

TWO TEXTUAL NOTES ON THE *AXIOCHUS*  
([PLAT.] AX. 364B5 AND 367A1)\*

Sunt autem spuria colloquia omnia, quae inter Platonica  
vulgo habentur, multo maiore, quam genuina, numero  
mendorum, praesertim minorum inquinata  
(August Boeckh 1810, VII)

1) *Axiochus' illness (364b5)*

Δεδακρυμένος δὲ ὁ Κλεινίας, ‘Σώκρατες,’ ἔφη, ‘νῦν ὁ καιρὸς ἐνδείξασθαι τὴν αἰεὶ ὄρυλουμένην πρὸς σοῦ σοφίαν· ὁ γὰρ πατὴρ ἔκ τινος ὥρας αἰφνιδίου ἀδυνάτως ἔχει καὶ πρὸς τῷ τέλει τοῦ βίου ἐστὶν κτλ.’

1.1 Cleinias, in tears, catches up with Socrates, who is on his way to the Cynosarges, and informs him that his father Axiochus is ill and probably about to die. The most recent translations of the *Axiochus* render the sentence beginning with ὁ γὰρ πατὴρ κτλ. as follows: “mio padre qualche tempo fa è rimasto all’improvviso senza forze ed è prossimo alla fine dei suoi giorni”; “Denn mein Vater hat einen plötzlichen Schwächeanfall erlitten und steht am Ende seines Lebens”; “Mon père vient en effet d’être frappé d’un malaise subit, et sa vie touche à sa fin”.<sup>1</sup> With regard to the rendition of the expression ἔκ τινος ὥρας αἰφνιδίου, a divergence can immediately be noted between the Italian translation (“qualche tempo ... all’improvviso”) and the German and French versions (“einen plötzlichen Schwächeanfall”; “un malaise subit”). Clearly, the expres-

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1) See, respectively, Aronadio 2008, 364; Männlein-Robert 2012, 45 and Brisson 2014, 70.

sion ἔκ τινος ὥρας αἰφνιδίου is problematic<sup>2</sup> and, in an attempt to make sense of the transmitted text, the German and French translations understand ἔκ τινος ὥρας αἰφνιδίου as a causal expression, whereas the Italian translation assigns it a temporal meaning.<sup>3</sup> The debate surrounding this passage has been raging for centuries and a wide range of solutions have been put forward, which may be summed up as follows:<sup>4</sup>

1) to preserve the transmitted text by understanding ἔκ τινος ὥρας αἰφνιδίου as a sort of ‘modal’ adverbial locution, as though it stood for αἰφνιδίως or αἰφνίδιον (Cornarius 1561, 1015; Serranus ap. Stephanus 1578, III 364), in such a way as to de facto circumvent the difficulty posed by the unusual construction;

2) to defend the transmitted text ἔκ τινος ὥρας αἰφνιδίου by assigning it a temporal meaning such as ‘at a sudden moment’ (de’ Rustici ap. Belli 1954, 456; Cassarino ap. Belli 1954, 462; Agricola 1511, sine numero paginae; Pirckheimer 1523, sine numero paginae; Clericus 1711, 80–81; Horreus 1718, 120–121; Aronadio 2008, 364): most scholars who have adopted this solution are forced to separate αἰφνιδίου from ἔκ τινος ὥρας, which leads to the embarrassing problem of having to go against the grammatical agreement and of having to interpret the no less unusual temporal locution ἔκ τινος ὥρας (with rather unsatisfactory results);

3) to assign the expression a temporal meaning (‘for some time’, ‘for a while’) by expunging αἰφνιδίου (O’Neil ap. Hershbell

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2) Of the three scholars, the only one who has felt the need to flag the objective difficulty posed by this passage has been Luc Brisson, who explains that he has chosen to render ὥρας αἰφνιδίου as “un malaise subit” because he identifies the concept expressed by this locution with the following term *σύμπτωμα* (401 n. 12: “C’est ainsi que nous traduisons *horas aiphnidiou*. Le *sumptoma* qui se trouve quelques lignes plus bas reprend l’idée”). This interpretation raises some substantial problems, as we shall see.

