This book will undoubtedly bring an interesting and valuable treatise to the attention of a wider scholarly community. VdH. treats the material carefully, without delving too deeply into historicity. When he does so he opts for a middle way, neither accepting the totality of Philo’s portrayal nor dismissing it as too polemical to be trustworthy as a historical source. His translation is careful and very readable. His notes are clear, pertinent and perceptive, avoiding the pitfall of prolix density that is often tempting for commentators. VdH. is to be congratulated for providing such a worthy addition to the study of Philo.

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The diversity of the different usage types of the middle and passive voice in Greek has been the subject of debate ever since the times of the ancient grammarians. The main question is whether the middle verbal endings express only one meaning (and in this case how it is to be defined) or a polysemous structure of semantic uses related to one another. Modern grammars identify a number of usages of the middle voice suffixes: direct reflexive (λούμαι ‘bathe oneself’), indirect reflexive (δευτερολόγιον ‘borrow’), intransitive corresponding to active transitive (τέρταλομαι ‘enjoy’ vs. τέρτω ‘please’), intransitive corresponding to active causative (ψοφομαί ‘flee in panic, fear’ vs. ψοφεῖ ‘make flee in panic, alarm’), passive (ὑποθαλάσσω ‘be assaulted’), media tantum (δύναμαι ‘be able to’), and so on. On the other hand, a number of publications give different unitarian definitions of the meaning of the grammatical category as a whole. These definitions tend to be unspecific to such an extent that also the meaning of oppositional active forms are covered by them. Furthermore, it is often hard to derive from the abstract definition the sense attributed to a middle form in a given passage.

This book, which is a slightly revised version of a doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of the professors C. J. Ruijgh and A. Rijksbaron, faces this puzzling problem and some other questions related to the morphology and the semantics of the middle voice. Be it only for this reason it should be welcome by linguists and classicists. Apart from that, the conclusions drawn by A. provide us with what in my view is a coherent description of the usages of the middle voice in Ancient Greek, a well founded unitarian definition of the meaning of the middle verbal suffixes and a thorough account of how the abstract meaning relates to the various middle uses and how these uses are semantically related to one another. However, the treatment does not exhaust the subject, because A. deals very briefly with the vexed question of the preference of the future stem for the middle voice (e.g. the future of the active λημνίσκω ‘take’ is λήψωμαι in the middle voice).

Chapter 1 (p. 1–56) deals with the following questions: 1) Is there a semantic element common to the different usages types of the middle voice? 2) Assuming that the various middle uses constitute a polysemous structure, in what way are the middle uses related to one another?
With respect to 1), A. holds that voice alternations can be fruitfully described as markings of departures from the prototypical transitive event. Transitive events are defined by means of a cluster of semantic properties, among which the occurrence of two participants playing the roles of agent and patient is crucial. In the unmarked coding of the prototypical transitive event, the agent is expressed as the subject, and the patient as the direct object. The middle voice expresses that the subject is affected by the event denoted by the verb. The subject, in some way or other, undergoes an effect of the event. This effect can be of a physical or a mental nature, and it can be direct or indirect (in that it involves an external object). Thus, the middle voice can be defined as a marked coding of a departure from the prototypical transitive event. The active voice is neutral as to the semantic feature of subject-affectedness. That the middle voice is marked can be shown by means of a number of markedness criteria: it is expressed by at least as many morphemes as the active voice; the active voice has more distinct forms and these are more frequent than those of the middle voice; and the active voice occurs in contexts that the marked middle voice occurs in (e.g. \( \zeta\alpha\tau\alpha\sigma\sigma\alpha\nu\varepsilon\zeta\eta \tau\iota \alpha \delta\gamma \zeta \tau\iota \) ‘he prepares something for himself’ is sometimes found instead of the synonymous \( \zeta\alpha\tau\alpha\sigma\sigma\alpha\nu\varepsilon\zeta\eta \tau\iota \). One of the central objectives of A.’s study is to aim for a unified account of all types of middle verbs: oppositional middles as well as media tantum.

