the *et*-stems and the corresponding bases is not homogeneous in the various texts. In the BLC and in the AT, most of the verbs encountered already achievements in the basic stem, as is clearly shown by the charts. On the other hand, in the Demonstrations and in the Commentaries, there seem to be more achievements among the *et*-forms than among the corresponding bases.

An important class of verbs that is relevant for establishing the behaviour of *et*-stems with respect to *Aktionsart* are those that in the charts have been indicated as ambiguous. One immediately notices that such a category is quite well represented in the columns referring to the basic stems, but absent in those referring to the *et*-forms. The verbs that have been classified as ambiguous are those verbs which admit more than one meaning and therefore more than one actional value in their basic stem. Among them is the verb *hza*, which, in the *p'el*, means "to see, to watch, to notice, to consider", and can be therefore a state, an activity or an achievement, but in the corresponding *et*-stem means "to appear, to be seen" and is thus telic and non-durative. Another example is the verb *šma* "to hear, to listen", a state or an activity, which in the *et*-stem means "to be heard" or "to obey", in both cases telic, achievement and accomplishment, respectively. Finally, from a different semantic area, the verb *nûh* "to cease", achievement, but also "to be at rest", state, in the *et*-stem "to take rest, to relieve oneself", in the sense of passing from a state to another (thus, also, "to die"), achievement. One can safely say that, when there is an ambiguity in the value of the basic stem, the *et*-prefix turns it into an achievement.

One of possible reasons for the apparent equivalence of actional values between basic and *et*-stems lays in the fact that, among the *et*-forms, there is a certain quantity of *etpa'al* stems: these are derived from the intensive-causative stem *pa'al*, which has been considered as the basic reference point for a comparison of the actional values. However, causatives generally have a major probability of being telic and thus to rank among achievements (and

accomplishments).²¹

Another phenomenon that may be observed in the charts is the increase of the number of states in the *et*-stems, with respect to the basic stem, and a corresponding diminishment of the activities. To this corresponds the relevant amount of perfects found among the *et*-stems, some of which may also express a resulting state.

The situation is far more clearer for the inner passive participles. Here the predominance of the states is almost absolute.

However, activities are also fairly represented. It may be interesting to examine some examples of this category. In AT I, 176, 10 we find:

10. "And I saw it [sc. a hand]...

<i>kad</i>	<i>grîr</i>	<i>leh</i>	<i>kalbâ</i>
adv. 'when'	pass. ptc. m. sg. 'drag'	prep. 'to/dir.obj. marker + suff. pron. III m. sg.	'dog'

"...While a dog was dragging it"

Here the inner passive participle *grîr* expresses an activity and has also active transitive value. This verb belongs to a semantic category to which belong also verbs such as *eḥad* and *šqîl* (also attested in the sample texts), both meaning "to take, to lift" or "to carry", the participles of which have active value. In the case of *eḥad* and *šqîl*, the passive participle means "holding", and therefore also "carrying".²² However, a passive meaning of such participles is also possible.²³ These verbs are signalled as semantic sub-group in some grammars²⁴, and their behaviour has been discussed also by Goldenberg 1992: 118:

²¹ This is the case, for example, of the verb *dmar*, attested in the *etpa'el* in AT IV, 209, 16, and in Apd. Dem. I, 40, 18. This verb in the *p'el* means 'to tremble', in the *pa'el* 'to make marvellous, to make tremble of amazement'. The *etpa'el* describes the cosequence of the *pa'el*, thus meaning 'to wonder, to be amazed', as an achievement, a change of state.

²² Cf. also the following example: "One often comes across what is passive in form only, but active in meaning: e.g. Lk 14.2 *ܟܢܝܫ ܗܘܐ ܕܡܠܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܗܘܐܪܝܢܝܐ* 'a man who has collected [*knîš hwâ*]water', i.e. dropsiac; Mk 14.13 *ܟܢܝܫ ܡܠܝܢ ܡܝܢ ܗܘܐܪܝܢܝܐ* 'a man carrying [*da-šqîl*] a water container (i.e. having picked up...and carrying).": Muraoka (2005: 67).

²³ This ambivalence of voice is not uncommon in Syriac, another example was given in § 4.3 for the *etp'el* of the verb *hẓâ*.

²⁴ Nöldeke (1898 [1966]: § 280).

The active meaning of some passive participles of the simple stem (whatever may be its origin) is in Syriac a special feature of certain verbs, mostly transitive, that signify "take, hold, carry" or the like.

A possible explanation of the phenomenon can be seen in the origin of the inner passives from stative adjectives. If the participle originally indicates a more or less permanent property of the subject, also actions like holding and carrying may be seen in this perspective. Moreover, such events are also included in the semantic area that Kemmer (1993) defines as 'indirect middle',²⁵ and which encompasses all the actions through which the subject achieves the possession of something. Finally, the participle in I, 176, 10 expresses an ongoing action and has progressive aspectual value. It is interesting to notice that, from the verb *gar*, also an *etp'el* is available. Therefore, this example contradicts the statement about the correlation between passive participle and *et*-stem participles from the same roots, found in Muraoka (2005) and quoted in chapter 3, § 3.2.3.

We saw in the previous paragraph that, in the compound tense with the verb 'to be', the inner passive expresses a concomitant state. When the passive participle is formed from a transitive root, however, the value of the compound does not seem to be so much that of an ongoing state, even resulting from a previous event. On the contrary the forms seem to have, rather, a Terminative value. Let us consider the following passage:

11. Aph. Dem. VIII, 381, 17 "A great favour was done to us..."

<i>psîq</i>	<i>hwâ</i>	<i>sakran</i>
pass. ptc. m. sg.	III m. sg. pf.	'hope' + suff.
'to cut off'	'to be'	pron. I pl.

"...our hope had been cut off, but there exists another one for us".

In this case the semantics of the root, both in terms of transitivity in general and in terms of actionality (the verb is an achievement) has an influence on the aspectual value of the verbal compound.

Analogous influence of transitivity and actionality on the aspectual value of this compound is found also in the structures of the type *ktîb lî*. This structure corresponds *grosso modo* to the romance perfects of the kind *habeo lectum librum*. It is a possessive structure of the type *mihi est*, in which the event, expressed by the inner passive participle, is presented as a

²⁵ Kemmer (1993: 74 ff.).

possession of the agent.²⁶ In Aph. Dem. VIII, 368, 6 we find "Everyone will be rewarded in his body whatever..."

12.

<i>d-men</i>	<i>qdîm</i>	<i>'bîd</i>	<i>hwâ</i>	<i>leh</i>
rel. part. + prep. 'from'	adv. 'before'	pass. ptc. m. sg. 'to do'	III m. sg. pf. 'to be	prep. 'to' + suff. pron. III m. sg.

"...he has done before".

In these structures the compound has a telic value and is most often an achievement, unlike the simple passive participle that, as was shown, is usually a state.

4.6 Voice, Aspect and Aktionsart

Crossing the results of the analysis of voice, aspect and aktionsart, the following conclusions can be drawn:

ET-STEMS convey a spectrum of meanings going from self preservation, body care and indirect middle actions, more immediately connected with proper reflexivity, upto agentless passive and passive with agent, covering all the semantic areas that are indicated by Kemmer as specific of middle voice.

The most represented combination is the one of agentless passive, with Terminative aspectual value (aorist or perfect in equal measure) and with actional value of achievement or, more seldom, accomplishment. Overall, the combination terminative - achievement appears to be the most frequent.

States and Activities are basically concentrated among the following semantic categories: body actions, positionals, emotion middle, cognition middle, perception middle, spontaneous events (these are, nevertheless, more frequently terminative and achievements, like agentless

²⁶ This structure will have fundamental developments in the modern Neo-Aramaic dialects. For a possible reconstruction of the origin cf. Kutscher (1977). For a description of the distribution and variants of in the Neo-Aramaic dialects and for their correlation with some Iranian equivalents cf. Pennacchietti (1988). Finally, for the parallel Iranian *mana kartam* type, cf. Haig (2008).

Outline of Middle Voice in Syriac

passives). These categories are also the ones among which are more numerous Non-Terminative aspects (although, in minor measure, they are found through the entire spectrum), which are almost always related with activities and states.

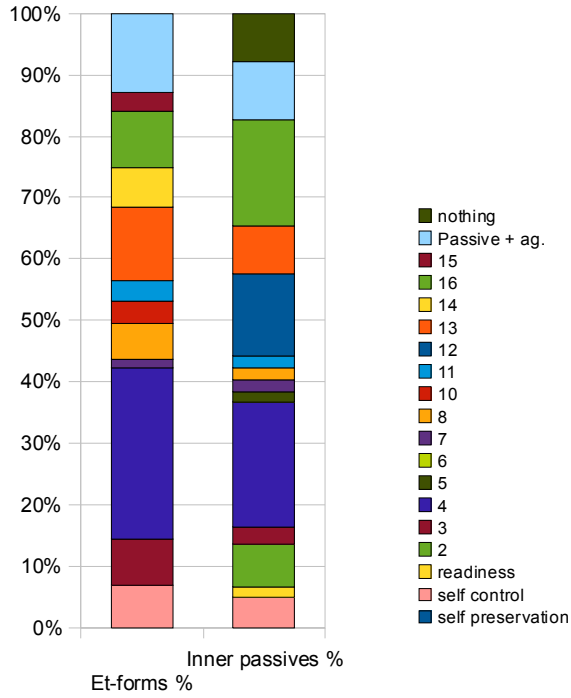
The distribution of the more frequent values for each category can be summarized in the following table:

4	Terminative	achievement (accomplishment)
passive + agent	Terminative	achievement (accomplishment)
16	Terminative	achievement (accomplishment)
self preservation, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	Terminative	achievement (accomplishment)
self preservation, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	Non-Terminative	activity/state

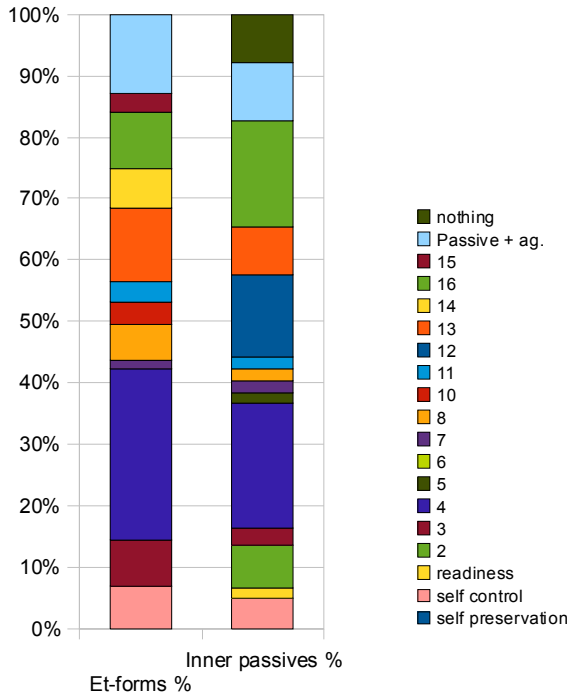
INNER PASSIVES form a much more homogeneous category. From the aspectual point of view they are almost always resultative perfects. Their aktionsart is in the great majority of cases state. The data of Syriac are completely in keeping with the description of passive participles of Haspelmath (1994).

Charts

Semantic classification of et-forms and inner passives in the Acts of Thomas

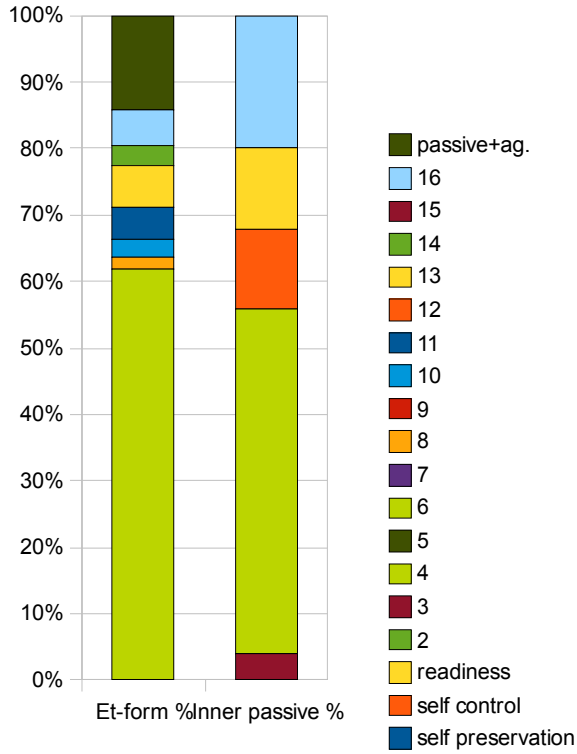


Semantic classification of et-forms and inner passives in the Acts of Thomas

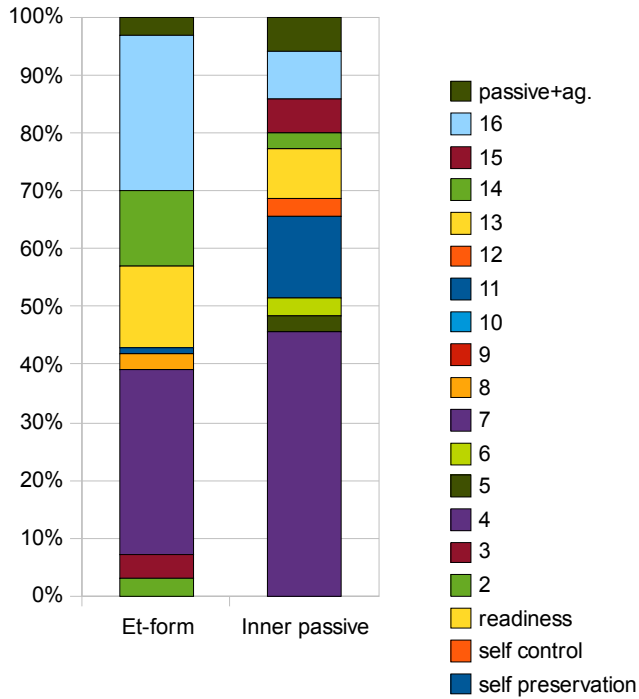


Charts

Semantic classification of et-forms and inner passives Aph. Dem. I

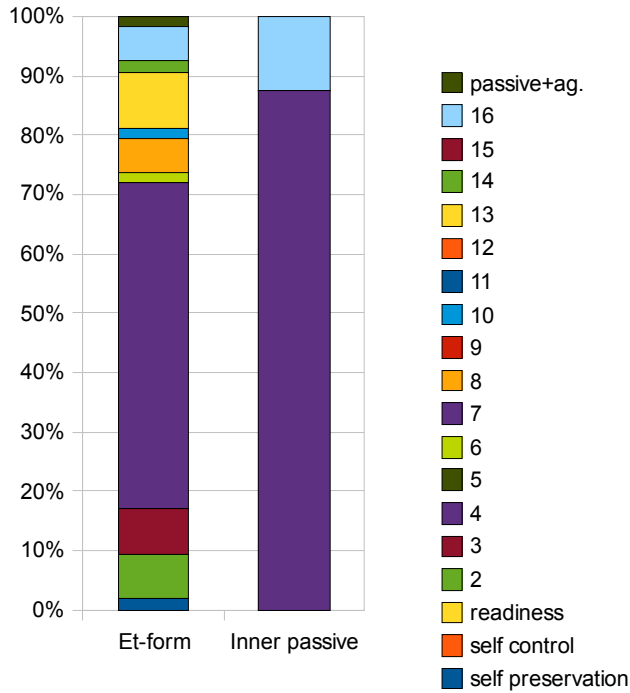


Semantic classification of et-forms and inner passives Aph. Dem. 8

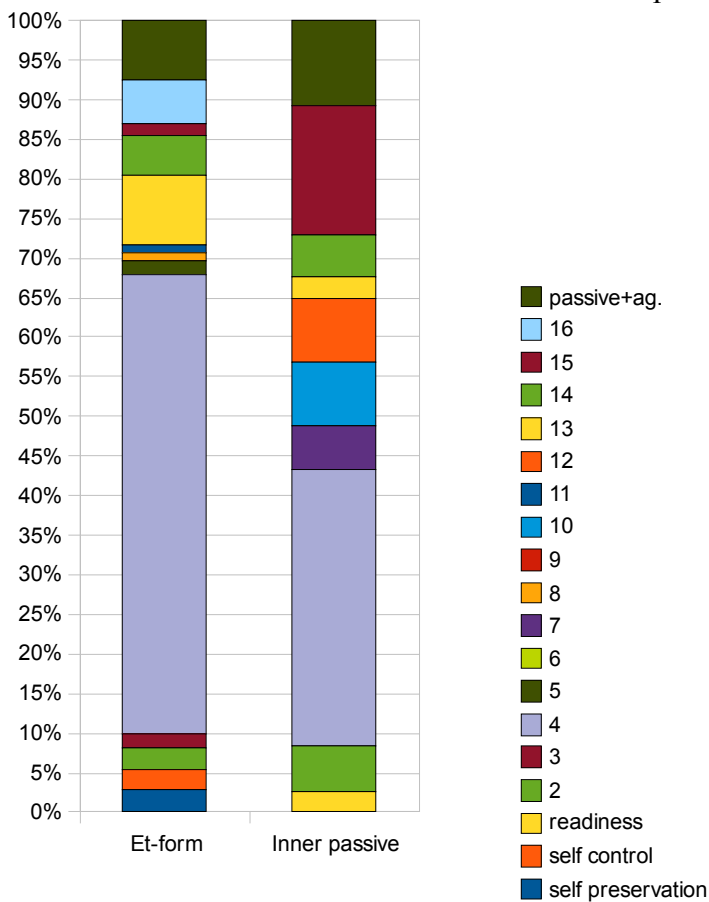


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Semantic classification of et-forms and inner passived Aph. Dem. 16