3) The locution ἔκ + genitive can have both a temporal and causal function: see LSJ s.v. ἔκ II and III.6.

4) For the translations made by de’ Rustici, Rinuccio Aretino and Cassarino I have consulted Belli 1954, who offers transcriptions from manuscript witnesses for each of the three Humanists (Rinuccio Aretino’s translation has been dated between 1426 and 1431: see Hankins 2009, 144 n. 141; de’ Rustici’s dates from 1436–1437; Cassarino’s from 1447). The other translations made between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century have been verified using reproductions that are available online. For Ficino’s translation, I have consulted the 1497 print edition of the text (on the history of this translation and its publication, see Chevalier 1915, 3–4).

1981, 54 n. 4, followed by Hutchinson ap. Cooper / Hutchinson 1997, 1735). This solution does not solve the fact that ἔκ τινος ὄρας remains an unprecedented way of expressing the meaning which is assigned to it: the outcome does not justify the expunging of αἰφνιδίου. Clotius 1758, 595 assigns the expression the temporal meaning of ‘too soon’ by emending the text to read πρὸ ὄρας τοῦ βίου, but this is an eccentric correction that is certainly to be rejected;

4) to defend the transmitted text ἔκ τινος ὄρας αἰφνιδίου by viewing it as a causal locution (Rinuccio ap. Belli 1954, 449; Ficino 1497, sine numero paginae; Wolf ap. Fischer 1786, 224–225; Segaar 1766, 21; Fischer 1766, 97–99 and 1786, 111–112; the last of these scholars is either directly or indirectly followed by Bekker 1826, IX 164–165; Souilhé 1930, 137–138 n.2; Hershbell 1981, 54 n. 4; Robin 1950, 1322; Männlein-Robert 2012, 45, and Brisson 2014, 70). Some champions of this interpretation have – rather unjustifiably – assigned ὄρα the meaning of *casus*, ‘misfortune’, while others have assigned it the no doubt more pertinent – if just as unfounded – meaning of *morbus* (more on this below);

5) to defend the transmitted text by interpreting it as “einen Vulgarismus” (Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1895, 983 n. 2): this solution too de facto circumvents the problem, as it fails to show that the term ὄρα can mean ‘negative event’;

6) to correct the text by assigning the expression a causal value. Thus Stephanus 1578, III 71 (Ann.) suggests ἔκ τινος ὄρας μεταβολῆς αἰφνιδίου. Aside from the problems surrounding the explanation of the alleged textual corruption, the use of the indefinite τινός and especially of αἰφνιδίου does not fit well with the suggested reading: precisely because they are cyclical phenomena, seasonal changes occur at specific moments of the year, which is to say that they are foreseeable. In Immisch’s critical apparatus we find the conjecture συμφορᾶς, assigned to Cornarius. This is actually a ‘ghost conjecture’, which no one ever really put forward – least of all, Cornarius. The misunderstanding was probably created by a sentence found in Fischer 1786, 111 (and already present in the 1758 and 1766 editions): “Videndum igitur, annon rectius cum Cornario reddere possis simpliciter *derepente*, ita, vt pro ὄρας reponatur συμφορᾶς, quod fieri potest”. In other words, by interpreting Cornarius’ translation (*derepente*), Fischer intimated that the latter read συμφορᾶς instead of ὄρας. Finally, Hermann 1853, XII – whom we will soon be discussing in more detail – suggested

we correct ὥρας to ὥρακίας (a suggestion taken up by Feddersen 1895, 1 and Immisch 1896, 87).

Before presenting my own solution, I wish to examine the two most interesting and influential positions: that of Johann Friedrich Fischer, based on a defence of the transmitted text, and that of Carl Friedrich Hermann, based on the emendation mentioned above.

