

## *The Laches of Plato*

*A translation and commentary by Kenneth Quandt*

### Introduction

“You've seen the display of fighting in armor, Nicias and Laches, and now Melesias and I will tell you why we invited you to come. With you, at least, we can be frank. Others might think this sort of thing ridiculous and rather than saying so might just say what they think we'd like to hear. We believe you two not only can judge well but also will tell us truly what your judgment is. That's why we asked you along. You see, it's all about our teenage sons here, named of course after their grandfathers – Melesias's son, Thucydides (the general, not the historian), and my son Aristides (yes, named after Aristides the Just). Lately we've decided to get involved in their education and not just let them while away their time the way so many parents let their children do. You, too, have sons and, given the sorts of men you are we were sure you've gotten involved in seeing to it that they turn out as best as they can be, and so we have asked you to give us your opinion – and in case you haven't, to talk things over with us as fellow parents.

“At the risk of boring you I will say more. Melesias and I are members of an eating club and sometimes our sons come along. Of course a lot of bragging goes on at a place like that, and although Melesias and I have plenty to say about the things our fathers did, we have nothing to say about ourselves in the presence of our sons! Frankly, this is a little embarrassing. We blame it on our fathers, though, because with all their military duties as well as their political work at home they neglected us in our teenage years and let us idle the time away! We've warned our sons against this, that if they neglect themselves and don't obey us, they will end up nobodies, whereas if they do obey us they may come to deserve the names they have inherited from their grandfathers.

“Well, the boys have said they would obey us and so now we have to find out what to tell them to do. Somebody told us fighting in armor would be a good thing for them to learn and got us to agree to attend a display – and it occurred to us to bring you along. That's why we're all here, and we ask you please to help us by giving your advice. How about it? Do you think fighting in armor is a good thing for us to arrange for them, or would you suggest something else?”

A certain Lysimachus has just said something like this to two men he hardly knows, in the presence of his son. It is a special thing about the Greeks, the way a man names his son after his own father. We do not need to plumb the Freudian depths to realize that all the mixed feelings a man feels

about his own father will be brought to mind every time he faces his son, a mixture his son does not yet know about in all its complexity, and may not until he has a son of his own; but a son has his opinions, too, opinions about his father, just as his father does about his own father.

A father has only one first son, and does not need to pass a test in order to qualify for fatherhood. His own upbringing will be his model for raising his son, by default, even if he fights it. At the same time, “The child is father to the man” – a true old saw that can also feed and strengthen a deep and strongly misleading delusion with which the father can console himself and justify all his foibles. And just as there are fathers who down deep want their sons not to surpass them, even if it means they merely imitate them so as to justify their own lives while at the same time hoping their sons will do them proud, there are sons for whom a sense of filial piety deters them from outdoing their fathers, a sense that at the very same time sits restively beside hopes or wishes to be free of the father altogether. A father's very notion that studying *hoplomachia* would make a man out of his boy – this cherished vision of his son decked out in seventy pounds of hoplite armor – is part and parcel of such magical and self-contradictory thinking. It is for instance characteristic of a certain kind of father to admonish his son not to waste his youth because the father himself wasted his own: the fact that he did might have enabled him to recognize it was a mistake but it did not equip him to teach his son how to do better. And in a moment we shall learn that the converse is also true: that if he is a man of accomplishments he might have too little time to father his boy. The father's dilemma will be expressed with poignancy near the very center of our dialogue by the juxtaposition of two proverbs – the father must avoid “starting sculpture with a pithos,” while at the same time he must realize that it is “not just the first pancake” that he is risking. The Greek naming convention draws all these feelings forward as the moth to the flame, and Plato's *Laches* provides us among other things with a window onto how these feelings might play out in a discussion among fathers, on a typical day in Athens in the late Fifth Century.

The father-son theme also plays an even more prominent and powerful role in Plato's greatest work, *The Republic*, and I may advert my reader to my commentary on that dialogue where this issue is for once given the recognition it deserves. The *Republic* however explores the problem from the son's point of view whereas the *Laches* gets its beginning from the father's side of the problem. Our opening speaker, Lysimachus, is one of four fathers who together will spend the afternoon talking, more and then less directly, about the upbringing of their sons. Unlike the *Republic* it is a “dramatic” dialogue – there is no omniscient narrator telling us that yesterday he went down to the Piraeus – and therefore Plato leaves it entirely up to us to recognize and reflect on what is said and what is not said, and to notice not only the blind spots of each speaker, but also the shared silences of the group and the sometimes painful silence of the sons of Lysimachus and his friend Melesias, who are present for the conversation as we learn early on, when Lysimachus introduces them by name. Lysimachus in his opening speech apologizes several times for breaking through the conventional silence by which these difficult and disarming questions are usually kept at bay, for several times he apologizes for his frankness. It is quite exceptional that he chooses to confess his belief that he is unqualified to raise his son rather than to hide it. He says this to a pair of virtual strangers while his son looks on, strangers whose help he has solicited because of their reputations as generals and statesmen, as though they are likely therefore to have given adequate care for their sons' upbringings. But he has just complained that his father was too busy with civic and military affairs to attend to his own upbringing, and moreover in embarking even at this late date upon the care of his son he suddenly claims that he is not doing what all the other parents do who allow their sons to idle away the time. Immediately thereupon it is his son that he admonishes, rather than himself, not to idle waste his time lest he end up a nobody in the eyes of the world, which is now tantamount to telling him not to not be cared for at the same time

that he demurs to tell him how he could become a somebody in his own eyes. That he should choose famous men for counselors is an index of his utter perfidy as a father. Most appallingly for his son, and for Melesias's son, it remains unclear whether the fathers are as worried about the lives their sons will lead as they are about how the perception of their sons in the eyes of others will affect their family names.

The first of the two strangers Lysimachus has brought along, the famous general Nicias, gracefully acquiesces to help in any way he can, but the first thing the second stranger says is that Lysimachus is right to point out this problem of neglect since he himself has neglected his own family given how busy a man like himself is at state affairs and war. It is this latter person, Laches, who gives the dialogue its name. His remark does not disqualify him to participate in the counseling, since Lysimachus has provided that in case they have not formulated ways to raise their sons they might for just that reason be willing to join Melesias and him in the deliberations as equally needful parties. Nor does Laches follow up with a demurrer to help: in fact he makes this remark without expressing any hint of regret, nor with any apology for frankness in the manner of Lysimachus, as if for him he means only to convey that Yes, he is a mover and shaker of the sort whose opinion is worth soliciting. Rather than making clear what he thinks he is saying, he moves on to express surprise that Lysimachus has not also asked for the advice of a fifth person who happens to be present, a person we readers know very well from elsewhere and know perhaps better than do any of the other participants in this conversation. Socrates is said, within this dialogue, to be “younger,” but the characterization may mean simply to emphasize that he hasn't yet had any sons, since this son of Sophroniscus did not become a father until he was 52 or so, and his oldest son reached the “educable” teenage years of the sons of the other four men more than twenty years after the “dramatic date” of the dialogue, at about the time of Socrates's execution by his fellow citizens of Athens. We do know, by the way, that in the traditional manner he did name his second son Sophroniscus, after his father.<sup>1</sup>

“Why,” Laches asks Lysimachus, “have you not also called upon Socrates to join in the consultation? After all he is very interested in the pastimes of the young and, even more, his father Sophroniscus was a fellow demesman of yours.” Since the time of the Cleisthenic reforms in Attica the role played by family dynasties in social organization had largely been replaced by shared membership in ten geographical demes. Laches is telling Lysimachus he already has a claim on Socrates's attentions without having to beg and flatter the way he had just done in his speech to himself and to Nicias. Lysimachus is old and doesn't get out much any more and so he doesn't know about this Socrates, but he can say he had never had a falling out with his father, Sophroniscus, up to his dying day, so that now he might prevail upon Socrates to extend the relationship between their households that he had enjoyed with Sophroniscus. “But wait!” he says, for it has just popped into his elderly mind that he has heard that name bandied about by the young ones talking in his house, and he asks his son, “Is this Socrates here the one you have been talking about so warmly?” “Yes, Father,” answers Aristides, his son, named after Aristides the Just. -- and this is the only way we know he is present for the conversation. “Well then, Socrates, it's only *just* that you help me with my sons,” Lysimachus immediately infers.

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<sup>1</sup> It is something of a fool's errand even to check the chronological possibility of Plato's dialogue dramas, as readers from Shorey to Nietzsche have said. Mythical and meaningful rather than historical and factual would be a better way to view the nature of their settings, as one can see from the spatio-temporally impossible meeting between Parmenides and the Young Socrates in the *Parmenides*. Socrates holds a theory that will be invented by his student; it is refuted by Parmenides as if he were familiar with it; despite refuting it he enjoins Socrates to hold on to it so that he will have something to do with philosophy; and then in the First Hypothesis he refutes his own theory of the one-being of his *Poem* as implying that being is unthinkable and unknowable.

Despite Lysimachus and Melesias's newfound desire to find a proper teacher for their sons, Plato leaves it up to us to notice that the sons themselves have already discovered the greatest teacher in Athens, the teacher whom Plato's brothers had sought out in the *Republic*, and have done so without their father's even being aware of it. Lysimachus for his part has heard them talking about him around the house but he has not heard what they said about him, nor has he asked we may only infer. And if we think about it for a moment longer we realize the sons have not taken the trouble to tell him, either. But again the action now recalls us from such reflections, for Laches quickly chimes in with the segue that not only Socrates's father but also his fatherland should recommend Socrates to Lysimachus. He, too, passes over the revelation about the sons' relation with Socrates, because he is eager to tell us that he was an eyewitness to the man's very deeds, how he behaved during the disastrous battle of Delium in which the Athenians were infamously routed. If all the Athenians had managed to keep as calm as Socrates had during that battle, says he, things might have turned out differently – all this as if it qualified Socrates still more to be a teacher of the two sons.

Clearly the grownups would rather talk to each other – hold forth, that is, before each other – than engage the young men in a conversation and ask about their experience of Socrates as a teacher or counselor. Lysimachus is preoccupied with cajoling Socrates to come on board with the others, just as is the old man Cephalus did at the beginning of the *Republic*, while Laches has forgotten his own neglect of his family and passed over Socrates's extremely relevant relationship with the sons in order to remember him in a different connection altogether, a connection quite unconnected to the topic that has been brought up by the display they have just witnessed and the elaborate request that Lysimachus made at the opening of the conversation. Only that first stranger, who politely and discreetly agreed to help – the general Nicias, who some years later will be in charge of the ill-fated Athenian campaign in Sicily – has not exposed a hugely unconscious broadside by his remarks so far.

Given the unanimous acclaim for Socrates, Lysimachus now demands that he also come on board to give him counsel, since it would be only just for him to carry on the family association. But even more just would it be, Socrates responds, if he spoke only after the two others, given the fact that they are his elders.

With this the conversation is underway. Shall Lysimachus and Melesias send their sons to study fighting in armor (*hoplomachia*), or what should they do, in order to help them turn out as good as possible? This is the first three pages of Plato's *Laches*, which according to the ancient subtitles of Thrasyllus and the modern secondary literature is a dialogue “On Courage,” though so far it hardly looks that way, and I can tell you now that the way it may truly be said to be about courage will end up never having been seen before!

## II. 181D8ff

The quieter Nicias will speak first, just as he was first to agree to speak. He seconds the opinion of that salesman that recommended *hoplomachia* to Lysimachus. The exercise will hardly tolerate idlers, and in addition to being as athletic a pursuit as any other it will prepare the sons as athletes in the greater contest of war, no less than horsemanship. They will learn how best to fight, and more importantly how to maneuver on their own in case the order of the phalanx is broken; but once they have mastered this they will conceive a desire to study the next level of military prowess. Success and decoration will then engender in them a desire to go on to the highest military studies and ultimately they might become generals! Overall the study will give them both boldness and a gracefulness of bearing, a thing particularly formidable in the face of the enemy. It is of course natural

that Nicias should assume the best outcome a young man could achieve is to become a general like himself and so he does not argue this but instead emphasizes how *hoplomachia* might instill in the young man an irresistible desire to do it – to study these higher things and really become a somebody. We can imagine this was the hope he held for his own son, and if we shift to the son's point of view we will recognize in what Nicias has said how every father tends to measure his son against himself and might have a tendency to justify himself by persuading his son to grow up and be like him.

Laches speaks next. He would hate to rain on Nicias's parade, but maybe *hoplomachia* is not a real study after all! Why haven't the warlike Spartans hired such teachers? And worse, why haven't those who teach it even dared to approach them with their wares, but instead frequent only those towns that have the least redoubtable of armies? In fact I have seen today's teacher, Stesilaus (now we learn the name of the man who had put on the display at the beginning), have seen him not only today with his high talk and uninterrupted display, but also under the press of action in the field, where a person is less in control of circumstances. It was on a troop ship sailing to a battle. The boat came upon an enemy cargo ship and our clever Stesilaus had a clever weapon – a sort of spear with a scythe at the end. He tried to reach to the other boat to cut its rigging but the spear-scythe got all tangled up in the other boat's ropes and he couldn't get it loose. As the boat passed he ran along the deck holding on to the spear but as it cleared the boat we were on, there he was, holding the shaft by the very tip, and the enemy burst into laughter at the graceful pose he struck. Then somebody threw a rock at his feet and when it hits the deck he lets the thing go! Even those on our side could no longer contain themselves but burst into laughter at the sight – the spear hanging in the rigging of the boat as it slipped away and Stesilaus looking off to it longingly. Nicias may be right to say *hoplomachia* is a valid study – I am only reporting what I saw. But I would say more: it may be that a coward who learns the art will then rush in too confidently and only sooner show his true colors, whereas a braver man that has studied it will be eyed with envy exactly because he did so and held to an impossibly high standard – so that in my opinion those who take it seriously are making a mistake.