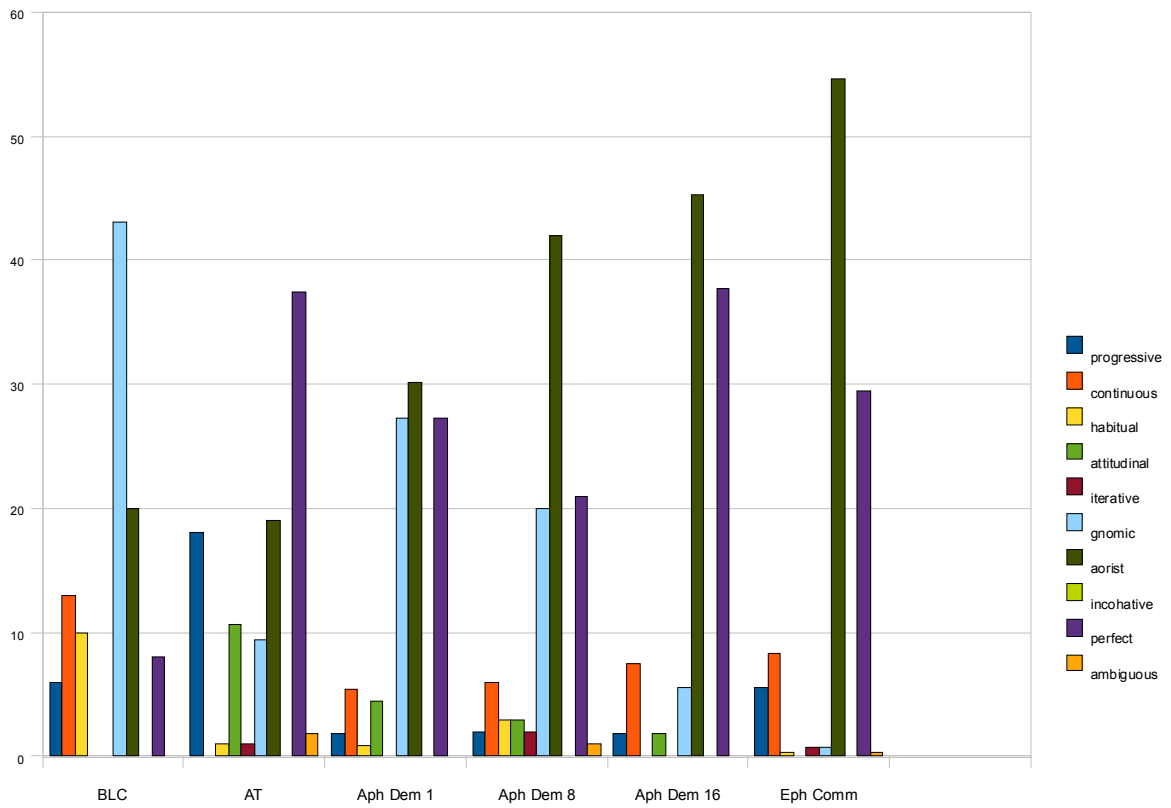


Semantic classification et-forms and inner passives Eph. Comm.

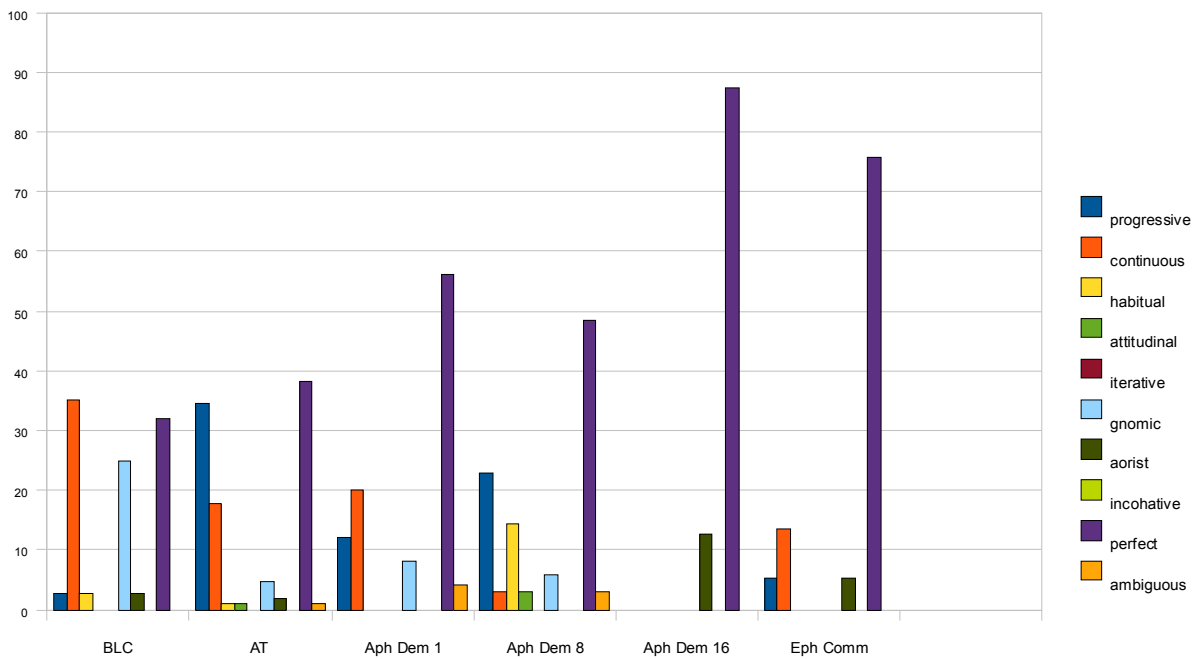


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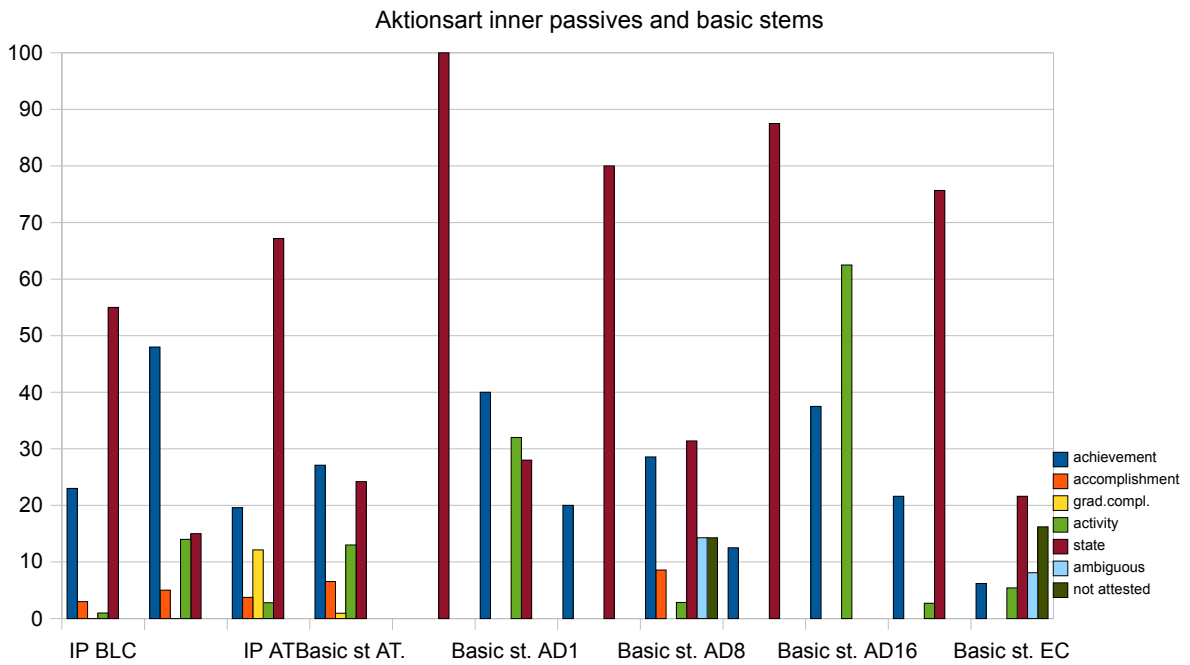
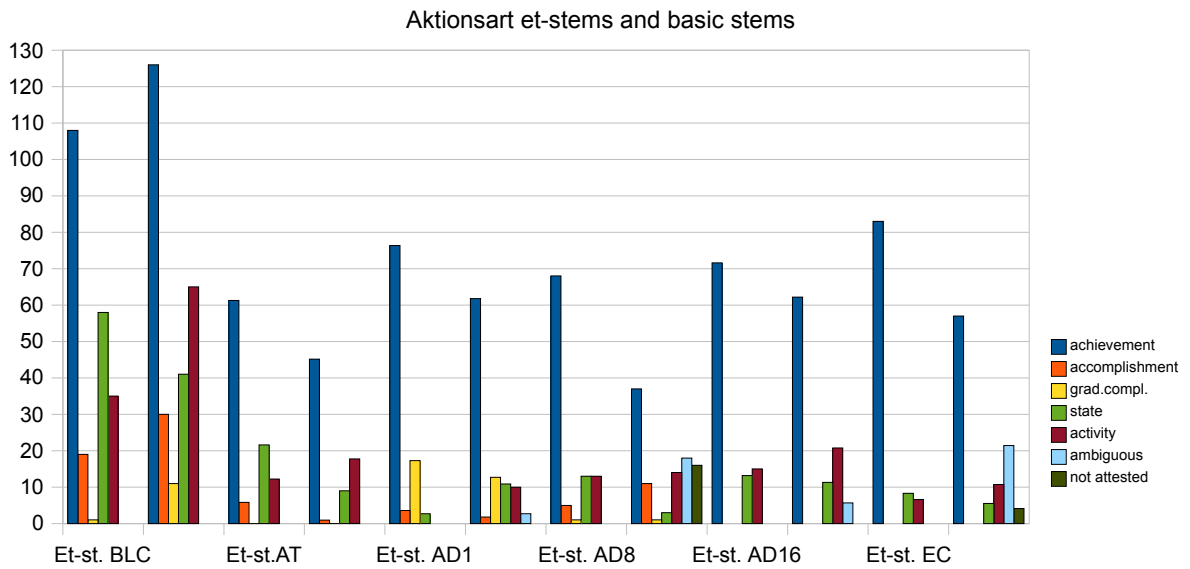
Aspectual values of the et-forms



Aspectual values of inner passives



Charts



CHAPTER 5

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS 2: COREFERENTIAL DATIVE¹

5.1 Introduction: syntactic aspects

In a number of classical Syriac texts a structure is found in which a verbal form is immediately followed by the preposition *l-* attached to a suffix pronoun coreferential with the subject of the verb. This structure is well represented in many classical Syriac works, but so far very little attention has been devoted to it in linguistic research², and hardly any in the grammatical descriptions of the Syriac language.

The verbal form can be either a basic or a derived stem, active or with *et-*prefix.

In order to give an account of this phenomenon, attention will be devoted first to its variant with *et-*stems, which is represented with particular frequency in Aphrahat's *Demonstrationes*.³

As regards voice, the verb in the structure here examined has passive value and the cluster *l- + pronominal suffix* does not express a dative, but anaphorically recalls the grammatical subject, namely the patient of the action described by the verb. Thus, for example, in Dem II 52, 11⁴ is found:

¹ This chapter contains the revision and the extension of a paper presented at the X Symposium Syriacum, held in Granada in September 2008. A shorter version will be published in the proceedings of the congress (cf. Farina (to appear)).

² The main reference studies on this topic are Joosten (1989) and Contini (1998 A), who gives an extensive review of the current bibliography on the subject. The same phenomenon has been noticed for Biblical Hebrew, and secondarily for Syriac, by Muraoka, who uses for it the term *centripetal* dative (cf. Muraoka 1978). More recently, Goldenberg (2007) has included this structure in a concise but sharp linguistic study on transitivity and diathesis.

³ Aphrahat's *Demonstrationes* contain 77,222 words (counted according to Syriac spelling). The *et-*forms followed by a coreferential dative are 91, cf. Appendix A for a complete list.

⁴ The Syriac text, the vocalization and the Latin translation, correspond to the ones provided by Parisot (1894).

Outline of Middle Voice in Syriac

1.

<i>kad</i>	<i>mṭâ</i>	<i>gêr</i>	<i>zabneh</i>	<i>d-nâmôsâ</i>	<i>ettawsap</i>	<i>leh</i>
adv. 'when'	III m. sg. pf. 'to arrive'	conj. 'for'	'time' + suff. pron. III m. sg.	rel part. + 'law'	III m. sg. pf. etp. 'to add'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III m. sg.

"(For) when the time of the law arrived, it [i.e. the law] was added".

The structure *ettawsap leh* is composed by the verbal form *ettawsap* and by the syntagm *leh*, in which the pronominal suffix refers to *nâmôsâ*, the logical subject of the verb and the patient of the action described by it. It is important to notice that this sentence is at the beginning of a new section of the text and no other possible referent for *leh* is available.

One could consider this as an impersonal structure, in which *leh* simply indicates the direct object of the verb. However, the range of structures found in the Demonstrations is more complex. In Dem II 56, 2 is found:

2.

<i>w-etmalkat</i>	<i>lâh</i>	<i>'abdûtâ</i>	<i>'al</i>	<i>zar'eh</i>	<i>d-abraham</i>
conj. 'and' + III f. sg. pf. etp. 'promise'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III f. sg.	'slavery'	prep. 'on, to'	'seed, offspring' + suff. pron. III m. sg.	rel part. + 'Abram'

"And slavery was promised to the offspring of Abram".⁵

Here the *et*-form *etmalkat* is a 3rd ps. f. sg., refers the noun *'abdûtâ*, coreferential with the pronominal suffix in *lâh*, placed right after the verb. The agreement in the feminine gender clearly shows that no impersonal structure is involved here. Likewise, in Dem II 57, 13:

3.

<i>hûšâḥawhy</i>	<i>gêr</i>	<i>d-nâmôsâ</i>	<i>etbaṭṭalw</i>	<i>l-hûn</i>
m. pl. 'use' + pron. suff. III m. sg.	conj.	rel. part. + 'law'	III m. pl. pf. etpa. of 'cease'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III m. pl.
<i>b-me'titeh</i>	<i>d-maḥyânan</i>			
prep. 'in, with' 'arrival' + pron. suff. III m. sg.	rel. part. + 'life-giving' + pron. suff. I pl.			

"For the uses of the law ceased with the arrival of our Saviour".⁶

The passages are quoted according to the column and line numbers in that edition.

⁵ Also in Dem. II 53, 23; 60, 10; 60, 14; 84, 20.

⁶ Similarly Dem II 57, 25.

In this example the agreement at the 3rd ps. m. pl. of verb, subject and suffix pronoun, indicates that this is not an impersonal structure.

5.2 Coreferential dative and *dativus ethicus*

5.2.1 The classical Syriac grammars

None of the traditional grammars of the Syriac language mentions this kind of construction. Nevertheless, traces of it can be found in some marginal observations in connection with the so-called '*dativus ethicus*'⁷. Let us consider the following remark, in Duval (1881: §305c):

Le pronom suffixe avec lāmādh se met souvent après certains verbes, comme pronom réfléchi, mais sans ajouter beaucoup au sens du verbe; on peut comparer nos verbes neutres, s'en aller, s'enfuir, se mourir; tels sont notamment *ezal leh - il s'en alla*, *'rab leh - il s'enfuit*, *npaq leh - il sortit*, *nhet leh - il descendit*, *qām leh - il se leva*, *etā leh - il vint*, *mīt leh - il mourut*, *gbā leh - il voulut*, *šṭā leh - il était insensé*, *ḥteb leh - il était assis*, *hwa leh - il exista*, *sbar leh - il pensa*, *eštakaḥ leh - il fut trouvé*, *šbaq leh - il laissa (après lui)* etc.

About this passage some observations are opportune. First of all, as regards the verbs listed by Duval, it is noteworthy that all of them but one (*eštakaḥ leh - il fut trouvé*) are *active* in form, thus they do not seem to belong to the same typology of those involved in the structure used by Aphrahat. Moreover, it is possible to point at some features common to the verbs listed above, from the semantic point of view: they all are verbs expressing motion, existence or emotion.

Observations similar to Duval's, but more systematic, are also found in Nowicki (1916). In the section of his work in which prepositions are analysed, a paragraph is devoted to the *dativus ethicus*. The scholar lists here *grosso modo* the same examples given by Duval (with specific reference to Ephrem's prose), but organized in semantic categories: *Verben der Bewegung, der Wahrnehmung, der Gemütsbewegung, die einen Mangel bezeichnen, die einen Zustand ausdrücken*. Once again, only active verbs are listed, no construction with a *et-*stem is mentioned.

⁷ On the use of which cf. Contini (1998 A).

This usage of the *dativus ethicus* has been recognized also in Biblical Hebrew by Joüon (1965), who prefers the definition of *dativus commodi*⁸:

Le *l* du dativus commodi est employé d'une façon très particulière avec le pronom de la même personne que celle du verbe. On obtient ainsi, surtout avec les verbes intransitifs (particulièrement avec les verbes du mouvement et leurs contraires) une nuance réfléchie indirecte, qui peut équivaloir à peu près à certaine nuance d'une forme verbale réfléchie (p. ex. nifal).

5.2.2 A first key to interpretation: Aphrahat's quotations from the Scriptures

Let us now examine again some examples of the structure found in Aphrahat. In two passages it occurs in quotations from the New Testament, but always with a certain degree of modification of the text, that is indeed relative to the group verb + *l*- + suff. pron.

Therefore, Dem II 52, 11 (see ex. 1. above) is related to Gal 3:19:

4.