1.2 In his 1786 edition (pp. 111–112), Fischer notes that in Hebrew, Greek and Latin a phenomenon occurs whereby certain time expressions are used to indicate the event that takes place at that time – usually a negative event (“in partem fere malam”). As regards specifically the use of the term ὥρα in this sense, Fischer refers to Mark 14:35–36 (καὶ προσήχετο ἵνα εἰ δυνατὸν ἔστιν παρέλθῃ ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ ἡ ὥρα, καὶ ἔλεγεν, Ἄββᾶ ὁ πατήρ, πάντα δυνατά σοι· παρένεγκε τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ) and John 12:27 (Πάτερ, σῶσόν με ἐκ τῆς ὥρας ταύτης. ἀλλὰ διὰ τοῦτο ἤλθον εἰς τὴν ὥραν ταύτην).<sup>5</sup> In addition, Fischer believes that the dialogue itself provides confirmation of his view: the expression ἀδυνάτως ἔχει and the following one σύμπτωμα would in turn indicate the *casus* which has befallen Axiochus and hence would help to understand the expression ὥρα αἰφνίδιος. After having introduced these data, Fischer concludes his argument as follows: ὥρα αἰφνίδιος indicates a *casus* (misfortune? calamity?) that unexpectedly befalls someone, sapping his or her strength. Now, it is interesting to note that the contextual argument (the reference to ἀδυνάτως ἔχει and the following σύμπτωμα) was already to be found in the second edition of Aeschinis Socratici dialogi tres, published in 1766, only with one significant difference. In 1766 Fischer had written: “Iam vero verba ἀδυνάτως ἔχειν et αἰφνίδιος ostendunt, ὥραν non significare partem diei, sed *morbum* [Fischer’s own emphasis]” (p. 98); instead in 1786 he stated: “Iam verba ἀδυνάτως ἔχειν et αἰφνίδιος ostendunt, ὥραν non significare partem diei, sed *casum* [Fischer’s own emphasis]” (p. 112). This means that in 1766 Fischer believed that a semantic leap could be made from *casus* to *morbus*. He probably found the term *casus* (already used in Wolf’s translation) too vague and did not accept the interpretation according to which what

5) One could also add Αποκ. 3:10: ὅτι ἐτήρησας τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου, καὶ γὰρ σε τηρήσω ἐκ τῆς ὥρας τοῦ πειρασμοῦ τῆς μελλούσης ἐρχεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ὅλης πειράσαι τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

Cleinius is saying is that Axiochus has fallen ill because of some ‘unexpected misfortune’, without specifying what this misfortune is. Fischer instead found *morbus* to be a more satisfactory translation, because it was more precise. In 1786, however, he reconsidered his stance and opted not for *morbus* but for *casus*. Why did Fischer have second thoughts? One reason might be that while in 1786 he believed – on the basis of his complex argument – that he could infer the meaning *casus* from ὥρα, he was no longer confident that he could go as far as to assign ὥρα the meaning of *morbus*. In other words, Fischer felt that the confirmation he had apparently found in the dialogue ran up against the difficulty of assigning the term ὥρα an unlikely meaning. This is why, to support his interpretation, the scholar sought external confirmation in two Gospel passages.

1.3 If we turn to examine the two passages from Mark and John, we indeed find that the term ὥρα is not used as a merely temporal indication, but rather to refer to the death which Jesus on Gethsemane feels is approaching (cf. Mark 14:35 and John 12:27, quoted above). However, precisely for this reason, it is difficult to draw an analogy with the *Axiochus* passage. The ὥρα mentioned in the two Gospel passages is the hour of Christ’s destiny, which is to say the hour of his saving death: it is a specific moment, fixed by God’s universal plan.<sup>6</sup> In the *Axiochus* passage, by contrast, the indefinite τινός rules out the possibility that what the author is referring to might be a specific moment. Besides, to the best of my knowledge, ὥρα is never attested with the meaning of *casus*, except in some very peculiar Gospel expressions (no evidence for such use is to be found in the ThGL s.v. ὥρα coll. 2047–2048 or in the LSJ s.v. ὥρα, and the same applies to the use of the term to mean *morbus*). What is more, in the passage from John (and, more generally, in Gospel Greek) the expression ἔκ + ὥρα in the genitive used in a

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6) As regards the passage from Mark and its possible eschatological meaning, see Brown 1994, I 167–168 (168: “While for Mark the death of Jesus is involved in ‘the hour’, the death is part of a struggle with sinners that is an aspect of the coming of the kingdom”). In general, see Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, IX s.v. ὥρα, 678–681, praesertim 678: “Die Verwendung von ὥρα im Neuen Testament entspricht weithin der in außerbiblischen Texten und in der Septuaginta. So bezeichnet das Wort ebenfalls zunächst *die für etwas bestimmte Zeit*”.