The speech is as stunning for its wit as it is for its perfect irrelevancy to the question. Laches is coloring outside the lines. He has undermined the advice of Nicias about the upbringing of the young but offered no advice of his own, and indeed has forgotten that question in order to ridicule the man they had come to watch giving the display. Where Nicias spoke with grace and some eloquence, as we shall see when we review the Greek closely, Laches is opportunistic and brusque. He challenges assent by means of satire and ridicule where Nicias sought to edify and persuade. He makes no recommendation about *hoplomachia* as a study for the education of young men nor does he suggest another tack for them to take, but only satirizes the display he had been persuaded to sit through.

In fact, as with his opening remark about neglecting his own family, he has spoken without making clear just what he is trying to do by speaking, nor does he seem concerned whether his remarks will advance the common work of the conversation. The structure of the speech reveals it is more a response to Nicias than an answer to Lysimachus. He starts by opposing Nicias's idea that the study has enough substance to lead to higher things, and then insinuates, in a captious and *ad hominem* way, just where it will lead instead, namely to failure in the real thick of battle, to a false sense of security, or at least to attracting the envy of one's peers. We hear satirical verbal echoes of Nicias's speech -- for instance about how the final pose that Stesilaus struck was hardly graceful and fearsome to the enemy but ungainly and ridiculous even to his own fellow soldiers -- but it is unclear whether the echoes are intentional since he neither owns up nor claims that this is the purpose of his speech, nor indeed does he tell us *what* he is doing. This is important because it leaves the group with two speeches that are not only discrepant but that cannot even be compared. Nicias has made a general

point that Laches undermines but does not claim to refute, and does so with a mere anecdote; while for his part the only general point Laches makes is that *hoplomachia* would not be worth studying if it were not a serious study, but this is true by definition. Plato leaves us to reflect that perhaps he is the sort of person Lysimachus referred to at the beginning, the sort that might ridicule such a study, and that Lysimachus was right to think Laches would not be at all hesitant to hide his feelings – and yet he does not articulate his opinion in a propositional way, so that he actually has taken no position at all.

### III. 184C9ff

What will – what *can* – happen next? Of course it devolves upon Lysimachus to speak, and in particular to request a response from Socrates. He asks him to break the tie with a third vote, but rather than jumping at the chance to hold forth as the other two have done, Socrates expresses shock. How in the world can you submit your son to a fate decided by a mere majority? Lysimachus is non-plussed and Socrates turns to his sidekick, Melesias, the other stake-holder in the consultation: Don't you think you would prefer to find an expert for your sons if it were a gymnastic competition he was to win? Melesias agrees and Socrates continues: But what should our expert be an expert in? What are we really deliberating about?

At this point Nicias interrupts – “*Hoplomachia*, no?” for he hopes to keep his favorite topic front and center, and Socrates turns to him to clarify the question he asked Melesias. It is not about eye-salve that we deliberate when somebody asks whether to put it on the eyes, but about the eyes for the sake of which we would do so. Similarly it would be for the sake of the son's souls that we would suggest one study or another and so in summary we need somebody who has studied and become competent at the care of the soul.

And now Laches interrupts: “*Studied?* Can't a person be effective without having a teacher leading him around by the nose?” Of course he is reiterating his skepticism about study in general, again without making a refutable argument to defend his prejudice, but for the nonce Socrates can sidestep the disruption with a slight modification. We need an expert who studied with a reputable teacher or failing that has *actually* improved somebody – indeed several people to be sure, and so according to their own testimony.

With just a few select remarks Socrates has brought all four others into a single conversation: Lysimachus and Melesias have been challenged, and Nicias and Laches have been corrected. Something like four dialogues have suddenly taken place and everybody has become involved. If they agree that they need an expert they will have to look beyond myself, he now goes on to say – I have spent my life thinking about this sort of thing but have gotten nowhere and never could I afford a teacher. But Laches and Nicias are older and richer, too. Moreover it seems they do have competence since they were so willing to hold forth a moment ago. I wonder only at the fact that they appear to disagree! So now Lysimachus, put it to them to show their credentials. And here Socrates gives him the very words to say, in order to ensure that things will not go off the rails again. In the course of doing so he happens to tie together several of the loose ends we noticed, that had been passed over by all the un-self-aware speechifying: “Here is what to say to them” (again I paraphrase):

“Socrates claims to be clueless about this matter himself and can't decide between you. So tell us with whom you studied the subject of bringing up the young so that just in case you haven't the time, given the pressures of your public activities, all of us here might go to that person instead and try to persuade him, with gifts or favors, to take care of both our children and yours, so that they won't heap embarrassment upon us by turning out poorly. Alternatively, if you discovered it on your own,

show us an example of a person you transformed. After all, if it is only today that you have become such experts as to hold forth, you must beware, for you aren't 'risking a Carian' but your sons and the sons of your friends; and beware that the old proverb of 'trying to start ceramics with a pithos' might apply to you!"

Socrates's words have Lysimachus admonishing Nicias and Laches for being too busy to tend to their sons, and including them in his own dilemma and embarrassment. At the same time Socrates is admonishing Lysimachus that the fact somebody is a close associate is a good reason for him *not* to give advice, unless he is truly qualified. Lysimachus had had the chance to evaluate Socrates's effect on his sons but forwent doing so in order to cajole him into helping, on the grounds of being a fellow demesman. Moreover, Lysimachus confessed to "a certain embarrassment" (ὑπαισχυνόμεθα) at having nothing to say on his own behalf at dinner but now Socrates calls a spade a spade, warning them all against what he calls a *devastating* embarrassment (κατασχύνωσι); and though Lysimachus had complained that his father was too busy to bother with him, Socrates now shames Laches for saying this is true of himself without batting an eyelash. The crowning blow comes at the end, with the two proverbs – that the father is not risking a mere Carian slave (tantamount to our proverb about the first pancake), and that one would do better not to begin pottery with a pithos. What describes the great human dilemma of the father better than to remind him that his son is nobody to improvise on but also that raising a son is the hardest thing a man will ever have to do – that he will indeed be starting on the hardest of pots to throw unless he has done some kind of preparatory work, for instance on *himself*.

#### IV. 187B8ff

Again it devolves upon Lysimachus to speak. Wonderfully he has recognized the dynamic challenge in what Socrates has said and in what he had done in the interlude. Even upon his first brief exposure to Socrates he suddenly finds just the right words (as we shall see) to describe the constituents and character of Socratic method! Recognizing its power and its stringencies he realizes Nicias and Laches have to be given a chance to beg off answering the challenge Socrates wants him to put to them, but he pleads with them that they rise to the challenge nevertheless, since the very fame of their families is at stake; and thus, just as before, Lysimachus's request creates a berth for two more speeches.

Nicias again comes first. Reading between the lines of Lysimachus's mild request he remarks that it surely must be true that Lysimachus knows Socrates only through his father: the disarming challenge Socrates has raised is nothing new, but arises typically when one converses with him. 'Sooner or later he always turns his interlocutor's outward gaze around and makes him look inward. I am used to it and am ready to undergo it again since however it may hurt it is no harm. Rather it is better to be improved than to continue in one's old ways. Solon himself said,

*Ever do I age, learning many things.*

And so I will take whatever he serves up. In fact I just knew this conversation would not end up being about the boys but about ourselves! But you had better ask Laches what he thinks.'

Laches steps in directly and by now we should be on our guard: 'My feeling about speeches is simple – or, better, duplex. Nothing pleases me more than to hear a real man give a speech about virtue or some kind of sophistication when he himself is worthy of making such a speech. The harmony between what he is and what he says produces that beautiful music of the Dorian kind, not

the fancy Phrygian, the lavish Ionian, nor that snarky Lydian, hardly fit for a Greek! But when it's the other way around it pains me: indeed the better the opposite sort of man speaks it pains me all the more! As for Socrates I haven't experienced his way of talking but can say that given the man I have seen him to be, he deserves to make as pretty a speech as ever he may – indeed to say absolutely anything he wants! Given all that, I am of course ready to be tested by him in conversation, and would also not be offended to learn something from him, for I too subscribe to Solon's advice, though with one proviso. I will gladly “be taught no matter how old I am,” as long as the teacher is a worthy man in himself, or else I will seem a very slow learner, indeed. That he should be younger than I or have not yet made a name for himself matters not: I feel this way about you Socrates – I put myself into your charge – I will never forget the dangers you and I went through that day at Delium, and the proof of yourself you offered, such as is only just for a man to offer!

The speech expresses an aversion to rational discourse in general, and spells out what had underlain his critique of Stesilaus and *hoplomachia* as a study. What matters is the man, not what he says. If he is a real man he can say whatever he wants and if he isn't he doesn't deserve to speak. The incident with Stesilaus on the ship was for Laches enough to annihilate categorically any claim that even the content of what he could offer as a teacher might make upon our attention. It is moreover noteworthy that Laches expresses his preference and aversion in terms of pleasure and pain – complaint and praise in these terms sidestep giving reasons for the pain and pleasure, the articulation of which would require *logos*, and a *logos*, to explain. His speech behavior is of a piece with all we have heard so far – either he ridicules as in the case of Stesilaus or he praises with mawkish understatement as in the case of Socrates, and while he will listen only with pain to anything a man says whom he thinks is less than a man, he will listen pleasurably to *anything* a man says who has proven his mettle on the battlefield. Does he realize that he buys his readiness to put down others at the expense of an excessive fealty to any man that impresses him, from whom he is willing to “hear anything”? Does he realize the implication that with all his talk (and each time in fact he speaks at much greater length than Nicias) he is arguing that arguments have no inherent worth, while at the same time he somehow allows that an unmanly man could speak well or even better, in order to say he finds it painful? What could speaking well consist of, in itself? As before Laches leaves it to us to fill all this in for him. The only thing we can imagine would pain him would be to hear a man boasting beyond his ability, as he suggests that Stesilaus had done, but even so what Stesilaus probably boasted about was the worthiness of the study, and only derivatively his worth as its teacher. Finally, Laches claims to be inexperienced in Socrates's manner of speaking as mere foil for saying he has experienced his prowess at war. At the same time that this is mere rhetoric his words evince a strong contrast with the reaction of the old man Lysimachus, who has recognized in the short space of the Socratic interlude how very special it is! Plato leaves all these quandaries in our lap.

It is marvelous that the biographical fact of Socrates's bravery at Delium provided Plato a way to make credible a scenario in which a man entirely skeptical of the validity of argumentation should be eager, and perhaps even compelled, to engage in dialogue, as long as it is with Socrates. We may now guess that this very special *tour de force*, which has taken Plato half the dialogue to set up, is the reason he named the dialogue *Laches*.

#### V. 189C3ff

Nicias has acquiesced in being examined for the sake of self-improvement; Laches is compelled to do so despite his resistance to talk *per se* because of Socrates's heroism at Delium. Now

Lysimachus seeks to absent himself from the conversation so as to return to the role of observer by asking Socrates to carry out the interrogation on behalf of himself and Melesias. At his age, after all, he can hardly keep track of the complicated give and take of a conversation like the one that just took place. Since the men have acquiesced to converse on the question of their merits and to examine their own credentials, Socrates can now turn the discussion to a program more substantial than merely to name teachers or persons they have improved, which would very likely devolve into insubstantial gossip. After all they would never possess such credentials unless they knew just what it is that improves a young man's soul as well as how to procure it for him; and they would never know *that*, in turn, unless they knew what virtue is, for it is virtue whose presence improves a man's soul. So let's check whether we know what virtue is.

Laches was the last to hold forth and so it devolves upon him to talk through this suggested change of program with Socrates. But first, Socrates suggests that to ask about virtue at large might be a rather large task, for after all they are only seeking to establish Laches and Nicias's candidacy to give advice about the upbringing of the sons. Perhaps it would suffice to focus on some aspect or part of virtue – say, bravery. We already have an inkling why this might have been the best question Socrates could ask Laches, since he had insisted that only a real man deserves to hold forth on “virtue or some wisdom” – whatever that phrase of his was trying to say. The virtue of talking intelligently (σοφία) for instance, if it were somehow a virtue, would be a non-starter with him, and his behavior in conversation so far evinces little respect for moderation (σωφροσύνη) or fairness (δικαιοσύνη), either. Of the four canonical or cardinal virtues mentioned elsewhere in Greek literature, bravery might be the only one Laches would even acknowledge as indubitably virtuous! In fact Socrates does not even hazard to mention the others by name, but just suggests bravery as the part of the whole of virtue with the graceful excuse that this is the part that according to most men would have something to do with *hoplomachia* – which Laches accepts with a derogatory sneer.