<i>mānā</i>	<i>hakil</i>	<i>nāmōsā</i>	<i>metul</i>	<i>mastyānūtā</i>	<i>ettawsap</i>
conj. 'why'	conj. 'therefore'	'law'	con. 'because of'	'transgression'	III m. sg. pf. etp. 'to add'

"Why then the law? Because of transgression it was added".

The original passage shows a regular construction, in which the noun *nāmōsā* is the subject of a verb in a *et*-stem, with passive value: *ettawsap*. In Aphrahat's rephrasing, nevertheless, the verb is followed by *leh*, referring to the subject of the verb, assigning to it the semantic role of patient⁹. An hybrid construction arises, in between a real passive and an impersonal followed by a direct object.

Dem III 116, 24-26 presents a construction that seems to be analogous to the ones so far

⁸ Joüon (1965: §133d). In Joüon & Muraoka (2006: §133) is enriched with new bibliographical references on the topic, such as the already mentioned Muraoka (1978).

⁹ The same kind of rephrasing occurs also with the verb *npal*, in Dem V 201, 1-2 *w-kad npal leh klilā d-rīšhûn* 'cum autem cecidit corona capitis eorum', cf. with citation from Lam 5:16 in 201, 7-8 *dwây lan da-npal klilā d-rīšan* 'Vae nobis quia cecidit corona capitis nostri'.

analysed:

5.

<i>wa-b-dīnā</i>	<i>da-ṣbā</i>	<i>la-mdan</i>	<i>ettdīn</i>	<i>w-ba-kyālā</i>
conj. 'and' + prep. 'in, with' + 'judgement'	rel part. + III m. sg. pf. 'to want'	prep. 'to' + inf. 'to judge'	III m. sg. pf. ettaf. 'to judge'	conj. and' + prep. 'in, with' + 'measure'
<i>da-b'ā</i>	<i>la-mkalū</i>	<i>ettkīl</i>	<i>leh</i>	<i>w-ayk</i>
rel. part. + III m. sg. pf. 'to seek, desire'	prep. 'to' + inf. 'to measure'	III m. sg. pf. ettaf. 'to measure'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III m. sg.	conj. 'and' + conj. 'like, as'
<i>d-etthaššab</i>	<i>l-me'bad</i>	<i>et'bed</i>	<i>leh</i>	
rel. part. + III m. sg. pf. etpa. 'to think, reckon'	prep. 'to' + inf. 'to do'	III m. sg. pf. etp. 'to do'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III m. sg.	

"With the judgement with which he wanted to judged he was judged, and with the measure with which he wanted to measure he was measured, and like he planned to do it was done to him".

In this passage Aphrahat is rephrasing Mt 7:2¹⁰:

6.

<i>b-dīnā</i>	<i>gēr</i>	<i>d-daynīn</i>	<i>antūn</i>	<i>tetdīnūn</i>	
prep. 'in, with' + 'judgement'	conj.	rel. part. + part. m. pl. 'to judge'	pron. ind. II m. pl.	II m. pl. pf. ettaf. 'to judge'	
<i>w-ba-kyāltā</i>		<i>da-mkālīn</i>	<i>antūn</i>	<i>mettkīl</i>	<i>l-kūn</i>
'conj. 'and' + prep. 'in, with' + 'measure'	rel. part. + inf. part. m. pl. afel 'to measure'		pron. ind. II m. pl.	part. m. pl. ettaf. 'to mesure'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. II m. pl.

"With the judgement that (with which) you judged you will be judged and with the measure that (with which) you measured it will be measured to you".

In this case the model of the Gospel suggests a different and more complex interpretation for the construction used by Aphrahat. The author rephrases the passage in Mt 7:2 according to the context, the 2nd ps. pl. is transformed in a 3rd ps. sg. The text of the Gospel, moreover, is a literal translation from the Greek ἐν ᾧ γὰρ κρίματι κρίνετε κριθήσεσθε, καὶ ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε μετρεθήσεσθαι ὑμῶν (it will be measured to you¹¹), therefore the cluster *l-kūn* renders here a real dative. The verb *kūl*, in Syriac, is not normally followed by *l-*; on the contrary, this construction seems to be triggered by the Greek model¹².

¹⁰ Partially corresponding also to Mk 4,24 and Lk 6, 38.

¹¹ Meaning 'you will receive'. Gr. metrevw ti tini = to give portion of something to someone.

¹² For the translation techniques in early Syriac texts see Brock (1977) and Brock (1979). For the Gospel

An interesting chain of structures is thus generated in the passage of Demonstration III: a direct transitive *ettdîn* is followed by an ambiguous structure *ettkîl leh* (in which *leh* can be meant both as dative or as a *nota accuativi*) and by a final real dative *et'bed leh*, that summarizes and generalizes the two preceding statements, and is not in Mt 7:2¹³.

5.3 Coreferential dative with the other verbal stems

5.3.1 Demonstrationes

Another series of passages deserves attention. In a number of occurrences a 'dative' (*l-* + pron. suff.) coreferential with the subject of the verb follows an active verb, in stead of a *et-* form. Such a structure corresponds, therefore, to the typology described by Duval and Joüon. II 60, 13-14:

7.

<i>men</i> prep. 'from'	<i>zabnâ</i> 'time'	<i>gêr</i> conj.	<i>d-etyahbat</i> rel. part. + III f. sg. pf. etp. 'give'	<i>ḥdatâ</i> 'new'
<i>beṭlat</i> III f. sg. pf. 'cease'	<i>lâh</i> prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III f. sg.	<i>'tîqtâ</i> 'old, ancient'		

"From the time the new [Testament] was given, the old one ceased".

The verb *bṭel* 'to cease' is followed by *lâh*, referred to the subject '*tîqtâ* 'old one' (namely *dyatîqî* 'Testament', fem.).

quotations in Aphrahat see Baarda (1975).

¹³ A deeper exam would be necessary, both on the Greek and on the Syriac point of view. This passage poses interesting problems as regards the biblical sources used by Aphrahat, the translation and quotation methods and the influence of the language of the Greek original on early Syriac.

8.

<i>w-en</i>	<i>neštkaḥ</i>	<i>ne klâ</i>	<i>b-‘arqâwhy</i>	<i>d-baytâ</i>
conj. 'and' + conj. 'if'	III m. sg. ipf. etp. 'to find'	'deceit, guile'	prep. 'in' + 'beam, framework'	rel. part. + 'house'
<i>nepel</i>	<i>leh</i>	<i>kulleh</i>	<i>benyânâ</i>	
III m. sg. pf. 'fall'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III m. sg.	'all' + suff. pron. III m. sg.	'building'	

"If a deceit was found in the framework of the house, the entire building would fall down".

9.

<i>naplâ</i>	<i>lâh</i>	<i>kullâh</i>	<i>haymânûtâ</i>
part. f. sg. 'fall'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III f. sg.	'all' + suff. pron. III f. sg.	'faith'

"All faith collapses".

Dem II 84, 18 and 84, 20: the verb *npal* 'to fall' is followed by *l-* + pron. referring to the subject of the verb, in one passage in the masculine, in the other in the feminine gender.

5.3.2 The Acts of Judas Thomas

In the first seven *Acts of Thomas* thirty-seven occurrences of coreferential dative are found. Of those, only five cases are in combination with *et*-stems¹⁴.

Examining the aspectual value of the remaining thirty-two cases with *non-et*-stems, one finds that twenty-five of them have aoristic value, three of them are perfects, three progressives and one has gnomic value. One observes, therefore, a clear predominance of the aoristic aspect. This feature emerges clearly from the comparison of the following passages:

¹⁴ Namely: I, 177, 17 *eštahlap leh* 'it had changed/was transformed'; IV, 210, 2 *meštqlâ lâh mennyî* 'will be taken away from me'; VI, 220, 11 *etkses leh men ewkarisṭiya* 'he was rejected by the Eucharist'; VII, 244, 2 *lâ meštlê leh* 'he has not been forced'; VII, 248, 5 *meštrên lhen* 'are loosened'. Cf. Appendix C for a list of all the coreferential datives found in the first seven Acts.

10. AT I, 182, 11

<i>eškaḥ</i>	<i>ʿnûn</i>	<i>kad</i>	<i>yatîbîn</i>
III m. sf. pf. 'find'	pron. II pl.	adv. 'when'	ptc. pass. m. pl. 'sit'

"He found them sitting".

11. AT I, 178, 2

<i>w-kad</i>	<i>zamârtâ</i>	<i>šelmat</i>	<i>îbat</i>	<i>lâh</i>	<i>lqûbleh</i>
conj. 'and + adv. 'when'	'song'	III f. sg. pf. 'cease, end'	III f. sg. pf. 'sit'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III f. sg.	prep. 'in front of' + pron. III m. sg.

"And when the song finished she went sitting next to him".

In these two passages the same verb *îteb* 'to sit' is found. This verb, just like English 'to sit', can indicate both a state and an achievement, according to its syntactic context. In the first sentence the verb in the 'passive' participle of the basic stem and it has progressive aspect 'to be seated'. In the second sentence, in stead, the verb is in the suffix conjugation of the basic stem, followed by the coreferential dative, and it has aoristic value: It indicates the moment in which the subject (a dancer) takes place next to Judas. In 11, thus, the presence of the coreferential dative gives an aoristic nuance to the verbal root, just like in English does the adverb 'down' in 'to sit down'.

Another clear example of the aoristic value given by the coreferential dative is the following:

12. ATI, 193, 19

<i>w-pkah</i>	<i>leh</i>	<i>nûrhûn</i>
conj. 'and' + III m. sg. pf. 'to grow pale, lose flavour'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III m. sg.	'light' + pron. suff. III m. sg.

"and their light became pale".

Which can be compared with the following occurrence of the same verb, also in the basic stem of the suffix conjugation, in Aphrahat:

13. Dem XIV, 577, 21

<i>wa-byawmayhûn</i>	[...] <i>pekhat</i>	<i>melhâ</i>
conj. 'and' + prep. 'in' + 'days' + ron. suff. III m. pl.	III f. sg. pf. 'grow pale, lose flavour'	'salt'

"And in their days [sc. of the evil rulers] the salt has lost flavour".

Here the form *pekhat* is a Perfect from the aspectual point of view, and the coreferential dative is absent.

This feature of coreferential dative has already been pointed out by Joosten (1989). The scholar notices, for example, that "when a stative verb is accompanied by the DE [sc. *dativus ethicus*] it never means "to be -" but invariably "to become -"". ¹⁵ Joosten analyses and classifies the occurrences of such a structure in a corpus of early Syriac texts constituted by the *Pešiṭta* translation of the New Testament, Aphrahat's first seven *Demonstrationes* and the *Acts of Thomas*. His conclusion is that "the DE defines the content of the preceding verb-form as an *entering into the state associated with the verb*". ¹⁶ Further remarks on this theory will be presented in § 5.7.1.

For the moment it is interesting to notice that the amount of *et*-forms followed by a coreferential dative found in the Acts of Thomas is strikingly smaller than that of those found in Aphrahat. As we will see, this is also true for the other Syriac texts examined (with variable porportion). The combination of coreferential dative with the *et*-stems seems to be, therefore, a peculiar characteristic of Aphrahat's style.

5.4 First conclusions: semantic and syntactico-semantic aspects

So far it was shown how the structures with *et*-stem and those with active form followed by the so-called *dativus ethicus* or *coreferential dative* are fundamentally analogous from the formal and syntactical point of view. The two structures share the following features:

- The verb is immediately followed by the preposition *l-* (generally used to express a dative or to introduce the direct object of a verb) and by a pronominal suffix;
- the suffix pronoun is coreferential with the subject of the verb, usually already mentioned before, very close, in the sentence (in 8 and 9, nevertheless, the suffix pronoun precedes the grammatical subject).

It is anyway possible to establish also a semantic link between the structures analysed so far, that all seem to be expression of the same linguistic feature.

¹⁵ Joosten (1989: 474).

¹⁶ Joosten (1989: 475).

All the verbal forms with *et-* prefix in the passages so far analysed are passive in meaning¹⁷, both according to the semantic value of the verbal root and to the syntactical context. The subject of the verb plays the role of a patient.

The other verbs here examined share the same feature: they are highly unagentive verbs, their subject undergoes the action described, or has very low control on it. Verbs such as 'cease', 'fall' belong, in fact, to the category of unaccusatives, being characterized by low volitionality and by the fact that their subject is an object (or a patient) in the deeper structure of the sentence. This last property is morphologically expressed in the construction analysed in this paper, in the cluster *l- + pron. suff.*, in which a pronoun referring to the subject is introduced by the particle that normally precedes the direct object, in order to stress the split between (prototypical) syntactic and semantic role.

Unaccusativity can receive different morphological and syntactical expressions in the various languages, and can emerge more or less systematically (or even not emerge at all).

In the text here analysed it is possible to identify an epiphenomenon of the link existing between medio-passive morphological structures (verbal forms with *et-* prefix) and unaccusative verbal roots . Dem I 8:12-14

14.

<i>w-benyâneh</i>	<i>men</i>	<i>gallê</i>	<i>lâ</i>	<i>mettzi'</i>
conj. 'and' + 'building' + suff. pron. III m. sg.	prep. 'from, by'	'wave' pl.	neg. part. 'not'	part. m. sg. etp. 'to quake'
<i>w-men</i>	<i>rûhê</i>	<i>lâ</i>	<i>metnkê</i>	<i>w-men</i>
conj. 'and' + prep. 'from by'	'wind' pl.	neg. part. 'not'	part. m. sg. etp. 'to damage, injure'	conj. 'and' + prep. 'from by'
<i>maḥšûlê</i>	<i>lâ</i>	<i>napel</i>		
'storm' pl.	neg. part. 'not'	part. m. sg. att. 'to fall'		

"And the building is not shaken by the waves, is not damaged by the wind and does not fall because of the storm".

It is a series of parallel structures, used by the author to describe analogous situations. The first two sentences contain a participle of a *et-* form with passive value (*mettzi'*, *metnkê*), preceded by the negative particle *lâ* and by the agent, regularly expressed through the preposition *men* 'from, by' (*men gallê*, *men rûhê*). The third sentence is constituted by a participle active in form (*napel*), preceded by *lâ* and by the same group *men + noun* (*men*

¹⁷ For a complete list of all the coreferential datives occurring in the Demonstrationes cf. Farina (to appear).

maḥṣulê), indicating the agent of an action that the grammatical subject undergoes, even though expressed by an active verb. The verb *npal* is therefore treated, in this passage, the same way as the forms with *et-* prefix, both from the syntactic and semantic point of view¹⁸.

The final step of this analysis is the specification of the link between the forms with *et-* prefix and the more general category of the verbs that can be followed by a *dativus ethicus*, according to the descriptions found in Duval, Nowicki and Joüon. For this purpose it is only necessary to recall the semantic classification made by Nowicki (1916) already mentioned above: verbs of motion, perception, affection, expressing an absence, state. At least five of these classes can easily be considered as part of the unaccusative category.

5.5 Other properties of coreferential dative in the *Demonstrationes* and in other Syriac texts

5.5.1 The *Demonstrationes*

An overview of the structure in the *Demonstrationes* enlightens some other interesting feature

First of all, as already shown in ex. 6, the phenomenon is not limited to the 3rd person, but is also attested for the other persons, even if less frequently. Thus, in Dem IV 173, 23 we find the 2nd ps. m. sg. *tetbaṭṭal lāk men ṣlūtā* 'you shall cease from prayer', in Dem VII 352, 4 the 1st ps. sg. *d-dalmā enā d-l-aḥrânê akrzet enā qnûmy estlê lî* 'ne, cum ceteris praedicaverim, ipse reprobus efficiar'.

As far as voice is concerned, a minor (but relevant) number of passages shows middle or reflexive value, rather than passive. Thus, for example, in Dem VI 293, 12 *metṭamrâ lâh rūḥâ* 'spiritus absconditur' and Dem VIII 364, 25 *w-'al d-methabbal leh pagrâ* 'de corporis autem corruptione' (lit. 'of the body corrupting') are middle in meaning, rather than passive; Dem 469, 14 *wa-bnayâ ethpek w lhûn* 'filii [...] se converterunt', has middle value, but the presence of the coreferential dative makes it closer to the reflexive pole.

Finally, it is sometimes the case that the very same construction is repeated within a few lines, with and without the coreferential dative, as in Dem VI 293,12-14:

¹⁸ Another interpretation is also possible. The participles, rather than passive, could simply have middle unagentive value, whereas the preposition *men* (usually indicating an agent) could simply introduce the causer of the event, always with low volitionality. Also in this perspective, nevertheless, *et-* form participles and active participle of the verb *npal* receive the same syntactical treatment and are considered semantically analogous.

15.

<i>metṭamrā</i>	<i>lāh</i>	<i>rūḥā</i>	<i>napšānāytā</i>	<i>‘am</i>
ptc. f. sg. etp. 'to hide'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III f. sg.	'wind, spirit'	'living, animal'	prep. 'with'
<i>pagrā</i>	<i>w-regštā</i>	<i>meštaqlā</i>	<i>lāh</i>	<i>menneh</i>
'body'	and + 'perception'	ptc. f. sg. etp. 'to lift, take away'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III f. sg.	perp. 'from' + pron. suff. III m. sg.

"The animal spirit is hidden with the body and sensation is taken away from it [scil. 'the body']".

and 23-24:

16.

<i>w-rūḥā</i>	<i>napšānāytā</i>	<i>metṭamrā</i>	<i>lāh</i>
and + 'wind, spirit'	'living, animal'	ptc. f. sg. etp. 'to hide'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III f. sg.
<i>ba-kyānāh</i>	<i>w-regštā</i>	<i>meštaqlā</i>	<i>mennāh</i>
prep. 'in, with' + 'nature'	and + 'perception'	ptc. f. sg. etp. 'to lift, take away'	perp. 'from' + pron. suff. III f. sg.

"The animal spirit is hidden in its nature and sensation is taken away from it [scil. 'the spirit']".