non-temporal sense usually indicates deliverance from the hour of death, i. e. it does not acquire the causal value we would expect it to possess in the *Axiochus* passage (more on this below). Finally, the very hesitation that Fischer shows in choosing between *morbis* and *casus* in the 1766 and 1786 editions reveals that he is not really convinced by either exegesis: the former is too bold and finds no confirmation whatsoever in Greek; the latter is too generic and equally unconfirmed by the sources, if we rule out the Gospel passages as genuine parallels.

1.4 All in all, I believe that the most persuasive solution suggested thus far is Hermann's conjecture (ὠρακίας in place of ὠρας), which is quite a straightforward one from a palaeographical perspective. As already noted, it was implicitly approved by Feddersen, whose translation presupposes ὠρακίας, and by Immisch, who included it in his edition of the *Axiochus* ("emendatio palmaris"<sup>7</sup>). This conjecture, however, was also favourably regarded by Burnet and Souilhé, who printed ὠρας yet recorded ὠρακίας in their critical apparatus, as well as by Hershbell, who acknowledged the worth of Hermann's idea.<sup>8</sup> The problem with Hermann's suggestion lies not so much in the fact that the noun ὠρακία is a ἀπαξ formed from the verb ὠρακιάω, as in the overall meaning it gives: based on the meaning of ὠρακιάω (cf. LSJ s. v.), i. e. "animo delinquere" (to quote Hermann), ὠρακία must mean 'fainting'. Now, while stating that fainting has made someone weak is not unreasonable, it is somewhat of a tautology: fainting is a symptom, not an illness. Furthermore, if the author had wished to say that Axiochus was feeling ill because he had fainted, he could have done so in a less abstruse way, for example by using a participle of ὠρακιάω.

1.5 All things considered, I believe that Hermann's suggestion moves in the right direction, as it attempts to introduce the reason for Axiochus' exhaustion in the passage, although it cannot be regarded as conclusive. Besides, while the temporal interpretation of the passage has endured over the centuries, it has not proven as popular with exegetes. Already Stephanus noted that it is diffi-

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7) See Immisch 1896, 19–21.

8) See Hershbell 1981, 54 n. 4.

cult to assign ἕκ τινος ὥρας αἰφνιδίου a temporal meaning.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, in the light of the overall meaning of the passage, a temporal reference hardly seems very relevant. By contrast, it would make sense for Cleinias to mention the cause of his father's illness, particularly since other sections of the dialogue focus on the topic of illness (364c7–8: {ΚΛ.} Ὀφθέντος σου μόνον, ὦ Σώκρατες, ραίσει· καὶ γὰρ ἤδη πολλάκις αὐτῷ γέγονεν συμπτώματος ἀνασφήλαι; 365a2–5: {ΣΩ.} καταλαμβάνομεν αὐτὸν ἤδη μὲν συνειλεγμένον τὰς ἀφὰς καὶ τῷ σώματι ῥωμαλέον, ἀσθενῆ δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν, πάνυ ἐνδεῶ παραμυθίας, πολλάκις δὲ ἀναφερόμενον καὶ στεναγμούς· ἴεντα σὺν δακρύοις καὶ κροτήσεσι χειρῶν; 370e4: {ΑΞ.} ἕκ τε τῆς ἀσθενείας ἑμαυτὸν συνείλεγμα καὶ γέγονα καινός). If the locution ἕκ τινος ὥρας αἰφνιδίου meant 'because of a sudden illness', all its elements – including τινος and αἰφνιδίου, which are so problematic for champions of the temporal interpretation – would make perfect sense. However, as we have seen in relation to Fischer's exegesis, it is very difficult to infer this meaning from the transmitted text. All in all, then, I wonder whether it might not make more sense to read: ἕκ τινος ἀρρωστίας αἰφνιδίου, 'because of a sudden illness'. What the term ἀρρωστία indicates is precisely an illness (cf. LSJ s. v.) and it occurs in many expressions akin to ours: e. g. Plut. Mulierum virtutes 255d4 (= Charon, FGrHist 262 F 7a,4): καὶ τὴν Λαμψάκην ἐξ ἀρρωστίας ἀποθανοῦσαν ἔθαψαν ἐν τῇ πόλει μεγαλοπρεπῶς, καὶ τὴν πόλιν ἀπ' αὐτῆς Λάμψακον προσηγόρευσαν; Plut. Alex. 56,2: οὐ μὴν ἐπὶ πλεον γε τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν εὐνοίας τοῦ βασιλέως ἀπέλαυσεν, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀρρωστίας ἀποθανὼν ἐκηδεύθη μεγαλοπρεπῶς; Plut. Demetr. 32,5: ἐν δὲ τούτῳ Δηιδάμεια πλεύσασα πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑλλάδος καὶ συγγενομένη χρόνον οὐ πολὺν, ἐξ ἀρρωστίας τινὸς ἐτελεύτησε; Socrat. Schol. Hist. Eccl. 5,26,1: Ὁ δὲ βασιλεὺς Θεοδόσιος ἕκ τοῦ πολεμικοῦ μόχθου κακῶς διετέθη τὸ σῶμα. προσδοκήσας δὲ ἕκ τῆς ἐπιγενομένης ἀρρωστίας τέλος ἔχειν αὐτῷ τὰ τῆς