With respect to the question 2) (p. 30 ff), A. argues that the monosemous and the polysemous approach are not mutually exclusive. The meaning of subject-affectedness denoted by the middle voice is compatible with the diversity of interpretations determined by the context by means of the complex category model as developed by R. W. Langacker (Foundations of Cognitive Grammar, vol. I, Stanford 1987). According to this model, at least some semantic categories have a highly complex internal structure and can be described as a network of interconnected values. The boundaries between semantically contiguous categories are of a flexible and graded nature, and some members are ‘better’ members than others. Membership of a category is determined according to the degree of resemblance to a central member, or prototype. Thus, in the semantic category of birds the robin is a category prototype, whereas ostriches and penguins are marginal members of the category to the extent that they lack the features of flying and having clearly distinguishable feathers, respectively. A. endorses the complex network category and accordingly distinguishes an abstract schema, defined as an integrated structure that embodies the commonalities of its members, and a number of elaborations, represented as a network of interrelated values. The prototype is normally the most entrenched use. The marginal uses are linked to the central uses in the network. Thus, the middle voice is seen as a polysemous network of interrelated meanings. The abstract schema, embodying the semantic commonality of all middle meanings, can be characterized as affectedness of the subject.

Chapter 1 also discusses the theory according to which the middle voice expresses the relative distinguishability of participants and refers to events intermediate between two-participants events and one-participant events (cf. S. Kemmer, The Middle Voice, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 1993). The author also puts forward the advantages of a unified account of both oppositional middles and media tantum.

Chapter 2 (p. 57–124) describes in detail the various middle uses and the relations among them.

A. distinguishes eleven middle uses on the basis of the semantic role played by the subject (agent, beneficiary, experiencer, patient), of its reference to an animate or to an inanimate entity, and on the basis of the morphological form of the aorist stem: passive middle,
spontaneous process middle (φτάνω 'grow'), mental process middle (φθορίζω 'fear'), épistēmω 'know'), body motion middle (τρέχω 'turn' (intr.), γλύνω 'lean', ποικίλω 'go, walk'), collective motion middle (ἀγγίζωμαι 'gather' (intr.), σώζω 'save', 'dispense' (intr.), reciprocal middle (ἀγνώστηκα 'contend, fight', μέτοχου 'contend, fight with'), direct reflexive middle (ξυρίζω 'take counsel, plan, resolve'), speech act middle (ἀπομάκρυνα 'speak in defence'), ἐπιθνάμω 'promise'), and indirect reflexive middle (χρῆμα 'consult an oracle' vs. χρῖτο 'give an oracle'). The former five uses predominantly have a passive aorist form in -(Θ)ο-, whereas the remainder have a sigmatic middle aorist.

For each middle use A. tries to ascertain to which other middle uses it is related. Thus, a form always covers a connected region of variant middle uses in the semantic network, and a form only spreads from one variant use to another when these uses are directly semantically related. The analysis of the middle usages results in a semantic map of the Greek middle voice, consisting of a network of the various middle uses and their semantic interrelations. The token frequency and the semantic connections with other uses suggest that the prototype use of the middle voice is the mental process middle. The body motion middle, the spontaneous process middle and the indirect reflexive middle can be viewed as secondary prototypes. A. points out convincingly that the so-called causative middle (e.g. Κύρος τα βασιλεῖα κατέκαυσεν 'Cyrus burned up the palace', 'Cyrus caused the palace to be burned') and the dynamic middle (e.g. πολίτευτο 'act politically') are to be understood as subtypes of the indirect reflexive middle use.

Chapter 3 (p. 126–177) describes the distributional patterns of the middle aorist forms and the passive aorists in -η- and -θη- , and the way in which these patterns changed from Homer to Herodotus. The distribution of the aorists in -η- and in -θη- can be explained by means of a number of morphological rules and semantic tendencies.

The aorist in -θη- is found in the polysyllabic stems (e.g. θυρωπηθήναι), in the stems ending in a vowel (e.g. δραμήνεται) and in the stems in -ς- (e.g. δομηθήναι), whereas the aorist in -η- is found in the stems of the forms (C)ςτα-, (C)ςτε-, (e.g. γυμναται). Finally, the 'heavy' monosyllabic stems (e.g. πλέκθη) and the stems with e-vocalism (e.g. ἐπεχθη) have predilection for the aorist in -θη-. The aorist forms in -η- not determined by the above morphological rules denote spontaneous processes (e.g. ἐτήνοις 'appeared'), whereas forms that are passive or denote body motion take the suffix -(Θ)ο-. Only a small number of verbs in Homer cannot be explained by these morphological and semantic factors. In Herodotus, the aorist in -η- decreases its use, and the stems of the structure (C)ςτα-, (C)ςτε- have normally aorist in -η- (e.g. ἔκλατην). However, the boundary between both formations is not entirely clear-cut. Many verbs exhibit a variation between -η- and -θη- (e.g. ἐπικλάτῃν vs. ἐπικλάτην 'depart, be removed'). Generally, the form that is not expected on the basis of the above principles occurs less frequently, or even only sporadically. As for the alternation between sigmatic aorists and aorists in -(Θ)ο-, A. argues that in the course of the epic tradition the aorists in -(Θ)ο- extended gradually to the verbs of body motion (e.g. ὀργάθηνα - ὀργασθήνα 'set off'), of mental process (γράφομαι - γράφθηνα 'became angry'), of collective motion. In classical period the aorist form in -(Θ)ο- spread to the verbs that have a subject in the role of patient. There is also a gradual extension of the aorist in -(Θ)ο- against the root and the thematic middle aorist in passive and intransitive uses (e.g. ἐπιθύμην - ἐπιθύμην 'obey, be persuaded').
As a result the aorist in -(θ)η- expresses an event which has an external initiator, implies a change of state and has an inanimate and non-volitional subject. Whereas the various meanings of the passive aorist cluster around the prototypical patient, the sigmatic middle aorists oriented towards the other extreme: the prototypical agent. Furthermore, A. convincingly argues that the existence of a special passive form in the aorist stem is due to its expression of telicity in the sense that the more completed an event is, the more likely is that the patient in fact registers to the full the effects of the action.

Chapter 4 (p. 178–202) deals with the middle and passive voices in the future stem. A. revives a theory of F. Blass, according to which middle ἔμαι expresses a 'presentic' (imperfective) aspect ('I shall appear time and again'), whereas ψηφισμαι ('I shall appear') expresses an 'aoristic' (perfective aspect). This semantic contrast may be relevant to other middle and passive future forms, although there are also verbs which do not have this aspectual distinction, but their middle future form simply has a middle meaning, and their passive future has a passive meaning. In my view, the conclusions drawn in this chapter are far from sure.

Chapter 5 (p. 203–247) discusses the semantic value of some activa tantum and media tantum verbs that apparently are synonymous. Most of them are either verbs of motion (e.g. ἓπι 'to go' and ἔρχομαι 'to go') or of mental process (e.g. χάω vs. ἔχω 'enjoy') and therefore involve subject-affectedness in that the subject undergoes a change of location or of mental state. A. envisages two possible explanations for these variations of voice: either the active and middle verbs involve subject-affectedness and this value is emphasized by means of the middle inflection or there is no demonstrable synchronic semantic difference between the active and the middle verb. The latter possibility is more likely in the case of the verbs in which the active or the middle voice are restricted to the poetry or to a given literary genre, style or register (e.g. ἄναμμω and ἀναφέρομαι restricted to poetry, against ἄνευ and ἀναφέρω). As for verbs which are used in the middle in the present stem and in the active in the aorist stem (ἀνάπτυξις - ἔξων 'be caught', ἔρχομαι - ἔρχομαι 'look'), the active form represents the use of the unmarked form of the opposition.

A. discusses the following pairs: ὁμίλωτο 'rush (up to)' vs. ὁμίλομαι 'start off', πτωτό 'make an attempt on by force' vs. πτωτομαι 'test, test by questioning, experience, try' (in both pairs the middle voice conveys a higher degree of subject-affectedness), πολεμίζομαι vs. πολέμειον 'act politically' (without any difference in meaning), ἐξέλω and πράχω 'jump' (the difference is one of register), and ψυχόμαι vs. ἐθέλου 'want' (the former implying a higher degree of mental involvement than the latter). In the last section of this chapter, A. argues that a tendency can be detected for manner of motion verbs to be active, and for nontranslational motion verbs and change in body posture verbs to be middle. These tendencies are viewed as an outcome of the differences in the degree of affectedness of the subjects.

The book, nicely produced, closes with a general conclusion (p. 248–50), a bibliography, and indexes of names and subjects, and of Greek words. Some rare misprints let uncover the underlying Dutch version. The style is clear and the book reads well, what is important for a text dealing with a difficult subject like middle voice in Ancient Greek.

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