In 11. *w-regštā meštaqlā lāh menneh*, a coreferential dative is found; a few lines after, in stead, the very same concept *w-regštā meštaqlā mennāh* is formulated without dative.

5.5.2 Other Syriac texts

As already discussed in § 5.1.2, instances of coreferential dative have been described in traditional linguistic literature, under the label *dativus ethicus*, with reference to various Syriac texts. Duval (1881) lists a number of verbs that can appear with such a construction; Nowicki (1916), in stead, analyses semantically the phenomenon only for the writings of Ephrem. Nevertheless, no specific attention has ever been devoted to the structures in which a *et*-form is involved.

A Pešitta Gospels

I will now consider the status of the phrase *et-form* + *l-* + *pron. suff.* in the *Pešittā* version of the Gospels and in Ephrem's Commentaries on Genesis and Exodus.

As far as the four Gospels are concerned, the only two examples of *et*-form+coreferential dative are: Mt 13:15 and Mk 10:14.

17.

<i>et'abî</i>	<i>leh</i>	<i>gêr</i>	<i>lebbeh</i>	<i>d-'amâ</i>	<i>hânâ</i>
III m. sg. pf. etp. 'harden, thicken'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III m. sg.	conj. 'thus'	'heart' + pron. suff. III m. sg.	rel. + 'people'	dem. pron./adj. 'this'

"The heart of those people has become insensitive".

Mt 13:15 is a quotation from Is 6:10 (also found in Acts 28:27). The quotation is almost literal and, as far as the consonantal text is concerned, the two passages are identical. Nevertheless, in the Gospel there has been an adaptation to the context, so that the imperative *et'bay* (cons. 't'by) in Isaiah has been substituted by a perfect *et'abî* (cons. 't'by) in Matthew. This can be easily verified by looking at the Hebrew text of Isaiah:

18.

<i>hašmen</i>	<i>leb</i>	<i>hâ-'âm</i>	<i>ha-zeh</i>
II m. sg. ipv. hifil 'harden, thicken'	cs. state 'heart'	art. det. + 'people'	art. det. + dem. 'this'

"Make the heart of the people become insensitive.

This slight modification has great consequences for the interpretation of the rest of the passage. In Isaiah the dative *leh* is the direct object of an imperative, the subject of which is external to the sentence (Isaiah, ordered by God). In Matthew, instead, *leh* is a coreferential dative, referred to *leb* 'heart', the subject of the perfect *et'abî* 'it has become harder'.

It is also interesting to consider the corresponding Greek text of the two passages. Both the LXX and in the quotation in Mt have: ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, with a III sg. of the indicative aorist passive of παχύνομαι 'to be made fatter'. The distinction between the two versions, found in the Syriac texts of Isaiah and Matthew respectively (and preserved by all the modern translations) is witnessed also by the Vulgate¹⁹.

In the Gospels are also found instances of coreferential dative in connection with 'basic' stems. Some examples are: Mt 2: 20, 3:2, 4:12, 4:17; Mk 4:28; Lk 8:49, 8:53, 10:34, 10:39.

¹⁹ Is. 6:10 *excaeca cor populi huius vs. incrassatum est enim cor populi huius*

Particularly interesting is Mk 4:28:

19.

<i>ar'â</i>	<i>gêr</i>	<i>maytyâ</i>	<i>lh</i>	<i>l-pi'râ</i>
'earth'	conj. 'thus'	ptc. f. sg. afel 'come'	prep. dat./obj. mark. + suff. pron. III sg.	prep. dat./obj. mark. + 'fruit'

"The earth will bring fruit".

According to the main available editions, such as Pusey (1901) the cluster *lh* is vocalized as *leh*, proleptically referred to *l-pi'râ*. Nevertheless, the Greek original and a number of translations seem to suggest a different vocalization and interpretation. The Greek has in fact: αὐτόματη ἡ γῆ καρποφορεῖ, rendered by the Vulgate as *ultro enim terra fructificat*²⁰, which point, for the Syriac text, in the direction of a dative coreferential with 'earth', rather than with 'fruit', thus to be vocalized as *lâh* (*ar'â* is feminine), in stead of *leh*.

B Ephrem's Commentaries to Genesis and Exodus

The other text that has been checked for the structure *et-form* + *l-* + *pron. suff.*, within this analysis, are Ephrem's Commentaries on Genesis and Exodus²¹. In this work the coreferential dative with *et-forms* is quite well represented, even if it is not as frequent as in the *Demonstrationes*: Ephrem's Commentaries contain 33,231 words (according to Syriac spelling) and 36 *et-stems* followed by coreferential dative.²²

5.6 Typological comparisons and Syntactivo-semantic Approach

5.6.1 Latin pleonastic reflexives

In Cennamo (1998) a Latin phenomenon is analysed, showing important affinities with the one so far described for Syriac. It is the so-called *pleonastic reflexive*: namely the use of reflexive pronouns *se/sibi* beyond their regular function of direct/indirect object markers,

²⁰ King James: 'For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself'

²¹ The text used for the analysis is the edition by Tonneau (1955).

²² Cf. Appendix B for a complete list. Cf. n. 3 for Aphrahat's *Demonstrationes*.

with a certain (variable) degree of grammaticalization (in Cennamo's terms: *Non-canonical/Pleonastic se/sibi*).²³

22. a. *Quid igitur sibi volt pater?* (Ter. Andr. 375) vs.

b. *Animus nescit quid velit* (Enn. trag. 199).

23. *Ille solemniter sibi ambulabat* (Formul. Tur. 30).

The phenomenon, as shown by the examples above, is already present in archaic Latin. Nevertheless it fully develops in the later stages of the language, when the grammaticalization process concludes and the pronoun becomes semantically completely unmotivated.²⁴ Cennamo demonstrates how in late Latin the pleonastic reflexive intervenes in a reorganization of the verbal system. Through a thorough analysis of syntactic structures and verbal categories involved in this kind of expressions, making use of the categories and the conceptual framework elaborated by the so-called *Syntactico-Semantic Approach*²⁵, the scholar shows that in late Latin, between 4th and 5th centuries A.D., pleonastic reflexives *se/sibi* become markers of split intransitivity²⁶. The structures examined can be classified according to the semantic properties of subject and verb:

Two parameters appear to be crucial in the pattern of active-like syntax we are arguing for: the nature of the surface subject, i.e., its Control (Animacy, Agentivity...) and inherent lexical aspect, in particular the notion of Telicity, although also such features as the Dynamic/Static, Cennamo (1998: 135).

²³ All the examples of this section are taken from Cennamo (1998).

²⁴ Cennamo (1998: 124): "Already from its earlier occurrences (dating back to the 3rd century A.D.) [...] and even more so later on, *sibi* appears also fully pleonastic, that is, it is no longer weakly motivated [...], but occurs in fully grammaticalized forms". The scholar gives a number of examples, for one of which Syriac can give a further confirmation. It is 37a. on p. 125, taken from Vulg. act. 28,16: *permissum est Paulo manere sibimet cum custodiente se milite*. The corresponding Greek of *sibimet* is here *kaq jeJautovn*, rendered in Syriac just with *aykâ d-zbâ* 'where he wanted'.

²⁵ Cf. Cennamo (1998) for a detailed bibliography, and particularly Van Valin (1997).

²⁶ This term indicates the phenomenon in which intransitives are morphologically or syntactically subdivided in unergatives and unaccusatives.

Moreover, these structures are distributed along a gradient, exemplified in Cennamo (1998: 136, tab. 2).

High unaccusatives are characterized by the presence of all parameters but Control, as with change of state verbs, having the features telic, dynamic, concrete, -Control. Low Unaccusativity on the other hand is characterized by the absence of the above-mentioned parameters [...]. High unergatives, on the other hand, denote atelic, dynamic, concrete situation with an Actor subject.

The correlation with telicity, as we will see in § 5.7.1, emerges also from Joosten (1989)'s observations on Syriac coreferential dative.

5.6.2 A possible origin of the Latin and Syriac phenomena?

The comparison between the Latin phenomenon studied by Cennamo and the use of the coreferential dative in Syriac can be further developed, revealing other analogies.

If one observes the examples given for *Non-canonical/Pleonastic se/sibi*, one notices that many of these are characterized by a certain degree of emphasis, th

are emphatically marked, compared to their equivalents without reflexive pronoun. That is the case, for example, with the *suo sibi* forms:

24. *ita nunc ignorans suo sibi servit patri* (Plaut. *Capt.*, 50)

25. *suo sibi suco vivunt* (sc. coclae) (id.81)

26. *suo sibi gladio hunc iugulo* (Ter. *Ad.* 957) ecc.²⁷

In all these passages the pleonastic reflexive is used to underline the exceptional character of the event described. The same can be said for the cluster *sibi + adj.*:

27. *sed solus sibi immotus Atreus constat atque... deos terret minantes* (Sen. *Thy.* 703-4)²⁸

And also for the equivalents of *per se*:

²⁷ Cf. Cennamo (1998: 118-119).

²⁸ Cennamo (1998:120).

28. *nam scorpio sibi ipse pulcherrimum medicamentum est* (Cels. 5, 27, 5)²⁹ etc.

In Cennamo (1998) no reference is made to phenomena of emphasis that, anyway, are not relevant for that analysis. Nevertheless, if compared with what is found in Aphrahat, the Latin examples can contribute to build a hypothesis for the possible origins of coreferential dative in Syriac.

As it was already mentioned before, some examples of coreferential dative on Aphrahat's *Demonstrationes*, are found in quotations of biblical passages, modified by the author according to the context³⁰. Such passages can be used for a comparison, in order to individuate another function of coreferential dative. Dem II 52, 10-11 is based on Gal 3:19, but the biblical passage is rephrased with the addition of the coreferential dative. The same is true for Dem V 201, 1-2, based on Lam 5:16. This time both the rephrasing and the literal quotation³¹ from the Bible are found in Aphrahat's text, at close distance.

It is evident, from the examples given, that the quotations by Aphrahat differ from the original biblical text because of the presence of the coreferential dative³².

Let us now consider the context of such quotations. Aphrahat's *Demonstrationes* are a doctrinal text. They are set in the framework of a long epistle, as a response to an *epistola interrogatoris*. The author, addressing his interlocutor with the second person singular, explains some essential points of Christian faith and provides a clue for the understanding and interpretation of the Scriptures.

Be the *epistola interrogatoris* a literary fiction or not, the strong rhetoric character and the persuasive purpose of the text are evident. The *Demonstrationes* are also referred to as *Homiliae* (cf., e.g., the title of the edition by Wright 1869³³).

Dem II 52,11 is part of a section in which Aphrahat discusses the statement *Iustus non est lex posita sed impiis* (I Tim I,9). The law, therefore, has not always existed, but was

²⁹ Cennamo (1998:120).

³⁰ The problem of biblical quotations in the early Syriac texts is quite complex and still a matter of debate, both as regards translation techniques and the kind of text that the author had at their disposal. For Aphrahat, cf. Baarda (1975).

³¹ The Pešitta text of Lam 5:16 is actually simply *npal klîlâ d-rîšan*.

³² This is not always the case. The coreferential dative is in some instances already present in the biblical source, be it in the Old or the New Testament. In Dem XXI 957, 19,23 the coreferential dative *mîtw lhûn* 'they died' is already in the original text of the Pešittâ of Ex 4:19.

³³ For the various names given to Aphrahat's work see Baarda (1975: 9-10), Forget (1882: 131).

introduced by God because of the transgression of mankind. Through a series of biblical examples, the author aims at proving that *si iustitia apud homines permansisset, opus lege non fuisset*³⁴. Therefore, the sentence in II 52,11 is not just the description of an obvious fact, but the emphatic stating of an interpretation that Aphrahat wants the reader to share. Thus the text goes on: *Legem enim additionem esse [Scriptura] demonstravit*³⁵. The Syriac text of Gal 3:19 is a faithful reproduction of the Greek original.

In Dem V 201 the mechanism of the quotations is more complicated, but can be neglected for the purpose of this analysis. At the lines 1-2, the cluster *npal leh* is used to introduce a sudden event, interrupting a static situation previously described: the king of Cherubs rises over his people, sitting at his feet, in his shade. The function of the coreferential dative is here to emphasize an unexpected event.

In the light of what has been exposed so far, it is possible to hypothesize, both for Syriac and Latin coreferential dative, an original emphatic value, that has been lost in time, through the increasing grammaticalization of the pronoun. A variable degree of emphasis and markedness is still present in such structures, that often keep a rhetorical function³⁶. Nevertheless they progressively reach the status of standard construction, at least when combined with some verbal categories.

Another observation can be made, with respect to the origin of Syriac coreferential dative. According to Kemmer (1993), the origin of middle markers is often to be found in the extension of reflexive markers. From the expression of coreferentiality *stricto sensu*, between Agent and Patient of a transitive action, the marker is progressively extended to other domains that relate to middle voice, rather than to reflexivity. As was shown in chapters 1 and 3, Syriac has a system of reflexive markers based on the use of pronominal suffixes, connected with prepositions determined by the governing verb.

The preposition *l-* is widely used in Syriac, as a marker of direct and indirect object and as such is one of the most frequent markers of reflexivity. On the basis of this observation, it is thus possible to see coreferential dative also as an original reflexive marker that has progressively extended its scope towards middle voice and has been then grammaticalized in a new function of middle voice marker.

³⁴ Dem II, 47.

³⁵ Dem II 52, 12

³⁶ For the emphatic origin of the markers of coreferentiality, cf. also what Kemmer (1993: 47) says about the origin of reflexive markers. The scholar also admits the possibility of intermediate stages in the grammaticalization of the markers, in which the emphatic function is preserved to a certain extent.

The group *l-+pron. suff., per se*, is still a marker of reflexivity, but, in the specific syntactico-semantic context discussed in this section, it has developed into a middle voice marker.

5.7 Concluding remarks

5.7.1 Coreferential dative and Aspect

In § 5.3.2 reference was made to the study on *dativus ethicus* by Joosten (1989). The author notices that the structure is mainly associated with verbs indicating a state (or expressing an action eventually resulting into a state) and believes that the function of the DE is precisely that of signalling ‘entering into a state’ (p. 482). He also gives a list of all the verbs occurring in this kind of structure, organized in categories (pp. 476-478). All the *et*-forms are listed together, under the label of ‘passives’, but without any attention to their quantity and specific relevance.

Moreover, the author gives important data about the distribution of the coreferential dative with respect to the various verbal tenses. It appears that there is an incompatibility of the structure with compound tenses constructed with the participle, whereas it is diffused with all the other narrative and perfective tenses. Joosten concludes: “This indicates that the use of the DE is incompatible with the notion of durativity” Joosten (1989): 489.

Here a brief terminological digression is required. In his article Joosten speaks of *Aktionsart* and *Phasenaktionsart*, concepts that, as was shown in chapter 2, belong to the inherent semantics of the various verbal roots. Nevertheless, the value that the author attributes to the coreferential dative rather belongs the aspectual domain: The verbs followed by coreferential dative seem to be mainly aoristic. This distinction is important, because it allows also to individuate two different levels at which coreferential dative can be examined:

- a) the semantics of the verbs with which it occurs;
- b) the properties of the sentences in which it can be found.

To the first level relate the semantic categories with which coreferential dative can be found, according to Joosten: statives, intransitives indicating change of state, motion verbs, *et*-forms. As was shown earlier, all these categories can also be defined as *unaccusative*.

To the second level belongs instead the remark that coreferential dative is not found with participial compounds indicating an ongoing process, but rather with ‘narrative’ and ‘perfective’ verbal tenses.

Is it possible to individuate the connection between the two levels? According to Joosten the underlying property binding all examples of coreferential dative is that they express 'entering into a state'. In terms of Actionality, one can say that the verbs followed by coreferential dative are *telic*.³⁷ It was also shown in the previous chapters and here in § 5.6.1 that telicity is also one of the features of unaccusatives.

As we saw in chapter 2, telicity has tendentially a greater compatibility with perfective Aspect and perfective tenses, although it can in principle be combined also with the imperfective ones³⁸. This explains why, in the Acts of Thomas, the majority of coreferential dative occurring with *non-et*-stems have aoristic value. And this also explains Joosten findings about the distribution of the phenomenon with respect to the verbal tenses.

5.7.2 Coreferential dative and the Aramaic background of the New Testament

In Black (1967), a study on the Aramaic background of the New Testament, a paragraph is dedicated to the possible traces of the *dativus ethicus* in the NT Greek. There the following remark is found:

The place of reflexives in the Semitic languages is largely taken by the *dativus ethicus*, a very common construction in Aramaic. It is not unknown in Greek, where it is usually classed as an extension of the *dativus commodi* or *incommodi*, but it is rare as compared with Aramaic usage, where it is a means of stressing the action of the subject and corresponds more to the Greek Middle than to the *dativus commodi*. Black (1967): 102.

Black appears fully conscious of the connection between the *dativus ethicus* and the values traditionally associated with middle voice. He does not develop his observation any further (being it beyond his scopes), but he gives a list of interesting examples of datives in the Greek text that are better explained as literal rendering of Aramaic *dativi ethici*, thus proving

³⁷ Cf. in this respect, Joosten's observation that "With regard to the term *Phasenaktionsart*, it is necessary to specify one more point. The phase of action on which the DE focuses attention is never viewed as a process, but as a limit, a terminus" (Joosten 1989: 487).

³⁸ In this respect, Joosten's statement that "the use of the DE is incompatible with the notion of durativity": 489 is rather drastic.

to be fully aware of the precise usages and function of such structures.