9) See Stephanus 1578, III 71 (Ann.): "Suspectus cuiquam esse possit genitivus ὥρας, cum pro χρόνου accipi non possit (ut accipiente qui interpret. Ex aliquot iam tempore) et alium satis aptum huic loco usum habere non videatur". It seems to me that Stephanus is quite right: one would rather expect a locution with χρόνος (cf. e. g. Dio Chrys. Or. 31,8: μοχθηροῦ δὲ ἄλλως κατεσχηκός ἐθους ἕκ τινος χρόνου, καὶ μήτε τιμωμένου λοιπὸν παρ' ὑμῖν μηδενός, εἰ βούλεσθε ἀλλήθες εἰδέναι; Gal. Quod qualitates incorporeae sint 19,472,5–7 Kühn: ἢ γέγονεν ἕκ τινος χρόνου καὶ συνῆλθεν εἰς ταῦτὸν ἅπαντα, ἵνα ἕκ συνεργείας γένηται τὰ συγκρίματα). No expressions of this sort are to be found in the LSJ s. v. ὥρα.

ζωῆς, μείζονα τῆς τελευτῆς περὶ τῶν δημοσίων πραγμάτων εἶχε φροντίδα. Just how this error may have crept in is far from obvious. It may be that two letters were inverted (APPΩCTIAC > ΩPPACTIAC) and that the text was then adapted in such a way as to produce a sequence that made sense.<sup>10</sup> The word ὥρας was read into the new string of letters, while the remaining letters (TIAC) could easily have been read as TINOC, not least under the influence of the τινος occurring just before. Once the sequence τινος ὥρας τινος was obtained, the second τινος was expunged as a useless repetition of the first one.<sup>11</sup> To sum up: APPΩCTIAC > ΩPPACTIAC > ΩPACTINOC > ΩPAC.<sup>12</sup> A psycho-cultural factor may also have come into play in this palaeographical process: a Christian scribe would certainly have been familiar with the term ὥρα from Gospel expressions such as those quoted by Fischer (esp. John 12:27: Πάτερ, σῶσόν με ἐκ τῆς ὥρας ταύτης. ἀλλὰ διὰ τοῦτο ἦλθον εἰς τὴν ὥραν ταύτην):<sup>13</sup> in all likelihood, the scribe would have read or heard these passages several times a day; in other words, he could

10) On ‘secondary induced errors’, see Ronconi 2003, 119–123 (praesertim 119–120: “Il copista che, nell’*ἀνάγνωσις* di un segmento grafico [...] abbia commesso un errore, nel caso in cui il segmento grafico generato dalla mutazione non abbia senso in sé o nel contesto, sarà indotto (consapevolmente o inconsapevolmente) ad alterarne ulteriori unità, fino a ottenere una sequenza dotata di senso compiuto”).