His articulation of the question that Laches must answer carefully repeats the criteria of the new program with its two steps. What is the bravery that we would endeavor to bring to the young men? Only later will we ask what studies, if any, might be useful for pursuing the second step, namely bringing it to them – say for instance through the study of *hoplomachia*. So 'How, Laches, would you characterize the virtuous man?'

“That's easy, Socrates: if a man should be willing to hold his ground in battle against the enemy and refuse to flee, you can know he would be a brave man.”

“Good answer, Laches, though now I see I did not ask the question I really had in mind to ask. I would agree the man you describe is brave but what about the man who flees and doesn't hold his position?”

“How could a fleeing man be brave?” Laches asks.

Socrates now cooks up some suggestive material from Homer: those horses of Aeneas that were reputed to know the lay of the land so well they were as good at charging as they were at flight. The Homeric term for fleeing is φόβος, which by the time of Socrates's Attic dialect almost always meant fearing – and so he then says Aeneas the governor of these horses, because of his knowledge of φόβος (fear or flight?), got the sobriquet “admonisher of flight” which in Attic would mean “admonisher of fear.” Sometimes of course it can be wiser to flee, as when the prospects are fearsome – but this engaging ambiguity is entirely lost on Laches (as it has been on all commentators to my knowledge), and he gruffly replies, “Socrates, you are talking about cavalry tactics, whereas I was talking about hoplites.”

Socrates quickly remembers a pertinent example of retreat as a hoplite tactic, the maneuver of the Spartan infantry, who as Spartans are indubitably brave, against the Persians with their wicker shields – how they turned to flee but then wheeled back upon them and won the battle at Plataea. The story is true, Laches allows, but rather than tarry on the refutation Socrates quickly moves beyond "exemplomachy" to the real issue. He meant to ask about brave men of all kinds, not just men at war. For in fact it takes bravery to travel at sea, and to face up to disease, and even to face pains and pleasures.

To this wider extension of bravery Laches readily agrees, eager as he is to admire bravery in any and all forms, and perhaps even hoping that bravery (*ἀνδρεία*) is the only virtue or the virtue that underlies what it means to be "a man" (*ἀνήρ*). "In all these areas, what is the common element?" Socrates now asks, and illustrates what he means with the example of quickness. One can be quick at running or talking, quick in body or in mind, yet in all these cases there is the single ability of quickness, the ability to do many things in a short time. So what is the common ability that is present in all cases of bravery? And Laches has an answer: it is "a strength of soul to persevere." This is just the sort of answer we need, Socrates says – but this would only include those sorts of perseverance that are admirable, no? – since bravery is a thing quite admirable? "You may be sure it is among the *most* admirable of things," is Laches's completely predictable and slightly corrective reply. Thus a *mindful* perseverance would be an admirable thing and be brave, but a foolish perseverance would be shameful and therefore would not be. "Of course."

Now Socrates introduces a new line: Would such a mindful perseverance be bravery whether it is a perseverance in small things as well as in large? If a person had the gumption to invest money knowing that later he would profit, would that count as bravery? Or a physician who denies his patient water and food when it would be deleterious, even if it were his own son – would this be a perseverance you would call brave? "No way," answers Laches. These are matters of money and health, and in the Greek outlook the goods of money and health fall below a third category, the goods of soul. We may only imagine that this is the "large" concern that Socrates's expression "large and small" had brought into play. And now Socrates presents him with a third and more detailed case to judge:

"Say you had a man who was willing to fight the enemy, calculating that he will have the support of others while he will be fighting against men fewer and less qualified than the men supporting him, and that moreover his position on the field is superior: would you call this man or the man on the other side who awaits the assault, the braver man?"

"The other one," Laches replies, and it is a huge decision since Socrates's hypothesis suggests beyond doubt that this waiting soldier will lose. This image of the man holding his "position no matter what" comes stunningly close to Laches's original (and for him definitive) image of the brave hoplite and moreover now places that hoplite in a situation that describes exactly their own "historical" position at Delium, facing superior numbers who held the higher ground! – and Laches says Yes! Will he after all modify his position merely because of its unforeseen implications, or will he stick by it with perseverance? With his previous examples Socrates had already broached the idea that the behavior of a soldier might be governed by tactical considerations and we saw how Laches responded there. He "informed" Socrates, as if he did not already know, that Aeneas's "expertise in fear" and the prowess of his horses to beat a retreat, was a matter of cavalry and chariots, whereas he, Laches, was talking about hoplites. But now Socrates has given him an example tailored to hoplite battle and there is no such escape – so Laches with imperturbable perseverance holds to the gut reaction he had expressed

from the beginning. His hoplite who will not turn to flight no matter what – just as Socrates did not, that day at Delium, which is after all the only reason he is willing (more exactly the one reason he is compelled) to participate in the conversation!

From this point it becomes inevitable that for the sake of consistency (i.e. perseverance) Laches will defend the unschooled cavalryman whom Socrates next brings up, as being braver than a schooled one (Socrates is working back toward the example of Aeneas) and then for good measure Socrates adds the unschooled archer or slinger as well, and then adds examples beyond the military range like diving into a well. The problem, however, is that Laches had initially agreed, when he at first was praising bravery, to associate it with mindfulness. At that point he had seen mindfulness as sober resolution. But in Socrates's last example of the hoplite on the battlefield, he has not only recreated the situation of himself and Laches at Delium but he has also slanted that mindfulness toward mere calculation, in his depiction of the opposing hoplite – a thing quite different in Laches's mind and more of the ilk of Stesilaus and his display at the gym. Socrates reminds him they had agreed that foolish perseverance was shameful but bravery was admirable, so that the position they have now reached, in making bravery shameful, is itself not admirable, but rather reveals a Doric disharmony within themselves – a discrepancy within them between their words and their deeds, for an observer of their behavior at Delium might believe they have some share in bravery, but an auditor of this conversation would hardly think so.

With this Socrates indicates that Laches, who puts little stake in talk, has not even met his own minimal standard for speaking! Laches bravely takes this comeuppance right on the chin (“What you say is completely true”), and Socrates playfully suggests they should not perhaps abandon Laches's position entirely, at least to the extent that they should bravely *persevere* in their search! Who knows, maybe bravery will turn out to be perseverance after all and the argument itself will laugh at them for quitting!

In response to this good-humored remark Laches candidly reveals his feelings, and they are a jumble, as feelings can often be. In fact, for the first time the confusion that has underlain everything he has said comes near the surface and confusion is all that he expresses. “For my part Socrates I won't stand down before the fight is over; yet please recognize that I am not really used to these sorts of arguments; and I have to admit that a certain contentiousness has sprung up in me about the things that have been said; and I am truly disturbed that I am unable to express what I see in my mind. I do have an idea of bravery, and I don't understand how it has so eluded me just now that I cannot capture it in words.”

#### VI. 194B5ff.

Of course something else has to happen, and luckily Socrates can now suggest they ask Nicias for help. Nicias steps right in and suggests a new line of argument, based on something he has heard Socrates say in other conversations, that becoming wise (σοφός) about something enables people to become good at that something, so that maybe bravery is a kind of wisdom. “Wise” for Laches immediately means “sophisticated” – a negative thing – and so he objects with incredulous indignation, “What! Sophistication?” We are in a sort of three-way and Socrates brings things under control by suggesting to Laches that he turn his exclamation into a question for Nicias: “What (kind of) sophistication?” and asks Nicias the question himself, on Laches's behalf. Laches can't wait to hear how Nicias will answer this, and answer it he does: “The science of what is to be feared and what is to be dared, whether in war or anywhere else.” Laches immediately dismisses the answer with ridicule:

“How far gone he is! We all know that bravery and sophistication have nothing to do with each other!” Socrates remarks, “Not according to Nicias,” so as to invite Laches to challenge his position with a question or argument, but again Laches retorts rather than responding: “No, not according to Nicias – that’s what I mean: he is babbling!”

The conversation continues in this vein for a page, with Laches’s captious swipes pre-empting Nicias from fully taking the floor to present his position on its own terms. Finally Laches accuses Nicias of being unwilling to admit that his position has been refuted as he himself had had the courage to admit when his position had been, and so Socrates needs to take over the role or job of questioner. He gets Nicias’s position clarified: Bravery is a knowledge of what is to be feared and what is to be dared. This would imply that no animal without *logos* (knowledge) could be brave, but we always think of the lion or the boar as brave in comparison with the monkey or the deer.

Laches interrupts again, now to praise Socrates’s question, for he sees it as a successful assault, but Nicias, quiet and unruffled, sticks to his guns: “Indeed I do not call any beast brave nor a mindless child, either. There are very few brave persons among men. The majority are mindlessly headstrong, like the ones you would call brave, whereas for me whether he is beast or man one must be mindful to be brave.” Laches again dismisses this *distinguo* as mere verbiage by turning to Socrates: “Behold how he decorates himself with fancy talk at the expense of dishonoring the sorts of people we all count as brave!”

## VII. 197E1ff

Socrates must again take over so as to maintain Laches’s participation in the dialogue while at the same time keeping him under control. He does so by asking a double sort of question: “Laches and I think this, Nicias (don’t we Laches?), but what do *you* think about it?” In particular, the two of us had adopted the study of bravery as being a part of virtue – are you on board with that Nicias? And when you speak of fearables and dareables, Laches and I think of these as future goods and ills (don’t we Laches?) – Do you? Nicias agrees. And yet the two of us think that knowledge of some category of things pertains as much to past cases of those things as present and future cases – don’t you? Given all this, bravery as a knowledge of future goods and ills would by implication include knowledge of all goods and ills, future present and past, so that your definition of what bravery knows mentions only a third of what it knows; and the *part* that we have asked you for turns out to be a knowledge of *all* goods and evils: a man that knew all that would be lacking in no virtue and would have the whole of it instead of just a part.

What is the opposite of a Pyrrhic victory? Nicias appears to have lost the battle, but (as Plato again leaves us to see on our own) he has won the war! After all it was virtue they needed to show they could articulate, as a prerequisite to being able to confer it upon the sons: Socrates had focussed on bravery merely to keep Laches in the discussion. Technically, however, the conclusion is that Nicias has failed to define bravery, and this is all the pretext Laches needs to gloat that Nicias has done as badly as he had done. Nicias responds as he had once or twice before but now with greater forcefulness, by calling Laches on his empty contentiousness. For all his praise of *manliness* (ἀνδρεία) he is himself behaving in a way that is all too *human* (ἀνθρώπειον), bringing others down to his own level rather than looking within and trying to improve himself. I have done what I could in the conversation today; if there were missteps I took I will right them sometime, and when I do I will come and teach you what I have learned, for you are sorely in need of learning.

“Sophisticated though you may be, Nicias,” replies Laches, burying the hatchet but not without

one final dig at the sophistication he despises, “I would advise Lysimachus and Melesias to drop us as counselors and rely on this fellow Socrates instead.” Nicias wishes he could persuade Socrates to help him with his own son, Niceratus, but reveals that for some reason Socrates always refers him to someone else when he asks. Perhaps Lysimachus will be more successful. Lysimachus chimes in with another cajoling but vague offer somehow to compensate Socrates if he will help him with his sons, again alleging it would only be “just” for him to do so – and all this draws Socrates out to make a longish speech that will bring the dialogue to a close.

“It would be unjust to refuse help, but our conversation has only shown that nobody among us stands out as qualified; but likewise nobody will let it out if I say that we have discovered that what we need to do is find a teacher for ourselves even before our sons! If someone ridicules us for going back to school at our age, we'll use Homer's line: “It doesn't help the beggar to be shy.”

Lysimachus, who has also learned quite a lot on this day, finishes things off with an improvement on the old saw of Solon: 'As I am the oldest I am also the most eager to learn! Please do come around tomorrow to my home, Socrates, and I will join my sons in the conversation!' Socrates says he will come around, God willing, and we know that when he does, Lysimachus, the most eager to learn because the oldest – though truly it is because he has learned the most today -- will finally be vouchsafed an opportunity to witness what his son has been talking about with Socrates, nothing different really from what these older men have been talking about today. But more importantly his son will be vouchsafed a chance to share the prospects of his life with his father and together they will bring the whole thing home and “justify” Lysimachus's old relation with Sophroniscus before he dies.

What a tender work it would have been, if Plato had written up what transpired the next day! Presumably he felt he had to move on to sterner duties.

\* \* \* \* \*

The foregoing summary digests the results of the translation and commentary on the Greek text of Plato's *Laches*, presented below. As in my work on the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus* I have reached a dramatically verisimilar and morally profound interpretation simply by moving from the inside out, allowing the Greek to explain itself rather than pressing it with questions from the secondary literature. Again I seem to have reached something quite new, and again from this close perspective many of the questions discussed back and forth in the literature of the last seventy years do not arise, but seem in the aftermath of my own work to be viewing the action at a distance from which it is impossible to tell whether the tower is round or square. Plato's story is well told; it has created its own horizon; there is no need to hypothesize a Plato struggling to work out a doctrine of his own, nor is there any sense in hypothesizing a Socratic agenda being foisted upon his interlocutors, destined only in our days to undergo a long-overdue perusal and evaluation by a professional "philosophical" criticism barely a hundred years old. If Socrates's questions to Nicias and Laches rely upon questionable presuppositions it is the place of Laches and Nicias to say so, not of the scholar who thinks to improve the discussion by diverting it from its own course. The course it takes on its own is vindicated at the end by the interlocutors' unanimous agreement, reached after only a couple of hours' discussion – the agreement that Socrates is the one counselor worth listening to -- though scholars are still squabbling over this point a couple of thousand years later.