5.7.3 Contini's analysis of coreferential dative as a middle voice marker

The functions of the coreferential dative have been described and analysed already by Contini (1998 A). In the first part of the study, the scholar gives a broad overview of the phenomenon in various Semitic (and also non-Semitic) languages, including references to the major studies on the matter. The scholar clearly shows the difference existing between proper *dativus ethicus* and coreferential dative. Contini also underlines the fact that all the various values and usages of such a dative are better understood if connected to the category of middle voice:

nonostante la coincidenza formale di questi pronomi con i corrispondenti riflessivi, proprio nella combinazione con verbi intransitivi il vero carattere di questi sintagmi si rivela consistere nell'espressione di una più intensa partecipazione del soggetto all'azione, ovvero della sfera semantica della diatesi media. Contini (1998 A: 86).

Contini's idea is that coreferential dative serves as a middle voice marker "nell'espressione di una più intensa partecipazione del soggetto all'azione"³⁹, in absence of a precise morphological category in the verbal system.

The main object of Contini's study is Pre-Christian Aramaic, therefore the Syriac phenomenon is only shortly examined in the preliminary overview. Nevertheless, the perspective that such a study offers on the different Aramaic dialects (and also on parallel phenomena in Biblical Hebrew) gives a very important insight on the underlying semantic processes that surface to a different extent in the various languages.

³⁹ Contini (1998 A: 87).

CHAPTER 6

DIATHESIS AND MIDDLE VOICE IN MEDIEVAL SYRIAC GRAMMARS¹

6.1 *The translation of the Téchne by Huzaya*

6.1.1 *Diathesis of the verb*

In the VI century the Syriac grammarian (*maqryānā* ‘teacher of reading’) Huzaya wrote a translation² of the *Téchne Grammatiké*, controversially attributed to Dionysius Thrax (grammarian and philologist of the II cent. b.C.)³.

The most accessible source of such a translation is the text given in the appendix of the history of Syriac grammar by Merx⁴.

Recently Contini⁵ has proposed an interesting analysis of some passages of Huzaya’s text, that will be discussed in this chapter.

Not all of the Greek original has been rendered into Syriac by Huzaya: the sections on orthography and phonology, for example, are missing. On the other hand, the translator has inserted a few remarks and explanations that are not found in the Greek text. According to Contini the omission of some parts can be due to the difficulty of applying to the Syriac language categories that are conceived specifically for the description of Greek:

¹ This chapter partially reproduces and extends the material published in Farina (2008).

² Or, in Contini’s words, an *adaptation*, cf. Contini (1998 B).

³ The attribution of this work to Dionysius has been a matter of debate from antiquity until nowadays. Cf. the three important contributions by V. Di Benedetto (1958, 1959, 1973). For an overview of the main current hypothesis cf. also Law (1995).

⁴ Merx (1889). Cf. Appendix 2 A for the list of the codicological sources.

⁵ Contini (1998 B).

... l'omissione dei capp. 2-10 (che trattano di questioni ortografiche, fonologiche e prosodiche) si spiega facilmente con la sensibile divergenza fonologica tra il greco e l'aramaico - oltrech  con l'esistenza di una tradizione siriana indigena di notazione ortoepica che in parte suppliva alla mancanza di sistemi organici di vocalizzazione ...⁶

The section on diathesis has been nevertheless translated by Huzaya, who uses the following terminology⁷:

- *qy m * 'positions': διαθήσεις;
- *ma* 'bd n t  'activity, action':  ν ργεια (active);
- *ħaš * 'suffering, passion': πάθος (passive);
- *meš* 'ay t  'mediatio, medietas': μεσότης (middle).

The term μεσότης is thus translated with *meš* 'ay t , related to the verb *mša* 'to be in the middle' a good literal rendering. This term, according to the *Thesaurus Syriacus* is used:

- a. in the sense of Latin *mediatio, interventio*, for example in juridical lexicon, or in idiomatic expressions meaning 'by means of', also in composition with the preposition *b-*;
- b. less frequently in the sense of Latin *medietas, media pars*.

A number of quotations in the *Thesaurus Syriacus*⁸ are from grammatical texts or lexica. It is interesting to notice that in none of them does the term *meš* 'ay t  appear to have a meaning analogous to 'middle voice' or even related to the area of verbal diathesis. In the grammar of Amira⁹, for example, it is used in the second sense, in the compound *meš* 'ay t sy m  lit.

⁶ Contini (1998: 100).

⁷ Translations according to Payne Smith (1903) and Payne Smith (1879, from now on *Thesaurus Syriacus*).

⁸ *Thesaurus Syriacus*: 2194.

⁹ *Grammatica Syriaca sive chaldaica Georgii Michaelis Amirae*, Romae 1596.

‘position of the middle’ to indicate (almost literally) *interjection*¹⁰. Finally, in the lexica of Bar Bahlul and Bar Ali, the term is rendered with various terms from the Arabic root *wṣṭ* ‘middle, midst’.

As already noticed by Talmon¹¹: ‘Many of the terms used in his translation have not been taken over by later grammarians, such as the names of the nominal cases, the term *mṣalyutâ*¹² [sic!] (*mesótes*) “middle voice of the verb”...’.

According to what follows in the Greek original, the three categories are briefly exemplified. The whole passage is thus¹³:

Diatheseis (lit. *qyâmê*, ‘positions’) are three: the active (*ma‘bdânûtâ*), the passive (*ḥašâ*) and the middle one (*meṣ‘ayûtâ*). The active is like ‘I hit’ (*maḥê ‘nâ*), ‘I do’ (*‘âbed ‘nâ*), ‘I write’ (*kateb ‘nâ*). The passive is like ‘I am hit’ (*metmhê ‘nâ*), ‘I am done’ (*met‘bed ‘nâ*), ‘I am written’ (*metkteb ‘nâ*). The middle is that which is ‘posed’ [>expressed, conveyed] sometimes by the active and sometimes by the passive, like ‘I travelled’ (*rbêt*), ‘I went’ (*helket*), ‘I sat’ (*yetbet*), ‘I ran’ (*reḥtet*), ‘I passed’ (*‘ebret*).

The corresponding original Greek text is the following:

διαθέσεις εἰσὶ τρεῖς ἐνέργεια, πάθος, μεσότης· ἐνέργεια μὲν οἶον τύπτω, πάθος δὲ οἶον τύπτομαι, μεσότης, δὲ ἢ ποτὲ μὲν ἐνέργειαν ποτὲ δὲ πάθος παριστάσα, οἶον πέπηγα διέφθορα, ἐποισάμην, ἐγραψάμην.¹⁴

The passage has been shortly analysed by Contini, who observes:

¹⁰ According to Payne Smith (1903: 375), the same compound can also indicate a preposition.

¹¹ Talmon (2000: 337).

¹² The consonantal misreading *mṣalyutâ* for *meṣ‘ayûtâ*, found in the Berlin ms., can be easily explained by the close resemblance of the Syriac letters *‘ayn* and *lâmâd*.

¹³ Cf. Appendix 2 A, ll. 5-7 for the Syriac text, Merx (1889: 60*).

¹⁴ Uhlig (1883: 46).

La definizione del medio è tradotta in modo goffo, ma è inequivocabilmente volta a darne un'accezione esclusivamente semantica (“è espresso da” vs. *παριστάσα* “che esprime” dell'originale), come si conviene a una categoria verbale che non ha rilevanza morfologica in siriano: e gli esempi proposti scollegati come sono da quelli della *Vorlage*, si giustificano solo nella loro indubbia compatibilità con una “semantica media”.¹⁵

[...] In vari casi (composizione nominale e preposizionale, diatesi) si è mostrato come l'adattamento siriano, pur non limpido nell'espressione, di fatto nasconda intuizioni rispettabili sulla morfologia della sua lingua materna¹⁶

The scholar highlights here the most important feature of this passage: the middle is not indicated here as a morphological category that conveys a number of meanings (as in the Greek original), but as a semantic category that can be expressed either by the active or by the passive. In stead of the Greek *παριστάσα* ‘expressing’, Huzaya uses the *etpa* ‘al participle *metqaymānā* of the verb *qīm*: ‘posed, expressed’.¹⁷

A few further remarks need to be added.

As noticed by Contini, the examples that follow the definitions are not mere translations of the Greek ones. Nevertheless, the distribution of the Syriac examples, with respect to the Greek ones, is even more complex: Huzaya picks three lexemes (*τύπτω* / *πέπηγα*¹⁸, *ποιέω*, *γράφω*) of which he gives the active and the corresponding ‘passive’ *et-* forms. The equivalents of such lexemes, in the Greek original, belong to the series illustrating the ‘middle voice’, and have been moved to the active and passive categories. The ‘middle’, instead, has

¹⁵Contini (1998 B).

¹⁶Contini (1998: 109).

¹⁷As regards the Greek *παριστάσα*, the term occurs twice in the section over the verb. The first time it is used in the general definition of *verb*: ‘Ῥῆμα ἔστι λέξις [...] ἐνέργειαν ἢ πάθος παριστάσα. The second occurrence is the one mentioned above, in the definition of diathesis. In the Syriac translation, however, two different forms are found. In the first case, in the general definition of the verb, we find the nomen agentis *mqaymānā* ‘constituent, one who establishes’. In the second case, as noticed by Contini, an *et*-participle form of the same root, with passive meaning, is chosen. This confirms Contini’s observation over the consciousness with which the translator chose the terminology, adapting it to the characteristics of the Syriac language.

¹⁸In the light of my further observations, I think that the underlying Greek verb is here *πέπηγα*, rather than *τύπτω*.

been illustrated through a number of verbs lexically independent from the Greek ones. All of them are motion verbs.

More important, although middle can be considered, and is considered by modern scholars, a specific morphological category in ancient Greek, the examples given in the *Téchne Grammatiké* are not homogeneous with respect to morphology, being in part radical perfects, with *active* endings and intransitive meaning¹⁹ (πέπηγα, διέφτορα); in part aorists of the (later) sigmatic formation, with ‘middle’ endings²⁰ (ἐποιησάμεν, ἐγραψάμην). The typical ‘middle’ ending -μαι instead, is used²¹ in the illustration of the passive (τύπτομαι).

The middle diathesis is described as a category of verbs that ‘sometimes’ (ποτε) stand for active, sometimes for passive meaning. The four verbs used to illustrate such a definition, as just noticed, differ from the morphological point of view mainly because two of them have active endings and two of them middle endings. Nevertheless, two features unite all of them:

•they can be used either intransitively, with what we would call medio-passive or medio-reflexive meaning or transitively (πέπηγα ‘I was stuck, fastened’ / ‘I stuck / I became solid’, διέφτορα ‘I was destroyed’ / ‘I destroyed’, ἐποιησάμεν ‘I was made’ / ‘I made for my self’, ἐγραψάμην ‘I was written’ / ‘I wrote myself’)²²;

¹⁹ It is important to note that πέπηγα and διέφτορα can be used both transitively and intransitively (with medio-passive value).

²⁰ Also these two verbs at the middle aorist can have both passive and middle-reflexive meaning (‘I made for my self, I wrote myself).

²¹ A fact that could be related to the developments of late and modern Greek. Cf. for example the thorough description in Robertson (1934). More specifically Ch. VIII, par. VI, p. 334 (e) *The Passive supplanting the Middle*: “In the modern Greek the middle has no distinctive form save λύσον (cf. λῶσαι) and this is used as passive imperative second singular. Elsewhere in the aorist and future the passive forms have driven out the middle. These passive forms are, however, used sometimes in the middle sense, as was true of ἀπέκριθε, for instance, in the N. T. the passive forms maintain the field in modern Greek and appropriate the meaning of the middle. We see this tendency at work in the N. T. and the *koine* generally. Since the passive used the middle forms in all other tenses, it was natural that in these two [namely, in the aorist and future] there should come uniformity also. The result of this struggle between the middle and passive in the aorist and future was an increasing number of passive forms without the distinctive passive idea”. If this connection is correct, that could be an argument in favour of a later dating at least of this section of the *Téchne*. From a different perspective, one could also interpret it as the emergence of a feature of the spoken language (therefore not necessarily late), as opposed to the classical and literary use (this second hypothesis was suggested to me by prof. Romano Lazzeroni, from Pisa University).

²² Cf. Liddell-Scott (1978)

•they may show a contradiction between morphology and meaning (the first two active morphology and passive meaning, the second two passive morphology²³ and active meaning).

These two characteristic of the examples given in the *Téchne*, caused in later commentators (at least)²⁴ two different interpretations of the passage.

According to the first one, the passage of the *Téchne* says that there can be a contradiction between the morphology and the semantic value of the verb. Thus, in Sophronius the following remark, clearly connected with the passage of the *Téchne*, is found:

Διαθέσεις εἰσὶ τρεῖς, ἐνέργεια πάθος μεσότης· καὶ ἐνέργεια μὲν ἔστιν, ἥνικα τις δρᾶ, οἷον τύπτω, πάθος δέ, ἥνικα τις πάσχει, οἷον τύπτομαι, μεσότης δὲ ἡ τοῖς αὐτοῖς χαρακτηῖται ποτὲ μὲν δρᾶσιν ποτὲ δὲ πάθησιν σημαίνουσα, οἷον πέπηγα διέφθορα ἐποησάμην ἔγραψα μὴν. Ἰστέον δὲ ὅτι ἔστι τινα ῥήματα ἐναντίον ἔχοντα τῇ φωνῇ τὸ σημαίνόμενον, οἷον παύσχω ἀποθνήσκω.²⁵

Along the same lines is the following remark found in *Stephanos*:²⁶

ἡ γὰρ τοῦ ἐγραψάμην φωνὴ δύναται σημαίνειν καὶ πάθος καὶ ἐνέργειαν, εἰ τὴν ἀρμόζουσαν σύνταξιν λάβοι·

The second interpretation is that the same morphological elements may convey different meanings. This interpretation may be found in the *Etymologicum magnum* (IX cent.):

²³ According to the definition of passive given in the *Téchne* in the same passage.

²⁴ The treatment of middle diathesis in the scholia to the *Téchne* is very interesting and complex, involving different linguistic and philosophical issues. We will here mention only the ones that are relevant for the understanding of the Syriac interpretation of the Greek passage. For an overview of the problem, and a summary of the main interpretations of the ancient authors, cf. Lallot (1989: 166-167).

²⁵ Uhlig (1878): pars quarta, 4.2, p. 411.

²⁶ Hilgard (1901), Scholia Vaticana in artis Dionysianae: 245. The preceding text says: “because grammar is accurate in everything and nothing in it remains neglected, necessarily also the third [sc. diathesis], the middle one, has been mentioned, the one that each diathesis indicates by means of the *phoné*”.

τὸ λέλογα καὶ πέφραδα ἐνεργητικὴν ἔχει σημασίαν· τὸ δὲ τέθηπα καὶ διέφθορα, παθητικὴν· οἱ αὐτοὶ γὰρ σχηματισμοὶ καὶ ἐπὶ ἐνέργειαν λαμβάνονται καὶ ἐπὶ πάθους.²⁷

The interpretation of this passage of the *Téchne*, that has been given here, is also supported by the commentary in Lallot (1989: 166-167).

The aim of this digression was to show that, even though the theoretical framework in the Greek text presupposes a morphological category of ‘middle’ able to express certain meanings, the examples that follow contradict such a framework and are along the same line as the Syriac ones. Moreover, the remarks of the various scholiasts show that a semantic interpretation of the verbal category of middle was very well possible and diffused in the late antiquity.

From all the previous observations three main conclusions can be drawn, as regards the conception that Huzaya had of ‘middle diathesis’:

1. it as a category that could be applied to Syriac verb;
2. it can be expressed sometimes by active and sometimes by passive forms;
3. it is related to motion verbs.

Observing the motion verbs used to exemplify *middle diathesis*, it is possible to notice that:

- they are all quoted at the active (basic) stem. No *et-* stem is used to exemplify the ‘middle’. Moreover, for the verbs listed, the *et-* stems are either unattested or

²⁷ (Kallierges 754,26). Source: *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae (TLG)*. As regards διέφθορα, it is also mentioned in the *De diversis verborum significationibus* (Περὶ διαφόρους σημασίας) n. 46, as a form that can have two different meanings, in terms of diathesis:

(46.) <διέφθαρται> καὶ διέφθορε διαφέρει. διέφθαρται μὲν ὑφ’ ἑτέρων, διέφθορε δὲ ἕτερον. Ἀριστοφάνης fr. 568 K. ἐν Ὠραϊς· διέφθορας τὸν ὄρκον ἡμῶν.

Μένανδρος ἐν < A > δελφοῖς fr. 5 Keo.—Th.²

εἰ δ’ ἔστιν οὗτος τὴν κόρην διέφθορώς°.

Ὀμηρὸς II. xv 128

ῥφρένας ἤλε, διέφθορας°,

ἀντὶ τοῦ διέφθορακας εαυτοῦ τὰς φρένας.

Source: *TLG*.

marginal, with specific secondary meaning, with the exception of the *et-* stems of *îteb*, that are nevertheless quite ambiguous with respect to diathesis;

- two of them belong to an ‘intransitive vowel pattern’²⁸;
- the *qtîl* participle has active value for *rhēt*, while for *rdâ* and ‘*bar* has passive value but only for peripheral meanings of the verbs (respectively *eruditus* and *superductus*). It is not attested for *hlak* and *îteb*;
- from the semantic point of view, all the verbs quoted by Huzaya belong to the category of *unaccusatives*²⁹.

6.1.2 Diathesis of the noun

The passage analyzed so far is not the only one in which diathesis is mentioned in Huzaya’s grammar. Following the Greek model, in fact, the translator has indicated it also as a feature of the noun³⁰:

Diatheseis of the word are two: active (*ma’bdânûtâ*) and passive (*hašâ*). Active is like ‘judge’ (*dayânâ*), that judges (*da’en*, active *p’al* participle), while passive is like ‘judged’ (*mettdînânâ* verbal noun), that is judged (*metdîn*, *etp’el.* participle).