11) The alteration of TIAC is generally due to the fact that this string of letters, in itself, is a vox nihili. In addition, as already noted, the previous occurrence of τινος may have favoured the reading of TIAC as TINOC; in particular, the final sigma of TIAC could have been read as an O, while the A could have read as a N. On the N/A and A/N switch, see Lapini 2007, 59 who refers to Aeschyl. Ch. 727 Ἐρμῆν Turnebus : Ἐρμῆα M; Hdt. 1,76,3 ἐπειρώντο : ἐπειρώατο C; Arr. An. 3,19,7 Ὑρκανίαν : Ὑρκανίδα A. Of course, other scenarios are equally possible: e.g. inversion, APPΩCTIAC > ΩPPACTIAC, + leap, ΩPPAC<TIAC>. As a less likely hypothesis, assuming that the first reconstruction of the origin of the error I have suggested is correct, τινος might be a transposed residue of an original APPΩCTIAC > ΩPPACTIAC > ΩPACTINOC. However, I fail to see why a transposition ought to have occurred; and, besides, this reading would imply expunging the present τινος, which in my view should stay in its place.

12) These passages are not bound to have occurred separately: several passages may have occurred simultaneously in the scribe’s mind.

13) Fischer established a connection between these expressions and the one in the *Axiochus*, while Horreus drew a link between the αἰφνίδιος from the *Axiochus* and the passage from Luke: a late-antique or Byzantine copyist might well have done the same. In certain cases, there is a thin line between the figure of the copyist and that of the exegete. Given shared cultural points of reference (i. e. Scripture), the same evaluations may be made by 18<sup>th</sup>-century scholars and late-antique or early Byzantine copyists.



easily have read certain biblical expressions into passages where they did not belong, particularly if – as has been suggested – the text was already corrupt to some degree (APPΩΣΤΙΑΣ > ΩΠΡΑΣΤΙΑΣ). On the other hand, this psycho-cultural factor may well have triggered the whole chain of errors: the inverting of the two letters (APPΩΣΤΙΑΣ > ΩΠΡΑΣΤΙΑΣ) may have occurred because the scribe read into the scriptio continua what was a familiar and meaningful expression for him: ὄρας. Besides, through his acquaintance with the well-known passage from Luke (21:34: καὶ ἐπιστῆ ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς αἰφνίδιος ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη), mentioned in a different context by Horreus 1718, 121, the copyist may well have had the term αἰφνίδιος in mind as well. For a number of different reasons, then, the *Axiochus* passage may have brought a series of Gospel passages to the scribe’s mind, possibly through a chain of references: αἰφνίδιος recalls the day of death, which in turn recalls the hour of death (the hour which Axiochus himself feels is approaching). Little does it matter that, upon close inspection, the wording which this kind of interpolation yields makes little sense in the context of the *Axiochus*. The point is that the scribe’s familiarity with the aforementioned Gospel passages and the importance they possessed for him must have somehow hampered the search for a meaning that (at least in our eyes) is fully consistent with the context.<sup>14</sup>

## 2) *Gymnasiarchy* (367a1)

ὅπoταν δὲ εἰς τὴν ἑπταετίαν ἀφίκηται πολλοὺς πόνους διαντλήσαν, ἐπέστησαν παιδαγωγοὶ καὶ γραμματισταὶ καὶ παιδοτρίβαι τυραννοῦντες· αὐξανομένου δὲ κριτικοί, γεωμέτραι, τακτικοί, πολλὸν πλῆθος δεσποτῶν. ἐπειδὴν δὲ εἰς τοὺς ἐφήβους ἐγγραφή, κοσμητῆς καὶ φόβος χειρῶν, ἔπειτα Λύκειον καὶ Ἀκαδήμεια καὶ γυμνασιαρχία καὶ ῥάβδοι καὶ κακῶν ἀμετρία.