The dialogue is not about bravery but about Laches as a type who for some reason chafes at

thought and speech, as if he “believes” in action instead, and is more quietly about the even-tempered Nicias. Laches's discomfort has a cause and a reason, more or less conscious, for he is a man and not a brute -- the cause of his attitude would be accessible to rational search -- but the prospects of his being brought to recognize this are shown to be slight, because when his one foray into conversation fails, he reacts with emulous aggression rather than self-corrective humility. Socrates suggests the focus on bravery because this is likely the only topic Laches feels it is incumbent upon himself to discuss, the only truth that matters. We are not talking about the Heraclitean, for whom the sense is always flowing and who will only wave his finger back and forth, but about a man whose words always fall short, living perhaps in envy of the smooth talkers who barely deserve to say what the gift of gab enables them to. The most sympathetic embodiment of such an attitude is Ajax; at worst it is the type of the crass and arrogant loudmouth who makes discussion impossible.

For such a man the only trusted value and the only solace is deeds done, deeds whose fame is secure from cavil, and it was exactly this that Laches revealed about himself when first he spoke, confessing without a trace of remorse that his public work has led him to neglect his family. The occasion of the dialogue -- the request of Lysimachus and Melesias -- brings to the fore that it is at the expense of his sons that Laches holds this value and consoles himself as he does. His sons will themselves have to act in their future and although it is incumbent upon the father to articulate the meaning of action as best he can so as to instruct them what to do and how to live, Laches, being skeptical of the truth of talk, is left only to hope his son's actions will be good or commendable. He barely realizes, at the same time that he subconsciously hopes, that the only recourse his sons will have is to imitate him, unless they find an avuncular figure like Socrates, the way Glaucon and Adeimantus did in the *Republic* and the way the sons of Melesias and Lysimachus have quietly done here. The opposite man to Laches is Solon, who has learned from life that life continues to have lessons for him down to the end. Of the four fathers depicted Laches is the only one who has no plan for his son and expresses no desire for one. In fact, again unbeknownst to himself, he reveals at the end that he has no idea “at what age” they are to be educated, as we shall see. His legacy will have its harvest in the life of the grandson who will be named after him.

Still, speech is the action that separates man from the brutes, and given Plato's lifelong project to depict man as the animal with speech – whose speech might raise him to a vision of truth and reality that is beyond the scope of language and everyday experience but may also promote and even foster forms of self-ignorance he would rather cover over with it – it was inevitable that sooner or later he would have to depict the type of man that plays a crucial role in the life of the polis but whose speech action is devoted to denying the validity of speech itself. This man is Laches. In the event however, Laches for all his gruffness will have spoken at greater length against *hoplomachia* and against speech than Nicias does on behalf of these, and in the dialogical section his belligerent speech-behavior will devolve into verbal swordplay, so that Socrates will need to bring him under control to enable him to continue to participate at all. It is his resistance to the world of language and talk that pushes Laches in the end to characterize his fellow general Nicias as a pansy sophisticate, whereas Nicias, as is shown by his own manner of speaking, proves to be decent, self-aware, and capable of improvement. In particular he defends his position with quiet perseverance – another sort of bravery in argument. It hardly needs to be said that these qualities make him most qualified in fact to raise his son; and in fact he alone succeeds to find not only bravery but even virtue as a whole.

Just as the battle of Delium is crucial to the attitude and behavior of Laches, Nicias's final battle in Syracuse becomes a theme for the dialogue on the plane of an allusion to the future, through the reference to soothsayers by Laches which is then later brought back, in relevant part, by Socrates.

It is something of a scholarly crux to determine how Plato, writing a dialogue whose dramatic date is later than the definitive battle of the one interlocutor (Laches at Delium) but of course earlier than the definitive battle of Nicias's career (in Syracuse, where he will be killed), should have settled the score about Nicias's behavior in the extremely important campaign at Syracuse. We shall see that Plato in fact alludes to Thucydides's description, and teaches us something by his allusion. Laches's "definition" of bravery failed because of his loyalty to the disposition exhibited by Socrates at Delium: tactics to the wind, the man he sides with is not the calculating soldier Socrates reminds him he faced at Delium, but himself and Socrates who took it on the chin; and Nicias's definition of bravery fails because, like his leadership at Syracuse, it was his fear to offend the gods, his mindful fear, and his concern and ability to distinguish fearables from dareables, that led him to make his tactically ill-starred decision to hold off retreating during the eclipse, so as to deserve to be called "all-virtuous" by Thucydides, which is also the outcome of his argument, here.

Although both men fail in argument, both evince their deep sense of what courage is, and the deep sense is veritable courage, though the sense does not completely understand itself. Scholars in their well-heated offices might think of generals as willful and slightly mindless types eager to beat the enemy with astute tactics, but in truth the military man knows full well, as does even the owner of a sailboat, that once he leaves port or goes into battle, all bets are off. Courage is the willingness to set off into such an unknown; and the definitions of courage that Nicias and Laches give, who are in fact men willing to do this, are only attempts by themselves to bear witness to and praise this disposition they have – whether to say it is a willingness to show up and hold the course rather than to cringe regardless of unforeseeable circumstances (Laches), or to view it as an exceptional belief that what is most to be feared might not be death after all but the manner of living one's life (which, though he may criticize his superstition, will be Thucydides's closing praise of Nicias).

My work has included reviewing the text and commentaries of all editions I could find from Ast and Bekker forward, as well as many translations, all of which works are named in the bibliography at the end. Of the older commentators Christian Cron deserves special mention as a particularly sensitive reader and thorough exegete of the Greek. Discovering the significance of the Arsinoitic Flinders Petrie papyrus (iii b.c.) published in 1895 by J.P. Mahaffy, was a great and fruitful surprise: over the course of a little more than two Stephanus pages (189D5-192A9), this papyrus presents some twelve legitimate readings where BTW *unanimously* present an *impossible* reading, which led me to prefer its readings, *ceteris paribus*, over BTW, even in the cases where these do provide legitimate variants, and I have accepted its reading at 190E3, for the first time to my knowledge, where the papyrus portrays Socrates flubbing the formulation of what the scholars call the "What is F?" question. Overall my interpretation has restored many well-attested readings and left behind many of the "improving" emendations characteristic of some Nineteenth Century editors. Many of my errors have been remedied by two slow readings of the text, first with my long-time student, Matthew Morrissey, and then with my fellow student, Thomas H. Chance, the commentator on Plato's *Euthydemus*. For the more recalcitrant ones that remain the credit is mine alone.

The person who has designed and published all my Plato work on the web (commentaries of the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus* and a *recensio critica* of the *NewLoebRepublic*), and who invented the special and unique scrolling and search capabilities for the sites, is my close friend and Greek student,

Tim James – reachable by the "megillah" button on the frame of the webpage. I thank him and hope you also thank him for making this material readily available to you at no cost, wherever you have web access.

\* \* \* \* \*

The *comédie humaine* in which fathers and sons are the players I know from both directions.

I have the privilege as father and the honor as son of dedicating this work to mine:

Frederick Alexander Quandt II (1920 - 1997)

Eric Sebastian Quandt (1973 - )

γηράσκωμεν ἀεὶ πολλὰ διδάσκομενοι

## The *Laches* of Plato

Lysimachus speaks:

“Now (178) you have seen the man's display of fighting in armor,<sup>2</sup> Nicias and Laches. Why we asked you to watch it with us, Melesias here and myself, we did not tell you before but now we will,<sup>3</sup> and the reason we will is that we are sure it is right and good to speak openly to you, given who you are.<sup>4</sup> There are people, after all,<sup>5</sup> who eschew<sup>6</sup> such activities as this<sup>7</sup> but if one seeks their counsel would not say what they really think<sup>8</sup> but would try to tailor<sup>9</sup> their remarks to the person who is

- 2 *μαχόμενον ἐν ὀπλοῖς* (178A1): That *ὀπλομαχία* held a place among the studies taught to young men in Athens we know from several sources (*Euthyd.*271E, *Gorg.*456DE; *X.Anab.*2.1.7, *Mem*3.1), but as to the traditional attitude toward its educational value in the upbringing of a young man the principal source is this dialogue itself, and in particular Nicias's remarks in reply to the request herewith made by Lysimachus (181D8-182D5).
- 3 Compare *συνθεάσασθαι* (A2) with *τεθέασθε* (A1). Just as dropping the prefix would be otiose, adding it is emphatic. Lysimachus did not tell them why he suggested they should view the spectacle but now that they have undergone and accrued whatever they will from the experience (*n.b.* perfect tense) he will reveal why he wanted them to join him watching: he wanted their advice (*συν-* prepares the request of *συνβουλευέσθαι* just below), unprejudiced by having preented his own agenda beforehand, but why he thinks revealing his own agenda would affect the advice they would give him is as yet unclear. Have these two generals never seen a display of fighting in armor? Or is this a matter of Lysimachus priming them with a fresh inspiration?
- 4 *πρός γε ὑμᾶς* (A4), *γε* causal. Nicias and Laches are important generals in the Peloponnesian War. Nicias will lead the Athenian Expedition to Sicily and die there (cf. *Thuc.*Books 6 and 7); on Laches's role cf. *Thuc.*3.86.1, 3.90ff. Just what it is about them that warrants Lysimachus's candor is not as yet clear, and so he immediately explains (note *γάρ* A4). To adduce in connection with Lysimachus's desire or willingness to speak frankly, a “sub-textual reference” to Socrates's recommendation elsewhere that a person take dialogue seriously enough to submit his true opinion to dialectical scrutiny (Emlyn-Jones *ad loc.*) is entirely irrelevant to Lysimachus's present motive and only distracts the reader from the drama that is unfolding before him.
- 5 With *γάρ* (A5) Lysimachus introduces the reason for the reason. The first *γάρ* promises to explain why he and Melesias asked them to watch the display, but before explaining that he interposes a second *γάρ* as to why he feels justified in being so frank as to tell them why he asked them. There is a self-conscious mixture of deception and solicitation in what he is doing with his speech.
- 6 *καταγελῶσι* (A5) may mean to ridicule (as to an audience of others) but also may mean merely to think something absurd on one's own (to laugh inwardly) as for instance at *Leg.*830B and D and esp. 831C, where a money-lover is said to *καταγελᾶν* (“scorn,” England *ad loc.*) any *ἐπιμέλεια* or *ἐπιτήδευμα* or *μάθημα* that does not enable the student to make money (among which *ὀπλομαχία* will there be classified: 833E6).
- 7 *τῶν τοιούτων* (A5) refers (with Cron, Robin, Chambry, Croiset, and Nichols) to the display (the “second person” pronoun as such refers to something the speaker has just adverted the listener's attention to). With his adjectival demonstrative Lysimachus alludes to a characterization – *the* characterization, in fact, that a critic would make, in which he would articulate the basis of his criticism – but since Lysimachus's entire purpose is to get the evaluation of Nicias and Laches the last thing he wants to do is to characterize it himself. This again is why he did not tell them in advance. *τῶν τοιούτων* cannot refer to the persons he is addressing (“people like you two” – *pace* Lane) and does not refer to “speaking candidly” or to persons who choose to do so (*τὰ παρρησιασθέντα* or *οἱ παρρησιαζόμενοι* drawn out of *παρρησιάζεσθαι* – *pace* Sprague, Lamb, Emlyn-Jones, Waterfield), both of which interpretations force poor sense upon the immediate sequel: cf. n.9.
- 8 The shift from a “vivid” protasis to a less vivid or ideal apodosis shows both that Lysimachus *desires* advice (subjunctive protasis) but that he *conceives* that it will be difficult to obtain (ideal apodosis with *ἄν*).
- 9 *στοχαζόμενοι* (B2): Polybius's use of the verb in his description of the checks and balances of the mixed constitution illustrates its meaning when used *c.gen.pers.*, as here. The consuls at war (6.15.9) and the senate in chambers (6.16.1)

asking and say something other than what they believe.<sup>10</sup> When it comes to you, we<sup>11</sup> are sure not only that you are capable of making the right judgment but also that once you have made it you would tell us<sup>12</sup> straightforwardly what you believe<sup>13</sup> – that's why we brought you in for counseling<sup>14</sup> on the matters that we are intend to share with you.<sup>15</sup>

“All this preamble<sup>16</sup> is because of this. (179) These boys here are our sons. This one is his and is named Thucydides, after the grandpa,<sup>17</sup> and this one is mine. He likewise has his grandfather's name, the name of my father, for we call him Aristides.<sup>18</sup> We have resolved to take it in hand<sup>19</sup> to bring these two up as well as we can – not<sup>20</sup> to act like everybody else and release them to do whatever they

must “acquiesce in” the will of the deme (στ. τοῦ δήμου) lest the deme curtail their funding or adjourn the assembly; indeed the tribune, the people's very spokesman, must “hearken to” them (στ. τῆς τούτου βουλήσεως) most of all (6.16.5); but conversely the deme must “countenance” the will of the senate (στ. ταύτης [τῆς συγκλήτου], 6.17.1), which after all awards large public contracts. That some people (τινες, A5), according to Lysimachus, should hide their scorn for something about which they have been frankly asked to give their counsel, and should seek instead to give the person making the request the advice they think he wants to hear, would be an abuse of the confidence placed in them (στοχάζεσθαι τοῦ συμβουλευμένου is almost oxymoronic) that implies they have an ulterior motive. Perhaps, for instance, they are *selling* something, like the other τις in this passage, described below (179E1-3), or perhaps they are amusing themselves even further with a send-up. To adduce another “sub-textual” reference (Emlyn-Jones: cf. n.4) to philosophical procedure or a to distinction between knowledge and guesswork (= στ. *c.gen.rei*), regardless of the fact that Lysimachus surely does not have any such thing in mind, is tantamount to “hearing voices,” and can only distract the reader from what is happening in the text itself. Soon enough we will encounter a καταγελῶν in person.