Which is clearly a literal translation of the passage in the *Téchne* (stigmatized by the following tradition):

οὐ δὲ ὀνόματος διαθέσεις εἰσὶ δύο, ἐνέργεια καὶ πάθος, ἐνέργεια μὲν ὡς κριτῆς ὁ κρίνον, πάθος δὲ ὡς κριτός ὁ κρινόμενος.³¹

²⁸ Muraoka (2005: §55-56).

²⁹ For a definition of this linguistic category see, among others, Perlmutter (1978) and Van Valin (1990).

³⁰ Cf. Appendix 2 B for the Syriac text Merx (1889: 59*).

³¹ Uhlig (1883: 46). On which the Scholiast comments:

Διαθέσεις μᾶλλον τῷ ῥήματι ἔπονται, καὶ οὐ τῷ ὀνόματι· ἀλλ’ ἐπειδὴ ῥηματικὰ εἰσὶν ὀνόματα ἔχοντα καὶ τὰς ἀπὸ τῶν ῥημάτων διαθέσεις, διότι ἐνεργείας ἢ πάθους εἰσὶ σημαντικά, τούτου χάριν

As will be shown further on in this work, this remark has a tradition throughout the Syriac grammar, and will be included and differently developed among others by Bar Šakku and Bar Hebraeus. Merx³² had already individuated the Greek text as the possible source for Bar Hebraeus, but without any reference to Huzaya's translation.

6.2 *Diathesis in the grammar of Bar Zu'bî*

Several centuries after the translation of Huzaya, in the XII and XIII centuries, other grammars of Syriac are found, that follow the Greek model of the *Téchne*. Nevertheless such works are not translations anymore, but in various manners their authors modify their structure and terminology, according to the features of the Syriac language.

The philosophical and grammatical reflection has progressed, and the Arabic cultural influence has given new impulse to the linguistic thought, even though without directly shaping all the grammars of Syriac. As will be shown in next paragraph, to the XII century dates the first attempt of application of the categories elaborated in the Arabic environment³³ to the Syriac language.

Nevertheless, the imprint of the *Téchne* is still predominant in many important works of this period.

τοῦ ὀνόματος εἶπεν εἶναι τὰς διαθέσεις. Πλὴν μεμπτός ἐστὶν οὕτως ἀποφηνάμενος, ὀφείλων μᾶλλον οὕτως εἰπεῖν, ἔστι δὲ ὅτε καὶ διαθέσεις ὀρῶνται ἐν ὀνόμασι ῥηματικοῖς οὖσιν, ὅσον παρὰ τὸ κριταὶ γίνεται ὄνομα κριτῆς καὶ κριτός, ὧν τὸ μὲν εἰς ἐνέργειαν ἀναλύεται, τὸ δὲ εἰς πάθος· κριτῆς μὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν ὁ κρινῶν, ὃ σημαίνει ἐνέργειαν, κριτός δὲ ὁ κρινόμενος, ὅπερ πάθος δηλοῖ. {Hilgard, 1901 #165}: 70.

³² Merx (1889: 240).

³³ Of course, also the Arabic linguistics have been strongly based on a Greek model. But the Aristotelian conception has prevailed on the grammatical approach of the *Téchne*. A clear and elegant (although a bit rigid) sketch of the relation between Arabic and Greek linguistics, also with respect to Syriac tradition, is found in Merx (1889: 137-157) et passim. On the relationship between Greek and Arabic linguistic thought and grammatical tradition, cf. the capital work by Versteegh (1977). Merx's reconstruction has been criticized (sometimes maybe too eagerly) by Elamrani - Jamal (1983). Through an overview of the classic Arabic philosophical sources, the author shows how the idea of a direct filiation of Arabic linguistics from Aristotelian logics is, in many respects, problematic and superficial.

The grammar of Bar Zu‘bî (beginning of XIII century), recently studied and partially published by Georges Bohas³⁴, is also inserted along this line of the tradition.

From the account given by Bohas it appears that Bar Zu‘bî mentions diathesis as one of the ‘accidents’³⁵ or types of affixes of the verb.³⁶

The types of affixes (*naqîpwâtâ*) that attach to the verb are seven: genders, numbers, tenses, persons, diatheseis, schemes [Gr. *schêma*, form], modes”.

From this passage it is already possible to notice a first difference from Huzaya’s text, as regards diathesis: the term is rendered here by (*aynâyûtâ*)³⁷ ‘quality’, whereas Huzaya used a more literal translation of the Greek term *diathesis* (Greek root **thē* ‘put, set’).

Furthermore, when treating specifically of diathesis, Bar Zu‘bî indicates for Syriac only the active and the passive diathesis ‘*diatheseis* (*aynaywâtâ*) are two: active (*m‘abdânûtâ*) and passive (*ḥašûštâ*)’. No reference to a ‘middle’ diathesis is made. As observed by Bohas (p. 67): ‘pour lui [scil. Bar Zu‘bî], il n’y a pas à parler en syriaque de diathèse moyenne’.

Examples of the two *diatheseis* follow:³⁸

And the active is like: ‘he spoils’³⁹, ‘he judges’, ‘he builds’ [basic stem of *bny*], ‘he restores’ [intensive stem of *bny*], ‘he orders’ [basic of *pqd*], ‘he commands’ [intensive of *pqd*], ‘he presses’, ‘he inherits’, ‘to bring in’ [causative stem of *ʔ*], ‘he relieves’ [causative stem of *nwh*], ‘he throws, puts down’ [causative stem of *rm*’], ‘he declares *sacer*’ [causative stem of *hrm*, basic stem unattested], ‘he delays’ [causative stem of unattested base *wḥd*], ‘he

³⁴ Cf. among others, Bohas (2003: 54-86).

³⁵ *naqîpwâtâ*. The term means literally ‘affixes, adjuncts’. Nevertheless this translation appears inexact with respect to modern linguistic terminology, therefore I have opted for the unelegant phrase ‘types of affixes’, which at least describes appropriately the categories listed in the subsequent lines. For a discussion of the problem cf. Bohas (2003: 56), where the term ‘accidents’ is chosen, in line with Brockelmann. Personally I am not sure that such an abstraction is meant in the Syriac text, that in my opinion refers rather to the real ‘briks’ that can be added to the verb to build the various forms.

³⁶ Cf. Appendix 2 C 1, according to Bohas (2003: 56).

³⁷ From *aynâ* ‘which?’.

³⁸ Cf. Appendix 2 C 2, according to Bohas (2003: 66).

³⁹ Literally all the examples are present participles. The stem is the basic one, when not otherwise indicated.

generates' [causative of *wld*], 'he accomplishes' [š stem of *ml*'], 'he makes abundant' [š stem of *rth*], 'he finds'.

One immediately notices that the examples given by Bar Zu'bî are much more numerous than those given by Huzaya (which, as we have seen, are an adaptation of the Greek ones), and completely independent semantically from the Greek *Téchne*. Moreover, of the 17 verbs listed, 11 are derived stem, with intensive or causative value.

As regards the passive, the verbs listed are corresponding *et*- forms of the active verbs listed above⁴⁰ plus other *et*- forms from different roots (at least according to the text presented by Bohas).⁴¹ The following three verbs are added, with respect to the list of active ones: 'he is accepted / he thinks', 'he promises', 'he distinguishes himself'⁴².

What is interesting, in this list, is that not all of the *et*- forms are really or entirely passive in meaning, and especially the ones without an active counterpart appear to be active or middle: *mettdîn* 'he is judged', but also 'he judges'; *metîret* 'he is made inherit'; *mettnîh* 'he rests, refreshes himself'; *meštamlê* 'he becomes perfect, fulfilled'; *metra'ê* 'he is accepted / he thinks'; *meštawdê* 'he promises'; *methzûzê* 'he distinguishes himself'.

What seems to be relevant for Bar Zu'bî, in these forms, is that they are the morphological *et*- counterpart of the 'basic' ones listed above, more than their specific meaning.

Diathesis, therefore, does not seem to be here described properly as a semantic feature. It is generically considered as one of the 'affixes' of the verb, even more than on of its 'accidents' (cf. n. 35).

⁴⁰ Therefore, when two forms are given for the same root, two corresponding *et*- derivatives are found.

⁴¹ Cf. Appendix 2 C 3, according to Bohas (2003: 66).

⁴² On which Bohas remarks that: 'Tous ces exemples illustrent ce qui a déjà été dit dans la partie précédente de Bar Zu'bî sur les classes verbales, à savoir que le passif est formé par préfixation de 'et à la forme active', Bohas (2003: 66). Unfortunately, Bohas does not insert in his article the section on verbal classes to which here reference is made, therefore it is not possible at the moment to analyse this information in more detail.

6.3 The Arabic model and Elias of Tirḥan

The first to describe the Syriac language according to the Arabic theories⁴³ and techniques is Elias of Tirḥan († 1049). His grammar is not a systematic description like the ones mentioned so far, and is conceived as a series of answers to questions, subdivided into chapters. The author, nevertheless, was not able to abandon completely the method followed by previous Syriac tradition, so that the structure of his work appears a bit confused⁴⁴.

In the introduction to his work Elias himself indicates in the Arabic grammar (*grammatîqî arabî'âyt*) and in the Aristotelian logics (*mlîltâ d-bêt arisṭâwtelîs*) the sources for his research, but mixed together with previous Greek and Syriac grammatical tradition: 'I have put together various things from the Greek grammar - although I don't know Greek - and those traditions that are available about Syriac'.

In this grammar there is no explicit mention of diathesis, the way it has been defined in the *Téchne* and its imitators. Nevertheless, problems connected with it are discussed in various sections.

The question opening the first chapter is the following:

by means of which signs do we indicate the agent (*'bûdâ*) that is the performer (*sâ'ûrâ*) in the Syriac language? The Arabic language has in fact in the grammatical terms signs for the one who effects and the one who undergoes, namely *fâ'il* and *maf'ûl*.⁴⁵

A long and detailed description follows, about which are the means of distinguishing the agent from the patient⁴⁶, and which are the possible patient-markers. It is a completely

⁴³ For a sketch of the history of Arabic linguistics cf. Bohas et al. (1990).

⁴⁴ Merx (1889:155) remarks on this point: 'Sed voluntas laudabilior fuit quam id quod praestitit [...] ita ut opus imperfectum et confusum composuerit'.

⁴⁵ Bâthgen (1880: 4*).

⁴⁶ Elias identifies here three ways of distinguishing the Agent from the Patient: 1. semantically 'First is the essence (*yâtâ*) i.e. the natural possibility (*mkânûtâ*) of the agent and of the patient (*met'abdânâ*'); 2. syntactically (or morphologically according to the Syriac point of view, that considers the prepositions as equivalents of the Greek case endings) 'Second by means of letters that are called article (*mašryâtâ / šaryâtâ*), like *b-*, *d-*, *l-*. Although properly we indicate the Patient with *l-*'; 3. (again) syntactically 'Third from the order and the precedence of the nouns', Bâthgen (1880: 4*).

different approach from the one we have seen so far, and it does not relate to diathesis *stricto sensu*, meant as a quality of the verb. Nevertheless it is still related to the Greek concepts of ἐνέργεια and πάθος, but through the mediation of the Arabic linguistic and logic reflection.

In chapter three another interesting problem is addressed: how is it possible to recognize that a noun is a patient, when the agent is not openly expressed. It is a question that could also be addressed by modern scholars dealing with diathesis. From a modern perspective the problem regards the possibility of distinguishing between a real passive and a middle or a reflexive structure. On the contrary, Elias wants to explain how it is possible to recognize in Syriac that a certain noun is undergoing (and not performing) the action described by the verb. This problem has its roots in the Arabic linguistic theory,

In Arabic, according to the grammarian, the distinction is made by means of different vowel patterns. In Syriac a specific vowel pattern is not needed, the forms with *et-* prefix convey the passive meaning:

Question: From which signs and marks is recognized a name that is patient (lit. *faciendum*) whose agent was not mentioned together with it?

Solution: We have remarked before that the nouns do not undergo any alteration [scil. Do not receive any case-marking], even when meanings are added ⁴⁷; thus when we mention something effected by means of a verb meaning an action, we distinguish what is effected and that is enough, although we do not need a different vowel (scil. ‘vocalization’) of the noun, like it is the use in Arabic. Like for example we say that *etmaḥḥî nûḥ* ‘Noah was beaten’, it is enough for us a transformation of the verb to indicate that Noah [is the object] of the wounds. Thus even when we speak about actions such as *etkteb ktâbâ* ‘The book/script was written’ and *esta ‘rat sâ ‘ûrûtâ* ‘the action was done’ and *etyahbat zkûtâ* ‘the victory was given’.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Bâthgen (1880: 13): ‘auch wenn sie in verschiedener Beziehung gebraucht werden’.

⁴⁸ Bâthgen (1880 : 7*).

It is implicit in the examples given in this passage that the *et-* prefix is associated primarily with the expression of passivity and of an action undergone. It is interesting to notice that no reference is made to passive vocalization in Syriac, even though it is available for the passive participles of all stems. Also this circumstance could be explained in the light of Arabic categorizations.

6.4 *The grammatical dialogue of Bar Šakku and the diathesis of nouns*

Bar Šakku was contemporary and disciple of Bar Zu‘bî (†1241). He is the author of a *compendium* on the seven *artes liberales* (cf. Merx⁴⁹), the first part of which (edited by Merx) is devoted to grammatical issues. Also this work, like the one of Elias of Tirḥan, is structured as a series of questions and relative answers. Both Greek and Arabic influences can be found in the way the various topics are addressed.

In Bar Šakku we find explicit mention of diathesis, with an approach that shows both Greek and Arabic influence.

In the first part of his treatise, the author lists the categories of affixes (*nqîpân*) of the various parts of speech, in line with the tradition of the *Téchne*:

third question: which are the affixes (attaching) to each one of the parts of speech?

answer: and we say that to the noun attach: genders (*gensê*), species (*âdšê*), schemes (*eskîmê*), numbers (*menyânê*), diatheseis (lit. ‘quality’ *aynâywâtâ*), cases (*mappeltê*).⁵⁰

Diathesis is therefore introduced as a quality of the noun, as was already found in Huzaya’s translation (and in the *Téchne* itself). Each of the categories is then explained in more detail. About diathesis it is said:

⁴⁹ Merx (1889: 210).

⁵⁰ Merx (1889 : 3*).

Diatheseis (*aynâywâtâ*) are four:

1. active (*ma'bdânûtâ*), like when it is said *qtûlâ* (murderer), *ktûbâ* (writer, scribe), *'bûdâ* (maker), *ktûbûtâ* (script/profession of copyist), *qtûlûtâ* (murder);
2. passive (*ḥašâ*) like for example *'bidâ* (fact), *ktîbâ* (writing), *qtîlâ* (killed), *'bidûtâ* (creation), *qtîlûtâ* (being slain), *ktîbûtâ* (writing, script), *met'bdânâ* (acted on), *metkatbânâ* (written/litterate);
3. quality (*qanâyûtâ*)⁵¹ like when you say: *zaddîqâ* (righteous), *'awwâlâ* (unrighteous), *tâbâ* (good), *bîšâ* (evil) *myatrâ* (excellent), *malkâ* (king) *zaddîqûtâ* (righteousness), *'awwalûtâ* (injustice), *ḥûbâ* (love);
4. manifestation of nature (*mḥawyânûtâ d-kyânâ*) like when you say, *barnâšâ* (man), *mûsâyâ* (*mwsy*’, cf. Gr. μωσαϊον?⁵²), *?tawrâ* (*twr*’ bull), *šmayâ* (sky), *ar'â* (earth).⁵³

The third and fourth qualities seem to be mostly semantically based and they do not relate to diathesis. The first two qualities in stead are clearly connected to diathesis and are associated to precise morphological patterns. Under the active are listed so-called *nomina agentis*⁵⁴, and their respective derived abstract forms in *-ûtâ*. The passive, in stead, is referred to the pattern *qtîl*, the passive participle of the basic stem (*p'al*), and the corresponding derived in *-ûtâ*, but also to *nomina agentis* of *et-* derived stems⁵⁵.

Problems related to diathesis are also treated in the questions 11 and 12. Question 11 closely resembles the one found in Elias of Tırḥan and discussed above (§ 6.3 and n. 46)⁵⁶. Question 12 deals with the affixes that convey passivity.

⁵¹ This term means ‘property, quality’ and is related to the verb *qnâ* ‘to gain, obtain’.

⁵² Cf. Costaz (1963: 178).

⁵³ Merx (1889 : 3-4*).

⁵⁴ A noun akin to the active participle, defined in Muraoka (2005: §51) as ‘a noun denoting a person who executes the action indicated by the verb’. In the basic stem *p'al* it has the pattern *qtûl*. In the derived stems, in stead, is done by adding *-an* to the participle: this is the pattern of the forms *met'bdânâ* and *metkatbânâ* listed among the passives.

⁵⁵ Diathesis as a property of the noun is found also in the grammar of Bar Hebraeus. This subject will be discussed in depth in § 6.5 and 6.6.

⁵⁶ Q 11 - Through which marks do we recognize an agent from a patient? A - And we say from three signs: 1. from the essence, that is the nature of the agent and of the patient; 2. from the introduction/prefix, namely the ‘article’ (*artrûn* < Gr. ἄρτρον) on the patient; 3. from the order and the precedence of the nouns; 4. priority of the agent on the patient.

6.5 The final synthesis: diathesis in the *Ktâbâ d-ṣemḥê* of Bar Hebraeus

Let us now consider another description of Syriac language, that is considered as the *apex* of ancient Syriac linguistic reflection, for its completeness and its systematic structure.

It is the *Ktâbâ d-ṣemḥê*, composed by Bar Hebraeus in the XIII century, in which all the previous approaches to the Syriac language, diversely connected to the Greek *Téchne*, to the Syriac masoretic tradition and to the Arabic descriptive methods, are collected and harmonized.

Diathesis is treated explicitly by Bar Hebraeus, both as a feature of the noun and of the verb. Thus, in the chapter on the noun he lists it among the properties of the noun, following the *Téchne* in the organization of the matter, but also expressing the same content that was already found in Huzaya and Bar Šakku:

The diatheseis (*aynâywâtâ*) are four: active (*‘abdûtâ*), passive (*ḥašûšûtâ*), quality (*qanâyûtâ*) and demonstration of nature (*mḥawyanûtâ d-kyânâ*).⁵⁷

In spite of the analogy in the initial formulation, the way the various *diatheseis* are exemplified differs significantly from the one chosen by Bar Šakku. Bar Hebraeus says:

And the agent (*‘abûdâ*⁵⁸) is the noun in front of which the verb, and what is like it, is [placed], like ‘Paul preaches’ (*akrez pawlûs*) and ‘Paul⁵⁹, his disciple is an announcer’ (*pawlûs, msabrân talmîdeh*). [...] And the patient (*ḥašûšâ*) is the one on which falls the verbal action (*melat sâ ‘ûrûtâ*), like ‘our Lord struck the Egyptians’ (*mḥâ mâryâ l-mezrâyê*) and ‘he went to the land of the Gadarenes’ (*w-etâ l-atrâ d-gâdrâyê*).⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Moberg (1922: 36).

⁵⁸ Morphologically and semantically related to *‘abdûtâ*, as explained also by Bar Šakku, cf. § 6.4.

⁵⁹ Casus pendens.

⁶⁰ Moberg (1922: 36).

Merx⁶¹ has brilliantly individuated the direct source of this passage (as of many others in the grammar of Bar Hebraeus) in the Arabic grammar of Zamaḥṣarī (X-XI cent.) *mufaṣṣal fī ‘ilm al-‘arabiyya*. The definition of *‘abūdā* corresponds almost literally to the one of the Arabic *fā‘il*.

In the section devoted to the verb we find again the ordinate structure used by Bar Zu‘bī and Huzaya and derived from the Greek *Téchne*. Diathesis is explicitly mentioned and treated as one of the kinds of affixes, or accidents of the verb.

On the types of affixes of the verb.

The types of affixes of the verb are seven: 1. the gender, masculine or feminine, like (m. *yâteb* ‘sitting’, f. *yâtbât* ‘sitting’); 2. number singular and plural, like (*šam* ‘a ‘listener’, *šam* ‘in ‘listeners’); 3. tense, like (*qâm* ‘he rose’, *qâ’em* ‘rising’, *nqûm* ‘he will rise’); 4. person, like (‘*ellet* ‘I entered’, ‘*ellat* ‘she entered’, ‘*al* ‘he entered’); 5. quality (*aynâyûtâ*) active and passive, like (*mamlek* ‘being king’) with *rbâšâ* (e vowel) *lâmad* (l-) among others, (*mamlak* ‘being made king’) with *ptâḥâ* (a vowel) *lâmad*, among others, Gospel⁶² (*w-kad šma* ‘*d-arkelaûs mamlek b-ihûd* ‘And when he heard that Archelaus had been made king of Judaea’) i.e. by Cesar. 6. *eskîm* simple, composed and extra-composed, like (*ḥzâ* ‘he saw’, *ethzî* ‘he was seen’, *ethzawzî* ‘he distinguished himself’); 7. disposition of the five species of the discourse, which the Holy (scil. Jakob of Edessa) called (*zanâyê* ‘varieties’), and others (*qaryâtâ* ‘invocations’), like command, request, question, exclamation, declaration.⁶³

In the quoted passage, points 5. and 6. are particularly interesting for our analysis. Two *diatheseis* (*aynâyûtâ*, quality⁶⁴) are here posed for the verb: active and passive (the terms used are built from the same roots used by Huzaya). No reference is made to a ‘middle quality’. The opposition between active and passive is meant as an opposition of internal vowel patterns (*pa* ‘*el māmallek* vs *māmallak*⁶⁵), no *et-* form is used to illustrate the passive.

⁶¹ Merx (1889: 241).

⁶² Cf. Mt 2,22.

⁶³ Moberg (1922 : 90).

⁶⁴ From the root of interr. *aynâ* ‘what’.

⁶⁵ Or *af’el mamlek* vs *mamlak*.

Moreover, for the passive diathesis, a full sentence is given as an extra example. It is a Gospel quotation from Mt 2,22 in which the form *məmallak* ‘he was made king’ is used. It is noteworthy that here Bar Hebraeus, in order to explain the ‘passivity’ of the sentence, specifies that an agent is implied: ‘by Cesar’ (*men qesar*).

After the definition of active and passive, in point 6. the forms (or stems) of the verbs are introduced. Here we find the *et-* forms, described as ‘composed’ and ‘extra-composed’, but from a purely morphological perspective, without any concern about the meaning⁶⁶.

6.7 Conclusions

As regards middle diathesis, from this overview emerges that the only reference to it in ancient Syriac grammar is in Huzaya’s translation of the *Téchne*. There it is indicated with the term *meṣ‘ayûtā* and is kept separate from the passive (represented by the *et-* stems) and exemplified with unaccusative motion verbs. This choice, together with the organization of the examples, with respect to their Greek equivalents, shows that the translator has consciously introduced ‘middle’ as a separate verbal category (even though on semantic grounds), and that he did not only operate a mechanical transposition of the Greek original.

Diathesis is indeed treated also in the later works, but always as a bipartite category, divided in active and passive. The way the two *diatheseis* are exemplified varies, but the passive is constantly connected with the *et-* prefix.

Particular attention deserves the so-called diathesis of nouns. This category, as was shown above, was already present in the *Téchne*, even though only as a quick reference, that has moreover been heavily criticized by the subsequent commentators. Nevertheless it had quite some success within ancient Syriac tradition.

Let us now consider the examples of the *diatheseis* of the noun given in the works analyzed in this study.

⁶⁶ The tripartite classification of verbs is once again derived from the *Téchne*, Uhlig (1883: 50-51).

1. The *Téchne* has the *nomen agentis* κριτής explained through an active present participle, and a (verbal) adjective⁶⁷ κριτός explained with a middle present participle. The category of diathesis, therefore, even though is not used as a verbal feature, is here referred to two specific morphological classes of verbal nouns, and connected with the correspondent participles⁶⁸. Unlike verbs, nouns do not have a middle diathesis.

2. Huzaya reproduces faithfully the Greek examples, giving for κριτής the semantically equivalent noun *dayânâ*, also explained through an active participle, for κριτός the form *mettdînânâ*, a noun derived from the *etp 'el* participle through the suffix *-ân*, according to a regular derivational process. It is explained with a *etp 'el* participle.

3. Bar Šakku indicates for the two *diatheseis* of the noun two derivational patterns: the *nomen agentis* 'abûd for the active, the passive participle 'bîd and the nouns in *-ân*, derived from the participles of *et-* stems, for the passive. From each class abstract nouns in *-ûtâ* are subsequently derived.

4. Bar Hebraeus chooses a completely different approach. He does not give lists of examples, variously connected with the Syriac derivational system. In stead, he first establishes a correspondence between 'abûdûtâ (active diathesis) and 'abûd (agent) on one hand, and between *ħaşûšûtâ* (passive diathesis) and *ħaşûšâ* (patient). After that, Bar Hebraeus gives two general definitions of agent and patient, syntactically and partly semantically based. The examples that follow each definition do not refer to a morphological category in particular, but to a sentence structure. As already mentioned (§ 6.5), Merx⁶⁹ has recognized in this passage of the *Ktâbâ d-šemhê* the Syriac rendering of the definition of the *fâ'il* given by the Arabic grammarian Zamħašarî. There the *fâ'il* 'agent' is individuated syntactically as *al-musnadu ilayhi fi'l* 'the one preceded by the verb'.

⁶⁷ The nominal pattern in *-το-* interferes from an early stage with the verbal paradigm, because of the analogy with the perfect participle in *-τός, τός*.

⁶⁸ Cf. on this the remark of the Scholiast, in n. 31.

⁶⁹ Merx (1889: 241).

This last concept, that in Bar Hebraeus is literally rendered as general definition of *'abūdā*, is present also in some of the older Syriac grammars, but next to other different points of view (cf. the answer to the first question in the grammar of Elias of Tirḥan, n.46, and the answer to the 11th in Bar Šakku's grammar n. 56).

Numerous different perspectives, variously combined by the single authors, contribute to the construction of the definition of diathesis in Syriac language given in antiquity. Under the influence of the Arabic syntactical theory of *fā'il* and *maf'ūl*, the short reference to the diathesis of the noun in the *Téchne*, is broadly developed, without being explicitly connected to the diathesis of the verb⁷⁰. If the distinction between active and passive in the (verbal) nouns is mainly based on syntax, the diathesis of the verb remains a morphological feature, the presence of the *et-* prefix.

The Arabic point of view and terminology seem to be eventually predominant, but the previous tradition and elaboration is partly preserved as a coexisting stream, enriching and complicating the picture.

⁷⁰ The Arabic theory of passive and reflexive, also because of the significantly different structure of the Arabic verbal system with respect to the Syriac one, has not been assimilated by the Syriac grammarians.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

In this dissertation a number of phenomena of Syriac language system have been analysed, which are correlated to the semantic categories of middle voice and unaccusativity.

In chapter 1 heterogeneous morphological and syntactic elements were presented, which, according to traditional Syriac grammar, may all be used to express meanings such as reflexive, passive, reciprocal. Such categories are: verbal et-prefix, inner passives, pronominal reflexive structures. It was also noticed how the majority of examples, that grammars present for the reflexive meaning of verbal et-forms, do not fit into a rigorous definition of reflexivity, but rather relate to the expression of the affectedness of the subject and to what, in other languages, is usually called middle voice.

In chapter 2 the term and the semantic category middle voice have been introduced and analysed. Particular attention was devoted to Kemmer (1993)'s study of the internal semantic articulation of the category and of the parameters on the basis of which reflexivity and middle voice need to be distinguished. Reflexivity was thus defined as a two-participant event, in which the agent and the patient happen to be coreferential, whereas middle voice is represented prototypically by a one-participant event in which the grammatical subject is affected by the process described. In this chapter unaccusativity was also introduced, a semantic feature of class of verbs, determined by the following set of parameters: affectedness of the subject, low control on the process, low agentivity, low volitionality, telic aktionsart. Unaccusativity has been individuated, by a number of scholars, as the main semantic feature of Indo-european middle voice.

In the light of all the preceding observation, the following program was made for the study of Syriac middle voice:

- 1 distinguish between proper reflexivity and reflexive structures of middle voice;
- 2 check for the semantic categories that Kemmer has individuated for middle voice, within

some specific Syriac verbal classes;

3 verify whether unaccusativity could play a role in the distribution of forms and functions of the morphological elements and syntactic structures presented in chapter 1.

More specifically, the following distribution of forms and functions was hypothesized:

reflexive (and reciprocal) (co-referentiality of agent and patient)	(prep.) + pron. suff. noun 'body' / 'soul' + pron. suff. (depending on the degree of emphasis required by the context)
middle - stative [- process]	inner passive
middle - unaccusative [- control] [- volition] [- agentivity] [+ affectedness]	external affixation: <i>et-</i> stems

In chapter 3 a brief overview was given of the Semitic parallels of the Syriac verbal morphemes involved in this study. The result was that also in the other languages taken into account, especially as far as the *-t-* verbal affix is concerned, a certain degree of vagueness in the correlation of forms and functions. However, reference is constantly made to the domains of reflexivity and passivity.

Chapters 4 and 5 present a textual analysis of a sample of early Syriac texts, dating from between the IIIrd and the VIth century AD.

In chapter 4 the results are presented of a classification of *et*-stems and inner passives, found in the sample texts, according to Kemmer's semantic categories, aspect and aktionsart. All Kemmer's classes appeared to be represented among Syriac verbs, although to variable extent. Moreover, there seems to be a preference for terminative aspect and for telic aktionsart, as far as *et*-forms are concerned, while inner passive turned out to be mainly resultative perfects and states. As regards aktionsart, it is important to recall that each one of the four main categories that have been used in this study (achievement, accomplishment, activity, state) is determined on the basis of three parameters [\pm telic], [\pm durative], [\pm state]. Therefore, when we say that inner passives are in almost all occurrences classified as states, we say something more than what is already common knowledge about the stative value of

the *qîl* pattern.

With respect to the hypothesis formulated in chapter 2, the following points were confirmed:

- the connection of passive internal vowel patterns with stativity;
- the connection of the *et*-prefix with telicity;
- the connection of both morphological categories with the semantic area of middle, as defined by Kemmer (1993).

In chapter 5 a particular phenomenon of Syriac was examined: coreferential dative. With this term a syntactic compound is indicated, in which a verbal form is immediately followed by the preposition *l-* (expressing dative) and a pronominal suffix coreferential with the subject of the verb. This phenomenon had already been studied by Joosten for Syriac and by Contini for Aramaic in general and for Pre-Christian Aramaic in more detail. The two scholars had underlined the following features of the phenomenon, respectively:

- the preference for the expression of aoristic inchoative aspect;
- the correlation with the expression of semantic affectedness of the subject.

In this study attention was devoted on the one hand to a more specific connection between *et*-forms and coreferential dative (especially observed in Aphrahat's *Demonstrationes* and in Ephrem's *Commentaries*), on the other hand a strong connection between the classes of verbs that can be followed by a coreferential dative and unaccusatives. Finally, a typological comparison was established between the Syriac phenomenon and the analogous Latin pleonastic dative, that was studied in Cennamo (1998). In her article Cennamo proved that there is a strong connection between late latin pleonastic dative and unaccusativity, to the extent that the distribution of the structure among verbal semantic classes, prefigures the development of Italian split intransitivity. To sum up, with respect to the hypothesis of chapter 2, in this chapter a correlation was established between verbal *et*-forms and a syntactical epiphenomenon of unaccusativity.

Finally, chapter 6 is an excursus is presented, through the main documents of medieval grammatical tradition, with respect to diathesis. Diathesis, translated in Syriac with the terms *qyâmê* 'positions', or *aynâywâtâ* 'qualities', has always been the object of a particular attention, in Syriac grammars, both of Hellenizing and Arabicizing inspiration. Nevertheless, only in the oldest grammatical document at our disposal, Huzaya's translation of the *Téchne Grammatiké*, reference is found to the existence of a middle diathesis. As already noticed by Contini (1998), Huzaya gives a purely semantic definition of such a diathesis, without

indicating any morphological element to be a characteristic of middle. However, if one takes a closer look at the examples that Huzaya has chosen to represent middle diathesis¹, one finds that they are all unaccusative motion verbs. Whether this is a mere coincidence, or, instead, an indication of the understanding of a salient feature of middle voice, is not possible to determine. It could, however, be taken as a starting point for further research into the linguistic awareness of ancient Syriac translators and grammarians.

In this dissertation a number of phenomena and problems have been examined, that would deserve further investigation, in a broader sample of Syriac texts. Among the desiderata, I would indicate, at least:

- the analysis of the aspectual and actional behaviour of the opposit pole of verbal system: intensives and causatives;
- a more selective analysis of the differences between the various verbal 'tenses';
- the extension of the corpus of Syriac texts to translations from Hebrew and Greek and to later texts;
- a comparison, as far as Aphrahat's *Demonstrationes* are concerned, with the available Arabic translations.

The term *outline*, chosen for the title of this work, indicates, on the one hand, the limit that was just expressed concerning the extension of the investigation. On the other hand, however, this term would like to underline the fact that the findings presented in this dissertation let emerge the profile of middle voice as a relevant category for the organization and understanding of Syriac verbal system and of a number of linguistic phenomena connected to it.

¹ Those examples, unlike all the other examples presented in that section of the grammar, are not a translation of the corresponding Greek ones.

APPENDIX 1

A. List of occurrences of the structure *t-form + l + coreferential dative in Aphrahat's Demonstrations*¹

Dem. I

5, 7 *hwa haw meddem d-kalê metnseb leh menneh*

et qui habet, si quecumque rogantem se volit prohibere, auferetur ab ipso quidquid ipse dare recusat

8, 11 *mâ d-'naš gêr etqarrab l-haymânûtâ ettsîm leh 'al ki'pâ*

quando enim quis accedit ad fidem, constituitur super petram

Dem. II

52, 11 *kad mîâ gêr zabneh d-nâmûsâ ettawsap leh...*

quando autem legis advenit tempus, addita est...

53, 19 *beh gêr b-haw zabnâ d-et'amrat leh l-abraham meltâ hade' [...] bhaymânûtâ ettsîr leh b-lebbeh d-abraham*

eo enim ipso tempore quo Abrahae factus est sermo iste: proles erit tibi, per fidem formatus est [sermo]²

in corde Abrahae

53, 23 *w-âp meltâ [...] etbatnat lâh b-lebbeh d-abraham*

sermo [...] intimo Abrahae corde conceptus est

56,2 *w-etmalkat lâh 'abdûtâ 'al zar'eh d-abraham*

promissa fuit servitus Abrahae posteris

¹ The latin translation is the one found in Parisot (1894).

² Also Parisot (1894) interprets *leh meltâ*.

Outline of Middle Voice in Syriac

56, 21 *estayyak leh nâmûsâ wa-nbiye' 'al halên trêñ pûqdânîn*

lex autem et prophetae in duobus illis mandatis comprehensi sunt

57, 13 *hûšahawhy gêr d-nâmûsâ etbaṭlw l-hûn b-ma'tnteh d-mahyanan*

finis enim legis evacuatus est per adventum vivificatoris nostri

57, 25 *w-men edanâ d-asrawhy et'esarw l-hûn 'ad'ide' b-šišlâtâ*

ex quo eum vinxerunt, festivitates eorum vinculis ligatae sunt

60, 10 *w-etmalyat lâh diyatîqi' qadmaytâ ba-'hraytâ*

textamentum prius novissimo est impletum

77, 9-10 *d-badmût štâyawmîn sîm leh 'almâ l-allâhâ*

mundum, sicut intra sex dies a Deo constitutus fuit

80, 7 *nettšîr leh men pûmeh*

proprio irretiatur ab ore

81, 1-2 *mettûl d-lâ šbeq la-knâteh qalîl d-leh saggî eštabeq leh eštem hû l-daḥšeh*

parum conservo non dimisisset is cui multum condonatum fuerat, satellitibus ipse traditus est

88, 17 *man d-sanê gêr ḥad men hadâmê da-mšihâ metpšah leh men kolleh pagrâ*

qui autem unum de membris Christi odit, a toto corpore divelletur

88, 18 *w-man d-sanê l-aḥûhy metpreš leh men bnayâ d-allâhâ*

et qui fratrem odit, a filiis Dei separabitur

Dem III

100, 12 *w-mâ d-šam men da-lma'kal w men d-meštâ etqrî leh šayâmâ*

quamdiu cibo potuque abstinet, ieiunare dicitur

116, 25 *w-ba-kyâlâ da-b'â la-mkalû ettkîl leh*

mensura qua metiri intendebat demensum est ei

Appendix I

Dem IV

141, 6 *w-âp abrahâm kad ašar leh allâhâ mûlkânâ dabrâ metiled leh emar leh...*

Abraham etiam, quando firmavit ei Deus de filio ipsi bascituro promissionem, dixit ei...

156, 5 *w-šali tûb dâni'êl wa-šlûteh pûmâ daryawâtâ sakrat. w-estakar leh pûmâ âkûlâ*

Daniel etiam oravit, eiusque oratio leonum ora praeclusit; obturatum est os voracissimum

168, 12 *hâkanâ ethaššab b-tar'ûtâk da-šlûtâk meštâbqâ lâh qdâm madbhâ*

Tibi autem animo finge, orationem tuam ante altare relictam esse

172, 11-12 *w-'ad bâ'e' aṅt la-mšalâmû šlûtâk tetpallaṭ lâh mennâk šbûtâ da-nyâhâ w-testaggap lak men
šbyâneh wanyâhe d-allâhâ*

Nam priusquam orationem compleveris, res illa quae Deum alleviaret tibi excidet, ispoque opere
quod Deo placet defraudaberis

173, 23 *tetbaṭṭal lâk men šlûtâ*

(noli) orationem omittere (lit. 'cease from prayer')

176, 3 *w-lâ tetqata' lak*

neque obtorpescas

Dem V

196, 25 *eštqel leh kolleh*

ablatae sunt omnes [scil. 'divitiae' = 'ûtar]

196, 26 *metdabrîn lhôn mennâk lwât ḥayûtâ*

procul abs te ad bestiam ducentur

197, 25 *w-kad eštâw lhôn men aṭrhûn*

quando autem de loco suo sunt abducti

209, 15 *neštakhûn lhôn ḥasîrîn*

invenirentur deficientes

209, 15-16 *w-eštqel lâh menhûn malkûtâ*

regnum auferretur ab eis

Outline of Middle Voice in Syriac

209, 24 *ethleṭ leh b-‘eqārā d-malkūtā d-parzlā*

radici regni ferrei sese commiscuisse

216, 20 *ettabar leh nīrā d-parzlā*

iugum ferreum [...] confractum est

217, 1 *ettrīm leh*

sibi exaltavit

217, 2 *etmreṭw lhôn ap gepawhy*

avulsae sunt etiam eius alae

232, 8-10 *āpen gēr l-ḥanpê plaḥ barnāšā. barsā‘teh d-metqreb la-qyāmeh d-allāhā etharrar leh*

quamvis enim servierit quis gentilibus, ubi primum foederi Dei appropinquat, extemplo fit liber

Dem VI

248, 9 *man d-raḥem qūryē w-te‘gūrtā metglez leh men mdīntā d-qaddīšē*

qui rura et mercatum amat prohibebitur a civitate Sanctorum

252, 20 *d-lā nethayyab leh*

ne forte superetur

252, 22 *man d-metqat‘ā leh lā zābê beh māreh*

qui taedio indulget, non sibi complacet in eo Dominus eius

253, 11 *man d-šāqel nīrā d-qaddīšē neteb w-neštūq leh*

qui iugum portat sanctorum, sedeat et taceat

256, 26 *w-ādām eštdel leh b-šabrūteh*

Adam imperitia sua deceptus est

261, 1 *w-nethšeb leh gayārā*

et adulter existimetur

280, 22 *metb‘ē leh mennan*

Appendix I

- nobis desumptum est
- 293, 12 *metṭamrā lāh rūḥā*
spiritus absconditur
- 293, 14 *w-regštā meštaqlā lāh menneh*
quod sensu destituitur (lit. 'and feeling is taken away from it')
- 293, 23 *w-rūḥā napsānāytā metṭamrā lāh b-kyānāh*
animalis autem spiritus in natura sua sepelitur
- 296, 26 *metbal'ā lāh rūḥā napsānāytā b-rūḥā šmayānāytā*
Spiritus animalis a Spiritu caelesti absorbebitur
- 304, 5-6 *haydēn dḥel ganābā w-'āreq d-lā netṭhed wnetṭšid leh*
pertimescit latro et aufugit, ne arripiatur et comprehendatur
- 308, 11-12 *metṭul d-metbal'ā lāh napsānāytā b-rūḥānāytā*
quod enim animale est absorberetur a spiritalis
- 309, 8-9 *w-haylēn aylēn d-methalpīn lhōn henūn lābsīn zūrtā d-haw ādām šmayānā*
qui immutabuntur, formam induent Adae caelestis
- Dem VII
- 316, 4 *metṭbar leh 'ūqsāh*
tunc stimulus ille confringetur
- 320, 3 *āp zakkāyē nethašbūn lhōn ḥayyābē*
innocentes in culpa esse iudicentur
- 321, 5 *methašbīn lhōn saklē w-bīšē w-marāḥē*
amantesque et improbi et imprudentes reputabuntur
- 329, 4 *nettkel leh 'al ḥādē*
et ille in hoc confisus fuerit
- 329, 16 *nettkel leh 'al ḥādē*
et super hoc confisa

Outline of Middle Voice in Syriac

332, 3-4 *d-dalmâ enâ d-la-hrânê akrzet enâ qnûmy estlé li*

ne, cum ceteris praedicaverim, ipse reprobus efficiar

340, 12 *lâ tetkel lâk d-hâ ît âsyûtâ w-tetel napšâk la-šmâ šaplâ*

noli ergo prae nimia fiducia medicinae attendere, ut tibi ipsi infamia afferras

352, 3 *tetkel lâk*

tibi ipsi nimium confidere

352, 5 *netrapê leh haw d-bâla'*

ille qui percussus fuerit animo frangatur

352, 7 *d-lâ nettrim w-nethayyab leh*

non autem superbire, et reum inde fieri

Dem VIII

364, 25 *w-'al d-methabbal leh pagrâ*

de corporis autem corruptione (lit. 'of the body corrupting')

368, 14 *w-en hâkanâ hû eštkħan lan sahdê daggâlê*

si autem ita res se habuerit, invenimur falsi testesss

368, 24 *etqrî leh šmayânâ*

caeleste dicetur

368, 25 *etqrî leh bakyâneh ar'ânâ*

secundim naturam suam vocabitur terrestre

369, 14 *metbalâ' lâh zûrtâ ar'anâytâ ba-šmayântâ*

forma terrestri a caelesti absorpta

369, 15 *metqrê leh pagrâ šmayânâ*

corpus caeleste praedicabitur

369, 17 *metqrê leh ar'ânâytâ*

terrestre nuncupabitur

Appendix I

400, 4 *b-hânâ 'âlmâ d-mettaḷqâ lâh ṭaybûtâ b-kî'nûtâ*

in mundo isto in quo iustitia gratiam absumit

400, 10 *w-man da-qribâ lwâteh ṭaybûtâ netpnê leh lwâtâh*

cui ergo misericordia prope accedit, ad eam ille se convertat

Dem IX

421, 17-18 *'âlmâ d-âtê metglez leh menneh*

saeculo venturo privabitur

441, 2 *ettawsap leh*

ampliatus [est]

Dem X

453, 1 *da-kmâ etbṭel leh 'al gzâreh*

qui tantam de grege suo curam habuit

460, 3 *eṣṭabî leh mada'y b-gazâ rabbâ*

mente captus sum prae tesauri illius magnitudine

461, 27 *âp d-qabbel meṣṭqel leh menneh*

ea etiam quae accepit, auferentur ab ipso

Dem XI

468, 12 *w-lâ mestaklîn etqrîw lhôn šallîṭê da-sdûm*

nec recognitant vocatos se fuisse principes Sodomae

469, 14 *wa-bnayâ ethpekw lhôn*

filiî [...] se converterunt

472, 14 *wa-gbên hwaw w-estalîw lhôn*

electi fuerunt et [postmodum] reprobati

Dem XII

513, 5 *etpnî leh 'al d-men 'ammê*

ad ecclesiam gentium se convertit

Outline of Middle Voice in Syriac

517, 10 *etḥšeb leh 'am mîté*

cum mortuis reputatur

Dem XIII

549, 17 *d-kad ḥzâ ethlalt leh darâ d-šît*

cum vidisset generationem Seth [...] se commiscuisset

549, 20 *d-lâ nethaltûn w-nettlîtûn lhôn 'am d-bêt qa'ên*

ne cum familia Cain [...] commiserentur et maledicerentur

553, 25 *d-dalmâ nethalat leh 'am zar'â lîṭâ d-bêt qa'ên*

ne maledicto semini domus Cain umquam se commiseret

557, 13 *kad lâ ettsîm leh namûsâ*

etsi nondum posita fuerat [legem]

Dem XIV

661, 22 *meštbe leh lebbeh*

cor eius captivatur

Dem XV

729, 24 *ḥlâp riḥâ basîmâ methapkâ lâh whâwyâ saryûtâ*

et fit pro grato odore fetor

Dem XVI

764, 22 *etpnî leh lwât 'ammê*

ad gentes se convertit

765, 14 *meṭṭul d-eštbeq leh 'amâ³*

proiectus est enim populus

784, 11 *dsawkê daḥtay etpšaḥ lhên*

³ Rephrasing of Is II, 6, but the text in the Pešittâ is: *mṭl dšbqtyhy l'mk* 'you have abandoned it, your people'.

Appendix I

rami qui peccaverunt fracti sunt

Dem XVII

797, 24 *d-lâ 'naš nestbar leh*

ne quis autem existimaret

Dem XX

897, 19 *b-haw lilâ teštqel lâh nepšak mennak*

eademque nocte anima tua abs te auferatur

Dem XXI

944, 1-2 *meṭṭul d-ettniḥat lâh 'al ḥbalâ*

quoniam in vastitate manet

Dem XXII

997, 8 *d-etmakkak leh mawtâ men šûlṭâneh*

quod ipsa e potestate sua deturbata esset [mors]

Dem XXIII

II 124,1 *eštkaḥ leh mhalek 'al-'ar'â*

humi ambulans invenitur

II 145, 1 *d-rahṭîn b-'ûtrâ lâ meqarên leh: meštqel leh menhûn*

qui divitias sectantur, ipsas non possidebunt, sed auferentur ab eis

B. List of occurrences of the structure *t-form + l + coreferential dative* in Ephrem's Commentaries in Genesis and Exodus

<i>Genesis</i>	48, 20 <i>et'abe's leh</i> he got angry
11, 1 <i>etbrî leh rqî'â</i> the firmament was created	48, 21 (idem x2)
11,5 <i>etbrî lhên 'nânê halên</i> it was created the clouds	49, 5 <i>netqaşsaş leh</i> he will be reckoned
23, 2 <i>etpallagw lhôn</i> they were separated ⁴	51, 25 <i>eştkahw lhôn</i> they are found
24, 29 <i>netkalyân lhên bûrkâteh</i> they were restrained, his blessings	52, 27 <i>tetqarê lâh</i> she will be called
26, 16 <i>eştallamw lhôn</i> completi sunt	55, 2 <i>etqarîw lhôn</i> they are called
31, 25 <i>ettaqnat lâh anttâ</i> and the woman was formed	55, 8 <i>nett 'îq leh</i> he will be grieved
46, 2 <i>etgzar leh 'layhûn</i> it was decreed against them ⁵	56, 13 <i>eştagşat lâh</i> she is troubled
	58, 23 <i>mestarhîn lhôn</i> they were destroyed
	63, 22 <i>meştakbân lhên</i>

⁴ *etpallagw lhôn atrawtâ* 'per loca sua dispersi sunt' Tonneau (1955).

⁵ impersonal with *leh* functioning as an empty subj.

Appendix 1

they are found	102, 11 <i>metkassê leh</i>
68, 22 <i>ešta'al leh</i>	he concealed himself
he abstained	103, 8 <i>eštkaḥ leh</i>
	he was found
74, 29 <i>ettrîm leh menneh alâhâ</i>	103, 18 <i>et'sî leh</i>
God is taken away from him	he was forced
76, 16 <i>tet'îq lâh</i>	110, 22 <i>etqaššaš leh</i>
she will be grieved	he is declared older
76, 23 <i>etpašqat lâh</i>	112, 20 <i>eštawtap leh</i>
she is exposed	he had intercourse
87, 20 <i>etpallag leh</i>	112, 28 <i>etpšet leh</i>
he doubted	he spread out
94, 13 <i>netdkar leh</i>	116, 25 <i>etbaddarw lhôn</i>
he will remember	they are dissolved
96, 17 <i>estabart lâh</i>	<i>Exodum</i>
she suspected	
101, 9 <i>eštanqat lâh</i>	122, 13 <i>ethattan leh</i>
she was troubled	he conjuncted himself
101, 27 <i>etnkel leh</i>	146, 2 <i>etr'emw lhôn</i>
he acted deceitfully	they got angry

C. Coreferential dative in the first seven Acts of Judas Thomas

With et-stems

	I, 178, 2 <i>îibat lâh</i>	she sat
I, 177, 17 <i>eštahlap leh</i>		
it had changed/was transformed	I, 180, 9 <i>nehtat lâk</i>	you descended
IV, 210, 2 <i>meštqlâ lâh mennî</i>		
will be taken away from me	I, 180, 21 <i>nepqet hwâyt lâk</i>	you had gone out
VI, 220, 11 <i>etkses leh men ewkaristiya s</i>		
he was rejected by the Eucharist	I, 181, 3 <i>iteb hwâ leh mârân</i>	and our Lord sat down
VII, 244, 2 <i>lâ meštlê leh</i>		
he has not been forced	I, 183, 1 <i>mennî etrahaq leh</i>	from me it moved away ⁶
VII, 248, 5 <i>meštrên lhen</i>		
are loosened	I, 184, 12 <i>hzaq hwâ leh</i>	he had gone, departed
<i>With other verbal stems</i>	II, 188, 7 <i>šqîl leh</i>	he takes for himself
I, 173, 16 <i>šteq leh</i>		
he was silent	II, 189, 7 <i>mâ'et 'nâ ly</i>	I am dying
I, 174, 11 <i>qâmat hwât lâh ržhâ</i>	II, 190, 14 <i>twar hwâ leh</i>	
the wind had risen/was steady		

⁶ Wright (1872): 'it was moved far from me' (impersonal).

Appendix I

he was astonished	VII, 234, 10, 'raqw lhôn
II, 191, 7 <i>tezban lâk</i>	they fled
you will buy yourself	VII, 234, 12 <i>etw lhôn 'alayhê</i>
II, 193, 8 <i>qâm leh ihûdâ</i>	they arrived/ they came upon them
and Judas stood up	VII, 236, 12-13 <i>ezal 'nâ lî men ləwatkôn</i>
II, 193, 20 <i>etkassî leh menhûn</i>	I will go away from you
he covered himself from them	VII, 236, 21 <i>šbeq leh</i>
II, 193, 19 <i>pkah leh nûrhûn</i>	it goes away
and became pale their light	VII, 238, 15 <i>l'î hway lhên</i>
II, 194, 14 <i>nehsar lâh</i>	they got tired
she will want (for herself)	VII, 238, 16 <i>qâmy hway lhên</i>
II, 195, 7 <i>sbû lkôn</i>	they stood still
receive (for yourselves) ⁷	
III, 203, 10 <i>nebteḷ leh</i>	VII, 239, 1 <i>krî hwâ leh</i>
it comes to an end	was becoming short
III, 204, 7 <i>tahmê lâk menneh</i>	VII, 245, 1 <i>mayety lhen</i>
you will turn away from him	they died
III, 204, 7 <i>ti'té lâk</i>	VII, 245, 4-5 <i>etayt lâk (x3)</i>
you will go	you have come
	VII, 249, 18 <i>šteq leh</i>
	he got silent

⁷ II, 194, 14 and II 195, 7 are borderline between coreferential dative and a real *dativus ethicus*.

D. Coreferential dative with et-stems in the Pešittā Gospels

Mt 13, 15 *et 'bī leh gēr lebeh d- 'amā hānā*

the heart of those people has become insensitive

Mk 10, 14 *etēb' eš leh*

he got angry

مختلا هي الفعلية من اجل ما انشا.. وهي في سبوا الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية..
سبوا الفعلية من اجل ما انشا.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية..
15 فتحة الفعلية من اجل ما انشا.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية..
الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية..
فعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية..
20 الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية..
الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية..

B The Syriac text of th Téchne Grammatiké - Diathesis of the Noun

متحلا هي الفعلية من اجل ما انشا.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية..
الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية..

C The Syriac text of Bar Zu‘bí's Grammar - excerpts²

1 بمقتضى ما انشا.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية..
مقتضى..

2 مقتضى ما انشا.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية..
مقتضى..

3 مقتضى ما انشا.. الفعلية.. الفعلية.. الفعلية..
مقتضى..

² The text reproduces Bohas (2003).

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