2.1 What we have here is the first part of Prodicus’ ἐπίδειξις, as recounted by Socrates, with a list of the miseries affecting man in the various stages of his existence: ‘And when he is registered

14) See Canfora 2002, 20: “Tendenzialmente il copista non si rassegna a scrivere qualcosa che gli sembra non dare senso, o non dare quello che a lui, trascinato dalla penetrazione col testo, appare come il senso più desiderabile in quel punto.”

amongst the epebes, there loom the κοσμητής and the fear of beatings, and then the Lyceum, the Academy, the gymnasiarchy, the canings, and countless other ills.’ In his review of Immisch’s important study on the *Axiochus*, Couvreur suggested emending γυμνασιαρχία to γυμνασίαρχοι and justified the emendation as follows: “γυμνασιαρχία n’a pas de sens: jamais il n’y a eu de rapport entre les éphèbes et cette sorte de liturgie; il faut lire évidemment γυμνασίαρχοι (cf. le passage de Télès cité en note)”.<sup>15</sup> Couvreur did not mean to say that there is no relation whatsoever between the epebes and this sort of liturgy, as the second part of his statement shows; rather, he was considering the kind of relation that emerges from the context: to state that an office (such as gymnasiarchy) looms over someone normally means that the person in question is required to take up an unwelcome office. In this sense, there is no relation between gymnasiarchy and epebes. Couvreur was perfectly right with regard to this point and the possibility of printing γυμνασίαρχοι – completely ignored by Burnet – has rightly been taken into account by Souilhé in his edition of the text for the Budé collection, not least in the light of the fact that the singular in -α may well have been due to attraction from the previous Ἀκαδημία. Young people are quite right to fear the gymnasiarchs on account of the corporal punishments they inflict. However, it is odd that the same concept is expressed immediately afterwards through the mention of ῥάβδοι: these are to be understood not simply as ‘canes’ but, metonymically, as ‘canings’ – the cause standing for the effect. All things considered, then, even if we accept Couvreur’s suggestion, the text still remains slightly redundant: γυμνασίαρχοι and ῥάβδοι constitute one and the same threat for the boys. At the same time, it is not quite clear who might be beating the young men or why.

2.2 Now, in order to solve these small problems once and for all, I suggest we adopt the following reading: ἔπειτα Λύκειον καὶ Ἀκαδημία καὶ γυμνασιαρχικὰ ῥάβδοι καὶ κακῶν ἀμετρία

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15) See Couvreur 1896, 79 n.1. The passage from Teles referred to is Teles p. 50,7–9 Hense (= Stob. 4,34,72 p. 849,1–3 Hense): ἔφηβος γέγονεν· ἔμπαλιν τὸν κοσμητὴν φοβεῖται, τὸν παιδοτρίβην, τὸν ὀπλομάχον, τὸν γυμνασίαρχον. ὑπὸ πάντων τούτων μαστιγοῦται, παρατηρεῖται, τραχηλίζεται. This passage from Teles is not actually quoted by Couvreur in any note, but only mentioned in passing on p. 77.

(ῥάβδος being a feminine noun),<sup>16</sup> ‘over the boys loom the gymnasiarchs’ canes (scil. canings)’.<sup>17</sup> The error just posited is a particularly straightforward one from a palaeographical standpoint: it consists in a fallacious division of the scriptio continua: ΓΥΜΝΑΣΙΑΡΧΙΚΑΙΡΑΒΔΟΙ > ΓΥΜΝΑΣΙΑΡΧΙ ΚΑΙ ΡΑΒΔΟΙ > ΓΥΜΝΑΣΙΑΡΧΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΡΑΒΔΟΙ. A significant contributing factor would have been the influence of the context: the polysyndeton with καί (Λύκειον καὶ Ἀκαδήμεια καὶ . . . καὶ κακῶν ἀμετρίαί) may have led the copyist to separate the adjective from the noun, turning them

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16) If this small yet crucial detail had consistently been taken into account, in all likelihood the solution outlined here would already have been put forward long ago. Instead, one reads statements such as: “[a proposito del passo di Plutarco] i γυμνασιαρχικοί ῥάβδοι non si rivelano altro che l’emblema di una funzione, che aveva rapporto con l’educazione dei giovani e il ginnasio” (Fontani 1999, 196); “Plut., Ant. 33, 7 berichtet, Antonius sei in Athen als Gymnasiarch mit den γυμνασιαρχικοί ῥάβδοι, Mantel und besonderen Sandalen aufgetreten [...]. Vgl. die Paarung γυμνασιαρχία καὶ ῥάβδοι in [Plat.], Axiochos 366e–367a” (Schuler 2004, 169 n. 35). Had the error of treating ῥάβδος as a masculine noun not been made, the passage from the *Axiochos* would probably have been viewed not as a Paarung, but as an instance of textual corruption. Leaving aside this problem, which is only a marginal one in their exposition, the two contributions just mentioned remain very interesting for their exegesis of Plutarch’s passage and outline of the figure of the gymnasiarch in the Hellenistic age.