- 10 παρὰ τὴν αὐτῶν δόξαν (B3): Their belief (δόξα) is what a moment ago they “had in mind” (νοοῦσιν). That verb was used before only to create a contrast between the (palpable) words they speak and the (impalpable) thoughts they think at the same time. The natural expression, δοκεῖν, will be used below (B4) when the idea is restated. It must be noted that a σύμβουλος properly so called would not act this way. A more exact way of putting what Lysimachus is describing is asking for counsel but getting a sales pitch.
- 11 With ὑμᾶς δὲ ἡμεῖς (B3) Lysimachus braves to place himself and Melesias in an immediate relationship with Nicias and Laches from which those mendacious others have been excluded
- 12 καὶ ἱκανοὺς γνῶναι καὶ γνόντας ἀπλῶς ἂν εἰπεῖν (B3-4). The first limb explains why they would ask them and the second why they would believe their response. The logic of their behavior toward Nicias and Laches is expressed not only by the analepsis of ἠγείσθαι (cf. A4), but also by the analepsis of γνῶναι, at the expense of an imperfect parallelism of εἶναι understood in the first limb (representing an indicative) over against εἶναι plus ἂν in the second limb (representing an optative). ἱκάνους γνῶναι means not only “able to form an opinion” (as those who understand παρρησιασθέντα as the antecedent of τῶν τοιούτων must take it) but “qualified to make a correct judgment.” To the mixture of deception and solicitation in Lysimachus's remarks we can add an unstable mixture of timidity and presumptuousness.
- 13 ἃ δοκεῖ (B4), parallel with τὴν αὐτῶν δόξαν (B2-3), just as ἂν εἰπεῖν repeats the shift to the optative ἂν εἴποιεν at B1. Lysimachus is being careful and logical in his movings backward and forward.
- 14 συμβουλήν (B5), more carefulness. He has drawn Nicias and Laches into the role of counselors by contrasting them with others from whom he would never solicit advice (cf. συμβουλευέσθαι, συμβουλευομένου, B1-2).
- 15 μέλλομεν ἀνακοινοῦσθαι (B5): There is some longwindedness in what Lysimachus is saying. As he braves to move forward he re-paves the path he has taken so far. With ἀνακοινοῦσθαι he presumes that Nicias and Laches will be willing after all to counsel him and Melesias.
- 16 περὶ οὗ τοσαῦτα προοιμάζομαι (179A1): This is his second apology for addressing Nicias and Laches at length. πάλαι and τοσαῦτα now acknowledge the long-windedness, but in apologizing that all he has said is a προοίμιον his apology only announces there will be still more! He is postponing something he is afraid or embarrassed to say.
- 17 πάππου (A2) without article is virtually a proper name: cf. Rep.571C9 and my n.
- 18 παπῶν ... ὄνομα ... τοῦμοῦ πατρός (A3-4): This expanded re-do (*n.b.*, καί, A3) of πάππου ἔχων ὄνομα (A2) emphasizes by hyperbaton the coming revelation that Lysimachus's father is none other than Aristides the Just. Why after all do Nicias and Laches need to know the boys' names? Lysimachus is exploiting the presence of his son to brag about his own lineage: at the same time that he is timid he allows himself to boast.
- 19 ἐπιμεληθῆναι (A5), inceptive aorist.
- 20 καὶ μὴ ποιῆσαι (A5-6) is not μηδὲ ποιῆσαι, as Stallb. noted. Lysimachus not only denies but rejects the alternative.

want once they show a beard, but rather just then to make a veritable start<sup>21</sup> at maximizing our involvement in their upbringing. Knowing as we do<sup>22</sup> that you, too, have sons we presumed<sup>23</sup> that surely you if anyone<sup>24</sup> would already have taken care<sup>25</sup> to ascertain by what regime they might turn out best, or if by chance<sup>26</sup> you have not focussed your attention on this sort of thing, we thought to remind<sup>27</sup> you that it should not be neglected and incite your interest<sup>28</sup> to do something<sup>29</sup> about the upbringing of your sons as a joint effort with us.

“Now you should hear why we made this decision,<sup>30</sup> Nicias and Laches, even if it makes things a bit longer.<sup>31</sup> You see,<sup>32</sup> we go to the common meal together,<sup>33</sup> Melesias and I, and our sons come

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- 21 καὶ (A5) with ἀλλά (A7) stresses the contrast with ἀνεῖναι. Lysimachus and Melesias had of course governed their children when younger but that will seem as nothing measured against what they will start to do just now.
- 22 οὖν (A8) again as connective (cf. A4).
- 23 ἡγησάμεθα (B1), following up their other confident presumptions about Nicias and Laches (178B2, 178A4).
- 24 εἴ τιςιν ἄλλοις (B1-2): In contrast with “the many” who neglect bringing up their sons these two, if anyone, will have decided (perfect μεμεληκέναι) how to continue their upbringing. Does Lysimachus believe this or is he merely flattering them?
- 25 μεμεληκέναι (B1): The tense also sets up the alternative that in case they hadn’t (μὴ προσεσχίκατε, B3) they would now be eager to take up the matter, which would justify even more Lysimachus and Melesias’s invitation to watch the display.
- 26 εἰ δ’ ἄρα πολλάκις ... τῷ τοιούτῳ (B2-3) solicitously minimizes the alternative – i.e., that they had not, *perhaps* (πολλάκις), to the *surprise* of Lysimachus (ἄρα), focussed their attention, upon *this sort of thing* (τοιούτῳ). The alternative, indeed, is presented as an afterthought (there was no μέν with the first) and it trails off in aposiopesis.
- 27 ὑπομνήσοντες (B3), reminding them, surely not teaching them, nor admonishing them: again solicitous. On the dropped construction cf. next note.
- 28 παρακαλοῦντες (B4), like ὑπομνήσοντες, is future. The participles represent Lysimachus’s (and Melesias’s) perspective at the time of ἡγησάμεθα, i.e., what they would do in case Nicias and Laches had not adopted a plan for their sons, requiring them to move on to “Plan B.” This is the second imperfectly parallel double construction with that verb. In the first case the first dependent infinitive is understood (εἶναι, cf. n.12) without difficulty. In this second case, the leading construction in ἡγησάμεθα, once it has provided enough background that we can grasp the future participles, is virtually forgotten. Lysimachus is both proposing something to Nicias and Laches and apologizing for doing so at the same time, and his anacoluthon is a diffident aposiopesis (complare Cron’s comment *ad loc.*). What he is apologizing for (or explaining) is παρελάβομεν ἐπὶ τὴν συμβουλήν ... ἀνακοινοῦσθαι (178B4-5), which κοινῇ μεθ’ ἡμῶν (B5-6) here recalls. The notion of a common counsel represents first the acquiescence of Nicias and Laches as superiors to give their counsel and second, in case they have not yet formulated a policy, their joining Lysimachus and Melesias as peers, a distinction with which Lysimachus closes his speech (180A1-5: cf. n.57). Again he is being careful and deferential in the expression of his back and forth (cf. nn.5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 25). The mss. are unanimous and the halting anacoluthon should not be “ameliorated” by the conjectural insertions of Badham, Král, and Schanz.
- 29 Reading ἐπὶ τὸ ἐπιμέλειάν τινα ποιήσασθαι τῶν υἱῶν (B5), with all mss., though accenting τίνα (paroxytone) might improve things since it is not to join them in engaging in some upbringing or other that they are calling upon them to do (τὸ ποιήσασθαι ἐπιμέλειάν τινα) but to join them in the investigation of what upbringing (τὸ τίνα ἐπιμέλειαν ποιήσασθαι), is best. Still, the former expression might be seen as a more general version of the latter.
- 30 ταῦτ’ ἔδοξε (B6) – i.e., their decision to focus upon their sons at this time. Lysimachus is again semantically careful in his back-reference to the decision expressed with δέδοκται at A5 above.
- 31 μακρότερα (B7), another apology for *still more* (whence the comparative) unannounced expatiation (cf. 179A1 and n.16).
- 32 γὰρ δὴ (B7-8): γὰρ is “programmatically” (fulfilling an announcement) and δὴ solicits attention “at the opening of a narrative” (Denniston 243), in particular when the narrative begins with facts in themselves not relevant that pave the way to other facts that will be.
- 33 συσσιτοῦμεν (B7): The συσσίτιον, a daily or periodical public dinner subvented by citizens, was an institution prominent in Crete and Sparta, at least, surely for the sake of fostering public spirit (so envisioned in the “Ideal State” at *Rep.*416E3-4). Of the Spartan custom we have detailed descriptions from Xenophon (*Lac.*5.2) and Plutarch (*Lycurg.*10, 12), but we do not have details about its practice in Athens (in the Decline of the “Ideal State,” *Rep.*547D6, the oligarchic state maintains the simple meals of 416E3-4 but adds timocratic athletic contests that shade the original state in a Lacedaemonian direction). The other survivals of the term seem to refer to military mess and meals taken by

along<sup>34</sup> with us. As I said at the beginning we are going to speak openly to you.<sup>35</sup> The fact is,<sup>36</sup> both of us have plenty of fine tales to tell our youngsters about our fathers – what they did in the war and in peace as well, having to do with the management of our alliances<sup>37</sup> and our own city's concerns – but when it comes to ourselves and what we have done<sup>38</sup> neither of us has anything at all to say! As you can imagine we are just a bit ashamed<sup>39</sup> by this in the face of these boys, and we blame<sup>40</sup> it on our fathers, because when it came to us they just let us<sup>41</sup> idle away our teenage years, while<sup>42</sup> the affairs of the others was their constant concern. We point this out to the boys, too – that if they are going to neglect themselves<sup>43</sup> and disobey us they will come out destitute of fame, but if they are going to

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groups of citizens on a civic mission abroad such as an embassy (e.g., D.54.4 and again compare Rep.416E3-4 [n.b. ὡς περ ἐστρατοπεδευμένων] and cf. Aesch.2.20, 22, 97), or taken in prison (Din.2.9) though even in the latter cases it serves as an index of friendliness and solidarity (Aesch.2.55, 126; Din. *ibid.*). Cron, *ad loc.*, cites G.F.Schoemann, *Griechische Alterthümer*, 1.363, who refers to an old Solonic law: *Das Gesetz nennt ferner Tischgenossenschaften, über die sich am wenigsten etwas Gewisses sagen lässt. Es scheint, dass sich öfters Männer, die entweder keine eigene Wirtschaft hatten, Junggesellen oder Witwer, oder die lieber in Männergesellschaft als zu Hause mit ihren Frauen speisen mochten, zu Tischgenossenschaften verbunden haben.* Cron continues with a note to the effect that in Athens they were optional whereas in Sparta they were mandatory. Jowett, Tatham and others have taken Laches's συσσιτοῦμεν to mean that Laches and Melesias “live together,” which makes a funny hash of their sons “living alongside them” (παρασιτεῖ).

Most have given little weight to his reference to such meals, but it comes right after he confesses candor and so it should not be ignored. Sprague, who translates “take our meals together,” thinks (Intro. p.4) that what Lysimachus goes on to say is unusual for acknowledging a Socratic sort of ignorance about how to teach virtue, but the picture of them at dinner is there exactly to show what made this ignorance of theirs ineluctably visible! They learn this, and indeed more, from their sons! The sense of συσσιτοῦμεν and the scenario invoked by it must, moreover, be given a meaning that justifies the exceptional term, ὑπαισχυνόμεθα, below (C6). I take it therefore that Lysimachus is describing with vivid candor how he and Melesias manage their appearance in a general meal among their peers, their sons looking on (ἡμῖν τὰ μεϊράκια παρασιτεῖ). We are meant to envision the embarrassing scenario that while others brag in public before each other's sons, Lysimachus and Melesias have nothing to say. An old-men's gathering and its competitive atmosphere are exactly the sort of thing Cephalus describes at Rep.329A2-B6.

- 34 παρασιτεῖ (B8): I take this to designate a sort of junior membership with limited privileges: they sit and watch and listen. Cf. the remarks at Plut. *Lycurg.* 12.4, 28.4.
- 35 ὅπερ οὖν καὶ ... πρὸς ὑμᾶς (C1-2): Still another apology but now blatantly, and therefore climactically, interruptive. We must presume we have come to the embarrassing confession (cf. n. 16).
- 36 γὰρ (C2) is again programmatic, this time because it fulfills the promise to confess implicitly announced by παρηρησία.
- 37 The war in question is the Persian War and the “matter of the allies” is the development of Athenian hegemony in the Delian League. Of Aristides (“the Just”) we know that he was a general at Marathon in 490 and was archon in 489, that he held a second generalship for the last three years of the war, and that in 477 he set the quotas for the states contributing to the Delian League. About Melesias's father Thucydides we know much less – that he opposed Pericles's building program and replaced Cimon as “leader of the rich” and that he was still alive in 426.
- 38 ἡμέτερα αὐτῶν ἔργα (C5): αὐτῶν stands in apposition to ἡμέτερα and makes it reflexive. For the “*ad sensum concord*” of the possessive genitive with possessive pronoun, cf. Smyth §977.
- 39 ὑπαισχυνόμεθα (C6), an *hapax* in Plato and perhaps all extant literature. He seeks to minimize their sense of shame (with the prefix) because they are *ashamed* to be ashamed in the face of their sons. Still and again he is explaining and apologizing at the same time.
- 40 αἰτιώμεθα (C7): The recoil to complain about their fathers is brought about by their sense of shame. Do they blame their fathers for the shame they feel or for the reason they should be ashamed, namely, that they have achieved nothing noteworthy?
- 41 εἶων (D1), imperfect, along with ἔπραττον, describing something Lysimachus experienced in his father as a (painfully) habitual behavior.
- 42 ἡμᾶς μὲν ... τὰ δὲ τῶν ἄλλων (C7-D1): By using μὲν / δέ Lysimachus avoids both to determine and to express the logical relation between the two behaviors, as for instance to assert that it is because they were preoccupied with the affairs of the others that they had no time for their sons. Perhaps they had time for both but simply did not care to care for their sons. His use of τῶν ἄλλων (not just ἄλλων) is, however, an index that he felt isolated by their neglect. The testimony of *Meno* 94A to the effect that his father bought him the finest of educations (and of 94C that Melesias's

develop themselves they might conceivably<sup>44</sup> come to deserve the names they bear.

“The boys for their part say they will obey us. Accordingly<sup>45</sup> we are looking to see what study or what practice<sup>46</sup> they might take up so as to become the best they can be.<sup>47</sup> Now<sup>48</sup> somebody introduced us to this study you have just now witnessed, saying<sup>49</sup> that learning to fight in armor is a fine thing for a young man to do. The fellow went on to sing the praises<sup>50</sup> of the particular man you saw making the display, and then he suggested we attend one of his displays. That's how it turned out that we decided<sup>51</sup> we ought to attend it ourselves but also to bring you along with us,<sup>52</sup> to act both as fellow spectators and also fellow counselors and partners<sup>53</sup> in the deliberation – if you are willing that

father did likewise for him) has nothing to do with the trade-off Lysimachus is describing. On the trade-off compare the formulation of Laches, below (180B67).

- 43 ἀμελήσουσιν (D3): The future protasis is minatory, containing “a strong appeal to the feeling or a threat or warning” (Goodwin, GMT 447). Lysimachus is showing Nicias and Laches how he talks to his son. And yet it was the *fathers* upon whom it was incumbent not to neglect the sons (e.g. B4, above), and it is upon their own fathers' lassitude that Lysimachus and Melesias blame their own being spoiled! Suddenly it becomes incumbent upon their sons to take care of themselves, and yet if Lysimachus himself had done this he would have had nothing for which to blame his father! In his defense however, alongside telling them not to neglect themselves he admonishes them to obey their fathers – and yet the fathers have no instructions for them to follow! We have finally reached the crux of the matter: Lysimachus does not know how to raise his own sons since he lacks a proper model in his father.
- 44 εἰ δ' ἐπιμελήσονται ... τάχ' ἄν ... γένοιτο (D4-5), another minatory future protasis, but this time it is combined with an ideal optative apodosis. Often the minatory protasis describing a negative or undesirable condition is matched with a subjunctive plus ἄν to express the positive or desirable one (Smyth §2328a: e.g., D.18.176; Isoc.6.107, 15.130), but in Lysimachus's case both protases are minatory and the distinction is drawn by the mood of the apodosis. He is *threatening* his son: Things will certainly come out badly if he acts wrong, but if he acts right he has only a chance of a better outcome to look forward to, and even there the outcome is described not as achieving the good so much as avoiding an evil. This verges upon cajolery laced with resentment, a form of fatherly persuasion that is not unknown. The gravamen, of course, is that the son needs to be told by his father what the self-care would consist of, but this is the last thing Lysimachus is thinking about: his ignorance comes upon him as an emergency that he had not thought about before.
- 45 With this δέ clause (D6-7) Lysimachus finally reveals the pinch he feels he is in.
- 46 μαθόντες ἢ ἐπιτηδεύσαντες (D7): The pairing is thematic in this discussion: cf. 180A4, 182C2-4 (*bis*), 183A1, 185B3, and finally 190E2, where Socrates for the first time reverses the order of the terms (ἐξ ἐπιτηδευμάτων τε καὶ μαθημάτων), probably for euphony. The pair straddles two aspects of the triad φύσις, μελέτη, ἐπιστήμη (on which cf. my n. *ad Rep.*366C7), ἐπιτήδευμα corresponding to the second and μάθημα corresponding to the third. For the pair cf. *Prot.*327A3-4, *Rep.*560B8-9, *Tim.*87B7 (ἐπιτηδευμάτων μαθημάτων τε). Cf also *Phdrs.*270B, λόγους καὶ ἐπιτηδεύσεις. For their close relation cf. 181C8 below, τὸ μάθημα ... ἐπιτήδειον; and *Rep.*527B1, μάθημα ἐπιτηδύμενον.
- 47 ὅτι ἄριστοι (D7): I borrow an English idiom that reproduces the incoherence of this statement. Compare bare ἄριστοι above (B2). The distinct connotation of ἄριστοι (in contrast with the other superlatives of ἀγαθός) is admirable strength. Here it functions as the contrary of ἀκλείης (D4). Before the desired outcome is defined more objectively, it will of course be impossible to evaluate whether the results produced by any specific studies and activities will qualify as “bestification,” and until then the only attitude with which the problem can be approached is magical.
- 48 Another narrative οὖν (E1): Cf. D6, C1, A8, A4, A1.
- 49 εἶη (E1) without ἄν indicates virtual indirect discourse dependent upon the past-tense leading verb, εἰσηγήσατο. Lysimachus prefers quoting his advisor over revealing his own present thought or evaluation of the display.
- 50 Note shift from aorist (εἰσηγήσατο, E1) to imperfect (ἐπῆναι, E2) continued in ἐκέλευε (E3). It was a sales campaign in three stages: initial suggestion, sales pitch and then (κᾶτ', E3) scheduling a demonstration. It is noteworthy that Lysimachus heeded this pitch from some unnamed τις, given the awareness he expressed at the beginning that “certain people” (τινες again) do not tell you what they really believe but try to say what they think will please you. Perhaps it was because he was thinking of just this τις that he asked Nicias and Laches to look on. He could not trust the man that recommended the study and so he has asked certain worthies – people who resemble his father, in fact, to help! That he could he not trust his own judgment meanwhile speaks volumes about the way he has raised his son. How would viewing the display help him, or Nicias and Laches for that matter, to decide whether this will help his sons become best? Has he brought them to something of which he imagines they might approve, hoping that this at least will

is<sup>54</sup> – about the upbringing of our sons. (180)

“That's what we wanted to share<sup>55</sup> with you. So<sup>56</sup> now it is your turn, to render your counsel whether about this study and if you judge it worth learning or not, or about the others if there is some study or practice that you can praise for a young man, and to answer whether you will join us in the effort we propose.”<sup>57</sup>

Nicias:

“Well, for my part, Lysimachus and Melesias, what I can praise<sup>58</sup> is the way you have thought the whole thing through, and I am quite ready<sup>59</sup> to join in your effort; and so, I imagine, will Laches here.”<sup>60</sup>

Laches:

“You imagine right, Nicias, since this thing Lysimachus has been saying<sup>61</sup> just now about his and Melesias's fathers seems to me quite well put, both as it pertains to those fathers<sup>62</sup> and to us and any man who engages in politics. Just what he is saying does happen<sup>63</sup> to them in connection with their

get them talking?

- 51 ἔδοξε (E4) again focussing on the resolution they made (B6,A4) that in turn initiated their solicitation of Nicias and Laches.
- 52 συμπαραλαβεῖν (E5) now brings forward, with characteristically solicitous care, the παραλαβεῖν of 178B4, adding συμ- by dint of the familiarity with his audience that the candor of his intervening discourse might have created.
- 53 The difference between συμβούλους and κοινωνούς (E5-6) is beneath the surface but will become explicit at 180A1-5 (cf. n.57).
- 54 εἰάν βούλεσθε (E6) = “if you please,” a deferential interjection adjacent to the actual request that for two pages he has been working himself up to make. For the idiom cf. *Rep.*358B1 and my n. *ad loc.*
- 55 ἀνακοινώσασθαι (180A1), brought forward from the present infinitive, ἀνακοινοῦσθαι, 178B5.
- 56 οὖν again (A1).
- 57 They are either to render their opinion about ὄπλομαχία as συμβουλευόντες to συμβουλεύόμενοι (and failing that to recommend some other pursuit), or to join Lysimachus and Melesias as equals (κοινωνοί) in a common search (κοινῆ, 179B5), as fellow fathers, in case they have just now been persuaded to pay attention to their sons for the first time (per 179B2-6).
- 58 ἐπαινω τε ... καὶ κοινωνεῖν ἔτοιμος (A6-7) answers Lysimachus with a playful retort. By passing over the question whether he “praises” any particular study he implicitly reveals and perhaps even discreetly confesses he has none to suggest, but places an emphasis instead upon praising the thought-process Lysimachus has gone through (διάνοια) as if this moved him readily to join in to help find one (for he says κοινωνεῖν rather than συμβουλεύειν).
- 59 ἔτοιμος (A7): Omission of the copula is idiomatic with this adjective: cf. *Rep.*567A10 and my n.
- 60 τόνδε (A8) continues the mental choreography, with Lysimachus and Melesias on one side paired up with their sons, and Nicias and Laches on the other side. At the moment of his δέ clause Nicias turns toward Laches.
- 61 ἔλεγεν (B1): With the imperfect Laches points to the descriptive aspect of Lysimachus's speech rather than to any of the resolutions Lysimachus had hoped would pass muster with him and Nicias. He was struck by the scene of the συσσίτιον. With a dramatic irony that is razor-thin, we realize it was from the other side of the equation that he was moved by it, as the negligent parent rather than the neglected son (see next note)! The two men's answers are an appalling turnaround: these respectable men have no idea how to raise their sons after all (to the contrary they are if anything part of the problem), and when it comes to recommendations the latter now suggests not some praiseworthy father but a fellow demesman of Lysimachus whom Lysimachus does not even know!
- 62 With (remote) ἐκείνους (B3) Laches rather un-self-consciously points back beyond Lysimachus and Melesias to their fathers, broaching the stunning asymmetry between being the neglectful father and the neglected son.
- 63 αὐτοῖς ... συμβαίνει (B5): His impersonal formulation with συμβαίνει exonerates the fathers of the responsibility for having made a choice, but even though he uses the passive ὀλιγορεῖσθαι rather than explicitly saying he (actively) shorts his family, the term itself reveals his awareness that the more time one spends in the one sphere the less (ὀλίγον) he can spend in the other.

children and the rest: their private concerns are shortchanged and carelessly left in disorder. This part of what you say is well put, Lysimachus;<sup>64</sup> but when you call upon us to be your counselors in regard to the education of your children but do not call upon Socrates here,<sup>65</sup> this gives me pause. After all he is a demesman of yours, and besides he is always found spending time<sup>66</sup> wherever something of the sort you are looking for is going on, a study or an exercise<sup>67</sup> designed for the young.”

Lys. “What's this, Laches? Are you saying that Socrates here has busied himself with one of these these sorts of things?”

Lach. “Quite so, Lysimachus.”<sup>68</sup>

Nic. “I have no less than Laches to tell about that,<sup>69</sup> since just the other day he gave me some personal help<sup>70</sup> by introducing me<sup>71</sup> to a music teacher for my son – Damon the student of Agathocles, a man most gifted not only in music but in the other fields to which you might deem it at all<sup>72</sup> worthy for young men to devote their time.”

Lys. “Well I have to tell all three of you, Socrates, Nicias, and Laches, that I and my age-fellows<sup>73</sup> are not acquainted with the younger generation, seeing as how we spend most of our time at home due

64 ὦ Λυσίμαχε (B7): By the unobtrusive insertion of the vocative in the midst of the speech Plato indicates that Laches is turning away from speaking to Nicias about Lysimachus (in the third person), toward speaking directly to Lysimachus himself. Cf. 181A1, 181D7, 183C1. Changes of addressee is one of the things Plato must manage in the “dramatic” as opposed to the “narrated” dialogues.

65 τόνδε (C1): More choreography, but no pairing! Socrates is an odd man out.

66 τὰς διατριβὰς ποιεῖσθαι (C2): With διατριβὰς sc. χρόνου. The expression διατριβὰς ποιεῖσθαι is a most general way of referring to a person's habitual ways of passing his time (the article is possessive: cf. 181E3). In the case of Socrates he famously passes his time in gymnasia, even more than in the agora (*Euthyph.* 2A1-2, *Charm.* 153A3). With the plural there is no reference to any directed activity or exercise, though in the singular there would be.

67 μάθημα ἢ ἐπιτηδεύμα (C4): He repeats the pair from above (cf. n.47) as something of an afterthought. His τοιοῦτων followed by his repeating of Lysimachus's alternative terms bespeaks a certain reluctance on his part to characterize what education or edification might consist of.

68 With this response (C6) Laches suggests to Lysimachus that Socrates is engaged in some sort of teaching or instruction beyond that of the ὀπλομάχης without specifying what it is – perhaps to lead him away from requesting his own advice.

69 Nicias's οὐ χεῖρον Λάχητος (C8-9) does not express emulation of Laches but an attempt to exonerate himself no less than Laches has just done from having to answer Lysimachus's request, by seconding Laches's recommendation that he consult Socrates. Adducing Socrates's recommendation of Damon, calling him χαριέστατος, and referring to a whole category of studies Damon might help with, shows that the μαθήματα καὶ ἐπιτηδεύματα Nicias would presume to be relevant to Lysimachus's request go far beyond gymnastics.

70 καὶ γὰρ αὐτῷ μοι ἔναχος (C9) recommends his corroboration as being factual and specific (καί added to γάρ), first-hand and personal (emphatic αὐτῷ), and current (ἔναχος).

71 προὔξενησε (C9): The proxenos is a foreigner's agent who is himself a citizen of the home country, as Alcibiades was Sparta's proxenos in Athens, but the verb can be used for agency without reference to a foreign connection, as here (Agathocles being an Athenian). The term suggests that Nicias had the impression that Socrates introduced him to Agathocles on behalf of Agathocles rather than on behalf of himself.

72 Reading ὀπόσου (D3) with BW (ὀπόσα T) as the *lectio difficilior*, a genitive of worth with ἄξιον. The construction is telescoped: “the other things you would want to pay whatever they are worth for young men of this age to join a teacher in working at.” σύν adds the reference to the teacher's presence, which is what is being paid for.

73 οἱ ἡλίκοι ἐγὼ ... γιγνώσκομεν (D4-5): For the singular pronoun agreeing with plural ἡλίκοι compare the expression of Pericles at *X. Mem.* 1.2.46, speaking of himself: ἡμεῖς τηλικούτοι ὄντες.

to our advancing years. But please, if you, too, son of Sophroniscus,<sup>74</sup> have some good counsel for your fellow demesman here, you ought to join in our counseling. Indeed it would only be right since as it happens I am an old friend of your father's. We were always companions and friends, and in fact the only thing that set us apart from each other was his death. In fact something came to mind just now while these two were talking about you to me. These boys have discussions with each other at the house<sup>75</sup> and the name “Socrates” comes up often, in very laudatory terms. But I never asked them (181) whether it was the son of Sophroniscus they were talking about. So – my boys,<sup>76</sup> tell me, is this man here the Socrates you were mentioning so often?”

Youth: “Yes Father, that's him.”

Lys. “Thank Hera<sup>77</sup> for this news, Socrates! You've done your father right, that best of men,<sup>78</sup> especially since from this day forward we will be sharing our households, no less!”<sup>79</sup>

La. “But don't let your description of him end with that,<sup>80</sup> Lysimachus! There's<sup>81</sup> another place<sup>82</sup> I have observed him doing the upright thing, not only right by his father but also by his fatherland! At the time of the flight from Delium he was retreating with me and I can tell you that if others<sup>83</sup> were willing to be like him, our city would be standing upright indeed, and such a fall would not have

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- 74 ὦ παῖ Σωφρονίσκου (D7): Lysimachus infers that the Socrates before him is the son of Sophroniscus merely from his name and the fact that he is a fellow demesman.
- 75 οἴκοι (E6): Lysimachus did not know about Socrates since does not get out (D3-4), but his sons brought the topic in!
- 76 ὦ παῖδες (181A1), the vocative with switch of addressee, again. He calls them παῖδες although they are μείρακια, because they are their sons (cf. LSJ s.v., I).
- 77 Εὖ γε νῆ τὴν Ἥραν λέγεις (A4): All the instances of this formula in Plato (*Apol.*24E9, *Gorg.*449D5, *H.Maj.*287A2, *Thet.*154D3) express pleasant surprise in response to an answer or assertion that is unexpected but unequivocal.
- 78 ἄριστον ἀνδρῶν (A5): The superlative is mere exaggeration in praise, but it echoes the “bestness” he is hoping his sons will achieve (179D7, 179B2). Immediately we are told that Socrates, at least, turned out well in the hands of Sophroniscus. One might have wished, then, that Sophroniscus were present for the conversation, or at least that Lysimachus would ask Socrates how his father raised him, but in fact the compliment is mere flattery by Lysimachus. He exploits the relation he had with Socrates's father in order to cajole him to add whatever help he can.
- 79 οἰκεῖα τά γε σὰ ὑπάρξει καὶ σοι τὰ ἡμέτερα (A6), reading γε with BTW and taking it with οἰκεῖα. There is insufficient warrant to emend to τε (with Bekker and edd.): the ensuing chiasm is sufficient to articulate the notion of reciprocity. By this announcement, which is similar to Spanish “*Mi casa tu casa*,” Lysimachus, in the wake of learning that “Socrates” is already a household word, is offering him his friendship (οἰκειοῦσθαι) as a continuation of his relation with Sophroniscus. He is excited not because the man his sons know and like is the same man that Laches and Nicias have recommended, but because the man that is both these things is also a demesman, so that he can prevail upon him to help. Lysimachus's first plurals do allude to his sons, but are essentially the *pluralis modestiae* (“*soziativ-affektische*,” Schwyzer *GG* 2.243: cf. Smyth §1011), referring to himself as the head of household (cf. C2, C4, C6 [bis]). Variation to the singular and back is regular in the use of this plural. Compare the elder Cephalus's use of the first plural before and after he uses the singular, at *Rep.*328C6 and D5-6.
- 80 μὴ ἀφίεσό γε τὰνδρός (A7): Lysimachus of course has no idea of letting Socrates elude his grasp: Laches recognizes this and gives him another reason not to.
- 81 ὡς (A7): Laches started his last speech similarly – i.e., with an interjection followed by a sentence introduced by ὡς (179B1).
- 82 καὶ ἄλλοθί γε (A8): γε threatens that ἄλλοθι will introduce something important.
- 83 Reading εἰ ἄλλοι (B2) with BT (οἱ ἄλλοι W : εἰ οἱ Vat.1029, Burnet) merely on the basis of superior historical authority. Without the article Laches's praise is stronger and also less resentful.

occurred.<sup>84</sup>

Lys. “Socrates,<sup>85</sup> the praise you are being served up is fine indeed, both because it is coming from men that deserve to be trusted and because of what they are praising you for.<sup>86</sup> Please therefore know that I am pleased to hear that you enjoy such good repute and that you may be sure I am most favorably disposed<sup>87</sup> toward you. You should have come around before, and visited us on your own initiative,<sup>88</sup> and have viewed us as family, according to what is right, as I said.<sup>89</sup> But regardless, from now

84 Again Laches's expression (A7-B4) is direct. Notice the swift transition from private to public in the metonymy of πατρίς, the engaging moment of suspense done with proleptic ἄλλοθί γε, the sudden asseveration καὶ γὰρ σοὶ λέγω; and then the massive understatement in τοιοῦτοι and the straining continuation of the metaphor in ὀρθοῦν (B3). As quickly as he confessed the failure of fathers in his first speech he praises Socrates against the other soldiers in this one. To praise Socrates by exempting him from the criticisms others deserve is the rhetoric of a speaker who demurs to decorate his own values with lofty language.

Alcibiades's eyewitness report (*Symp.*220E7-221C10) of Socrates's great calmness *in retreat* (συνανεχώρει) at Delium can be explained by Thucydides's account (4.96). At a certain point the Athenians had routed the Boeotian left while the Boeotian right, stacked twenty-five hoplites deep against the usual Athenian provision of eight, was advancing against them *but at first only slowly* (κατὰ βραχὺ τὸ πρότερον, 4.96.4). At this point it appeared the Athenian right might encircle the Boeotians leftward, but their general Pagondas concocted the ruse of sending a contingent beyond the Athenian right, around a hill unseen, to surprise the advancing Athenian right from their rear. These took them to be a second army and broke ranks in panic, so that in the end all the Athenians were put to flight. We may presume the hoplites on the right are the "others" that Laches blames for losing their nerve, while Socrates and Laches himself slowed the advance of the Boeotians on the Athenian left, and that it was their slow and steady retrenchment (συνανεχώρει) under attack to which Alcibiades refers in *Symp.* and that Laches refers to both here and, with the term συνδιεκινδύνευσας, at 189B5. Cf. nn.312 and 404, and cf. the remarks of P.S.Bond and E.H.Crouch, *Tactics* (The Army and Navy Journal, New York, 1922), p.278, which apply as well to hoplites as armed infantry: “The withdrawal of the firing line, while in close contact with the enemy and under his fire, is, of course the most difficult, dangerous and critical part of a withdrawal from action. It is one of the severest possible tests of the discipline, training and loyalty of troops. That it frequently takes the form of a wild rush for cover, is not to be denied. That many lives will be saved if it can be carried out in an orderly fashion, is equally true.” It is not, I think, clear from Laches's expression (τοιοῦτον πτώμα) that he means to say the Athenians might have won at Delium (if the Athenian right had shown the aplomb of Socrates) – but only that the loss would not have been so *shameful*: τοιοῦτον suggests the latter.

85 Ἦ Σώκρατες (B5), initial. The force of the initial position of the vocative in continuous conversation is revealed by the fact that although the medial position (or “enclitic” position as Wackernagel called it, *Vorlesungen* 2.311) is usual, the initial position is almost always used in one of three circumstances: (1) when an imaginary interlocutor is adduced in continuous conversation, or (2) when A tells A' what B might say to him or to them (*Charm.*165D8; *Crito* 44B1 [Socrates's dream], 50C4, *al.* [the Laws speaking to Socrates]; *Gorg.*451A8, 452A4, 469D2 [Socrates is speaking with Polus but imagines addressing him in the agora], 521E6; *H.Maj.*287C1, 288C10, *al.*; *Lach.*192A9; *Meno* 71A3; *Phlb.*63B2; *Prot.*330C3, 343E6, 353A4, 357C6; *Rep.*332C1, 337B5, 366D7, 453B2-3, 526A1, 589C7, 599D2; *Tht.*154C8, 158E7, 162D5, 195C7, 203A7), or (3) when A tells A' what the two of them might say to B (*Apol.*29C7; *Leg.*629B9, 631B3; *Phdrs.*268E1 and E2, 269B4-5, 273D2). In such cases it becomes clear that the initial position has the pragmatic function of *initiating a new interlocutory dyad*: with the vocative utterance the speaker's voice announces itself by indicating to whom his (and its) remarks are addressed, just as when someone calls from the crowd, we then look in the direction from which the voice is coming rather than toward the person on the podium the voice addresses (for such cf. *Crito* 44B1, *Phdrs.*227A1; *Rep.*327C4, *Symp.*172A4 and 174E5). The initial position is likewise usual when an entire conversation begins (*Alc.*1103A1, *Euthyd.*274D4, *Lys.*203A6, *Parm.*130A8, *Prot.*316B1, *Rep.*328C6 and 357A4), and when a new person enters an ongoing conversation or the speaker who has the floor turns to speak to a different person (*Gorg.*447C9; *Euthyd.*283E2, 285A3; *Lys.*213E1; *Prot.*318A6; *Rep.*357A4, 487B1; *Symp.*194D1-4) – something that happens especially when many persons are present (as for instance in the relatively populous *Protagoras*: cf. 330C3, 336D7, 337C7, 339E6, 348B3, 348C5).

We may classify these uses as having to do with the fundamental pragmatics of conversation, but beyond them there are in Plato about fifty instances of initial vocative *within* an ongoing conversation (same speaker and same

on, now that we have come to recognize who each other is, spend time with us and get to know<sup>90</sup> not only us but also these young men, so that you yourselves in turn<sup>91</sup> might<sup>92</sup> foster and preserve our friendship. Be sure to do so,<sup>93</sup> as we will remind you to in the future;<sup>94</sup> but as to what we started with, what say you all?<sup>95</sup> What's your opinion? Would you judge this study suitable to our young men, learning to fight in armor?"

Socrates:<sup>96</sup>

"Lysimachus, I will surely try to counsel you on these things to the extent I am able, and also

addressee). In the majority of these the one interlocutor is couching the remark he is at that moment making to the other as a sort of sublimating meta-remark about the conversation the two of them are having, whether reflecting upon methodology, or indicating an access of increased candor, or apologizing for what will be a something of a lecture (*Charm.* 163D1; *Crito* 46B1; *H.Maj.* 304B7; *H.Min.* 369B3 and D1, 373B6; *Ion* 541C7; *Leg.* 630D2, 634C5, 637B7, 673B5, 686D7, 708E1; *Lys.* 204B5; *Meno* 70A5, 79E7, 94E3 and 95A2; *Phdrs.* 228A5, 247E7 [correcting Theuth: cf. E4]; *Prot.* 328D8, 334C8, 335D6; *Rep.* 329E1 [where Soc. has told us his motive in advance: D7-E1], 336E2 [where again we get the motive: 336D5-E2], 344D7, 378E7, 450D5, 473E6, 499D10; *Symp.* 218C7; and esp. in the highly contentious dialogues, *Euthydemus* [275D3 answered by 277D4, 288B4, 305B4, 307A3] and *Gorgias* [448C4, 461C5, 471E2, 481C5 answered by 482C4, and 517B2: note also the unique and ominous *terminal* vocative with which Socrates ends that dialogue: ὦ Κάλλικλεις, 527E7]).

The medial position in continuous conversation, on the other hand, acknowledges along the way that the speaker is continuous attention from his interlocutor. For this use the instances in the *Dialogues* are countless. It is interesting to note that when the thinking the two are doing is very much of one mind – when the dialogue portrays a kind of thinking that is like the soul's dialogue with itself – such medial vocatives are absent (as in the proofs in the *Parmenides*) or rare (the vocative is relatively *rare* in the *Republic* where in general the brothers are allowing Socrates to lead, though there are notable exceptions). When the interlocutor's attention is so acknowledged, he might acknowledge the acknowledgment by responding with a medial vocative in kind, and will often position it politely at a similar distance from the beginning (cf. *Alc.* I 124C7/8, 135D3/4; *Leg.* 638A1/A2; *Phdrs.* 230C6/D3, 264A7/B1, 269C6/D2; *Phlb.* 17A6/A8, 21E3/22A1, 24B9/10; *Symp.* 194A5/8). Conversely, such mirroring can verge on mimicry and then mockery and bespeak a certain tension between them (*Crito* 43B10/C1, 44B3/4, 44B5/C6, 44D1/D6; *Euthyd.* 305E3/5; *Gorg.* 495A7/B1, 502B9/C2, 521C3/7; *Lach.* 185C2/5, 185E7/9; *Phlb.* 14D4/E5; *Rep.* 354A8/10/12, 540C3/5).

In the present case the initial position has the "pragmatic" function – Lysimachus is for the first time turning to include Socrates in the conversation – but we also should notice that the initial placement buys him a berth to interpose a lecture to Socrates on his reason for doing so (181B5-C6).

- 86 καὶ εἰς ταῦτα εἰς ἃ οὐτοὶ ἐπαινοῦσιν (B6-7) goes with ἐπαινῆ, with Ast (*idque in iis in quibus hi laudant*) Stallb. Cron Tatham Plaistowe/Mills Croiset Sprague Rainey Nichols Emlyn-Jones (against Ficinus [*qui in iisdem laudandi et ipsi sunt*] Engelhardt Lane Allen Dorion Waterfield Hardy). There is a certain idling redundancy in Lysimachus's expression, as if to betoken that his newfound respect for Socrates were an event of some significance, which only emphasizes the fact that up until now he has been unaware of Socrates and the beneficial effect he has had upon his sons.
- 87 Reading ἐν τοῖς εὐνουστάτοις (B8) with TW (γ' εὐνουστάτοις VV). The emendations of Schanz and Burnet (εὐνουστατον Burnet : γ' εὐνουστατον Schanz) barely affect the sense. For the absolute use of ἐν τοῖς to strengthen a superlative cf. *Crito* 43C7 and J. Adam *ad loc.* If any ms. had read this expression here (i.e., absent a dative plural as the emendators do) it would have been the *lectio difficilior*. Lysimachus's attempt at balanced expression in the ὅτι clause (ἐγὼ ... , σὺ δὲ ...) continues his attempt to put the two of them on a reciprocal footing proper to a friendship between peers. The adjective suggests he means to confer some benefit onto Socrates. It is not merely Socrates's attributes that dispose him well toward him but the prospect of his continuing to pay attention to his sons.
- 88 αὐτόν (C1), i.e., *tua sponte*, on the basis of the πατρικὴ φιλία (E2). So also the connected notion of rightness is brought forward (δίκαιον, C2: cf. 180E1 and next note). For Lysimachus it denotes reciprocal response, tit for tat, *quid pro quo*.
- 89 ὥσπερ τὸ δίκαιον (C2): With the "anaphoric" article (Smyth §1120b) he looks back and repeats his prior admonition, δίκαιος εἶ (180E1).
- 90 σύνισθί τε καὶ γνώριζε (C4). The substance and manner of his expression is again close to that of Cephalus, another old man who at his advanced age is something of a shut-in waiting for visitors (*Rep.* 328D4-6: μὴ ἄλλως ποίει ἀλλὰ τοῖσδε τε τοῖς νεανίσκοις σύνισθι καὶ δεῦρο παρ' ἡμᾶς φοῖτα ὡς παρὰ φίλους τε καὶ πάνυ οἰκείους). To ask Socrates to come around in person (σύνισθί τε καὶ γνώριζε ...) is to ask him to do *more* for his son without thanking

will try to do all the other things you invited me to do,<sup>97</sup> and yet what seems to me to be most just<sup>98</sup> is that since I am younger than these two<sup>99</sup> and so less experienced in the matter you have raised,<sup>100</sup> I should first hear what these men have to say and learn from them – and that if I have something to add beyond what they say should I thereupon try to teach and persuade them and you<sup>101</sup> of my view. So, Nicias, why don't one of you speak?"

Nic. “Certainly,<sup>102</sup> Socrates. I too<sup>103</sup> think this study is beneficial for the young to learn, beneficial in many ways. The very fact of not passing their time in the places the young tend to go when they have

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him for what he has done so far. As to γνώριζε, the prefix ἀνα- is dropped in repetition according to the Indo-European rule (cf. ἐμέμνησθε, A2, repeating ἐπιμέμνηται, 180E6).

- 91 διασώζητε καὶ ὑμεῖς (C5): καί illative, as often in final clauses. Socrates is too young to be a peer of Lysimachus as Sophroniscus was (though Sophroniscus was presumably older), but at the same time he is too old to be a peer of his sons, and so it occurs to Lysimachus that his son and Socrates (this is the reference of ὑμεῖς) might in turn (καί) carry forward the πατρικὴ φιλία he himself had enjoyed with Sophroniscus (this is the reference of ἡμετέρων).
- 92 The addition of ἄν (C5) sometimes acknowledges, as here, that achieving the purpose is subject to vicissitude: cf. *Gorg.* 481A2; *Phdrs.* 239B6; *Rep.* 494E5.
- 93 ταῦτα μὲν οὖν (C6) begins a transition away from his invitation, back to the present business (περὶ δὲ ...); ποιήσεις, jussive, repeats and therefore closes off the imperative in μὴ ἄλλως ποιεῖ above (C3-4); and αὐτίς is dismissive, as very often (*Charm.* 169D4; *Euthyphr.* 6C8; *Gorg.* 447C3, 449C6; *Phlb.* 33C1; *Prot.* 347B3, 357B6, 361E5; *Rep.* 466A3).
- 94 Note the reciprocal juxtaposition of the pronouns (ὑμεῖς τὴν ἡμετέρων φιλίαν [διασώζειν] is Socrates's part of the deal, whereas ἡμεῖς σε [ὑπομνήσαι] is Lysimachus's). In substance, he is asking Socrates to help with his sons, but still he does not know what the help will be. In the case of Nicias and Laches he could call upon their fellow fatherhood, but he takes Socrates to be younger. It does not occur to him that Socrates might also be a father even though the implication of what he has just learned from his sons is that Socrates has been acting as a father to them, or an uncle at least. Instead, Lysimachus is pre-occupied with cajoling him into helping him.
- 95 ἠρξάμεθα (C7): Lysimachus now broadens the first person (over against Socrates, who is his second) to include Laches and Nicias (for it is they that had begun discussing the topic), and then the second plural τί φατε opens the floor to all three, reverting back to the request he made at 180D4 (as Tatham asserts *ad loc.*, there is no polite “plural for singular” in the second person). With τί φατε he asks whether they are willing to share their thoughts, and with τί δοκεῖ asks what those thoughts would be.
- 96 Though Lysimachus asks all three, Socrates (D1) is naturally the one to respond as being the last person spoken to, and responds to Lysimachus as being the last person to speak (compare Laches playing answerer at 190B2, and cf. n.347 *ad loc.*). This is the expected order of conversation; anything else is strictly a breach. Hence Lysimachus spoke after Laches at B5ff as being the person to whom Laches was speaking (A7-B4), but since he spoke not to Laches but to Socrates he signalled the break with initial vocative (B5: cf. n.85). Cf. also 190B2 and n.347, *ad loc.*
- 97 προκαλῆ (D2) refers to the (asymmetric) initiative Lysimachus has taken to establish what will become a reciprocal friendship. Cf. *Thuc.* 5.112.
- 98 δικαιοτάτων (D3), answering Lysimachus's repeated reference to τὸ δίκαιον (180E1 and 181C2), and trumping his claims with the superlative.
- 99 τῶνδε (D4), the first person demonstrative (“my men here”), since now Lysimachus has classified Socrates alongside Nicias and Laches as one of his counselors.
- 100 Though the word order tells against it, I take τούτων (D4) to be an objective genitive with ἀπειρότερον: “these questions you have raised.” Socrates should be about fifty at the dramatic date of the dialogue (c.420), and therefore not much younger than Nicias and Laches (who will continue serving as generals for years to come), but he is surely less experienced in discharging the duties of a father, since as yet he has no sons. We know from Xenophon that his oldest was a μειράκιον at the time of his execution, which took place some twenty years later (*Mem.* 2.2.1).
- 101 διδάσκειν καὶ πείθειν (D6): διδάσκειν does not always cast its audience into the role of students and therefore can mean something less than “teach.” Here (as at 198B2) it means little more than λέγειν in the sense of taking charge of the conversation so as to articulate what may merely be his own opinion. Hence, in a dialogical context, where the upholder of the thesis answers the questions of his interlocutor, Socrates at *Crito* 49E1-2 requires Crito either agree with the answer he has given or else λέγε καὶ δίδασκε (i.e., himself become the ἀποκρινόμενος) Cf. also *Euthyphr.* 6D2, D10, E3. For the pairing of διδάσκειν with πείθειν cf. *Apol.* 35C2 and D3-4 where Socrates contrasts explaining for the

free time, but instead in this, is a good thing, a thing that cannot but improve the state of the body. After all it is no less noble an exercise than any of the gymnastic<sup>104</sup> pursuits, nor any less strenuous – while at the same time it is an exercise particularly fitting for the<sup>105</sup> free man (182) to pursue, right alongside horsemanship.<sup>106</sup> After all, for<sup>107</sup> the contest in which we are competitors and for the field of struggle in which we are poised to strive,<sup>108</sup> only those are training themselves who train in the use of these instruments, the instruments of war.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore,<sup>110</sup> this study also provides some margin<sup>111</sup> of benefit in the heat of battle, when one is called upon to fight in formation with a large group of others, but its largest benefit comes<sup>112</sup> when the ranks are broken and he must move on to<sup>113</sup> fighting one on one, whether in offensive pursuit against a man who is on the defensive or for that matter in

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sake of persuasion with begging in order to coerce.

- 102 ἀλλά (D8) answers the ἀλλά of Socrates's request (D7) in friendly retort. Its force, in reply to a request, is to stress that the responder accedes to the request without hesitation (cf. 181D1, 182D6, 184C9).
- 103 Schanz and Burnet for the first time report καὶ ἐμοί (E1) as the reading of T (Bekker Stallb. reported ἐμοὶ καὶ B : ἐμοί W, and subsequently Croiset and Vicaire reverting to leaving their apparatuses blank). With Burnet's καὶ ἐμοί (tr. by Hardy only, though Allen has “indeed”), Nicias adds his approval to that of the anonymous τις who had solicited Lysimachus (179E1-3), but then with slight compression (πολλαχῆ pertains only to his own opinion) he adds his own spin. The reading of B (ἐμοὶ καὶ) inappropriately emphasizes ὀπλομαχία over other studies as yet unmentioned. Without καὶ (the reading of W) it would seem that πολλαχῆ should have been at the beginning rather than the end, but this would spoil the sentence since Nicias's entire purpose is to place πολλαχῆ last, and thereby to announce that his speech is an ἔπαινος (“many are the paths of praise...” cf. Pindar O.2.83, O.8.13, O.11.1-6\*7, O.13.1-10\*11; N.6.33, N.10.3; I.5.51).
- 104 οὐδενὸς ... τῶν γυμνασίων (E5): