In his pioneering study on reduplication („Doppelung“) Pott gives a typological sketch of reduplication devices in which he analyses the figura etymologica as syntactic reduplication, with a certain areal / genetic preferences for the Semitic languages (cf. Class. Arabic َدَرَبُ-اَلَّذِي َدَرَبَتْهُ, „he hit violently“, lit. „he hit a blow“). One of the problems he had to struggle with is the border between stylistic and grammatical resources.

In the first part of the paper I will use the well studied case of Old (Classical) Arabic to clarify the following relevant concepts:
- on a general level with regard to the question of a specific grammatical device (i.e. productivity vs. lexical restrictions) and grammaticalization in the sense of necessary forms of the articulation of syntactic structures.
- more specifically with regard to the adverbial functions of the construction in Arabic (which lacks the grammatical category adverb).

In the second part of the paper I will analyse the construction in more detail in neo-Arabic varieties: esp. Moroccan Arabic and Maltese.

This implies two levels of analysis:
- the analysis of competing expressions in syntax: verbal modifications of the predicate (coverbs in the sense of my earlier studies of Moroccan Arabic) vs. nominal constituents in the periphery of the clause (prepositional phrases),
- the analysis of the morphological form of the reduplication (the unmarked case being the masdar, as in دَرَبُ-اَلَّذِي َدَرَبَتْهُ, „hitting“), where more nominal marked forms, e.g. with concretizing suffixes that make the masdar more „nominal“, can be used.

Thus syntactic reduplication can be shown to be a grammatical device in the polarized field of the predicate and its complements, with complex predicate formation on the one side and predicate-governed nominal complements (possibly with dummy expressions) on the other.

An interesting point is the renewal of Old Arabic (Old Semitic) structures in the contemporary varieties. Especially interesting is the case of Maltese, where as a consequence of contact with Italian and in contrast with all other varieties of Arabic, morphologically marked adverbs are used. This will be presented in the third part of the paper.

Argumentation in the paper will be informal, focussed on the data and not committed to a special grammatical theory.