17) Some translations are worth mentioning on account of their valuable insights. Cassarino ap. Belli 1954, 463: “post id vero cum in ephebis adscriptus fuerit et deterior manuum metus successerit liceum et academia et exercendi principatus virgae et malorum nullus modus”. The interpretation which emerges from the translation is rather misleading: it seems to suggest that what looms over the ephebes are the insignias of power, as though these youths were expected to fill an office, as though what were being discussed were *fascēs* of some sort (the same error would appear to have been made by Serranus ap. Stephanus 1578, III 367 – “Lyceum, Academia, Gymnici imperii auctoritas, officiorum apparitio, denique malorum omnium infinitas” – and, a few centuries later, by Aronadio 2008, 367: “poi il Liceo e l’Accademia e la sorveglianza del ginnasio e i bastoni del comando e mali a dismisura”). Still, Cassarino felt the need to link γυμνασιαρχία and ῥάβδοι, as though the two formed a hendiadys. The same course was taken – only this time grasping the real meaning of the text – by Cousin 1840, 132–133 (“Quand il est inscrit au nombre des adolescents, à l’âge où la contrainte est plus insupportable encore, vient le lycée, l’académie, les maitres de gymnastique, avec leur cortège de verges et de peines de toutes sortes”) and Hershbell 1981, 35 (“then the Lyceum and the Academy, superintendents of the Gymnasium with their sticks and miseries without measure”), followed by Cooper / Hutchinson 1997, 1737 (“then comes the Lyceum and the Academy and the gymnasium-masters with their canings and excessive punishments”). It should be noted, however, that Hershbell accepts Couvreur’s emendation: γυμνασίαρχοι pro γυμνασιαρχία.

into two separate elements on the list, with the suffix -καί providing material support for what the copyist was anticipating to find in the light of the polysyndeton. The word *γυμνασιαρχία* would therefore have emerged as an essentially spontaneous adaptation (after all, there are not many other ways to complete the word *γυμνασιαρχι-*), possibly suggested by the previous *Ἀκαδημία*. The iunctura *γυμνασιαρχικαὶ ῥάβδοι* is attested in Plut. Ant. 33,7: ἐπὶ τούτοις εἰστία τοὺς Ἕλληνας, ἐγυμνασιάρχει δ' Ἀθηναίοις, καὶ τὰ τῆς ἡγεμονίας παράσημα καταλιπὼν οἴκοι, μετὰ τῶν γυμνασιαρχικῶν ῥάβδων ἐν ἱματίῳ καὶ φαίκασιόις προήει, καὶ διαλαμβάνων τοὺς νεανίσκους ἐτραχήλιζεν. As far as I am aware, this is the only attestation we have, but it clearly presents the *γυμνασιαρχικαὶ ῥάβδοι* as a typical attribute of the gymnasiarch – an attribute which had survived into the Roman age and was taken up as a traditional symbol by the Hellenising Anthony, who took up public offices in Athens. It is worth noting that Plutarch's passage still associates the gymnasiarch, with all his attributes, with the inflicting of corporal punishment upon young men (*διαλαμβάνων τοὺς νεανίσκους ἐτραχήλιζεν*). The reading *γυμνασιαρχία καὶ ῥάβδοι* is also attested by Stobaeus: ruling out the rather tortuous hypothesis that what we have is a case of polygenesis in the Stobaeus tradition (or Stobaeus himself) and the *Axiochus* one, the error in question must have emerged before the age of Stobaeus (5<sup>th</sup> century), i. e. through a transition from upper-case to upper-case script.

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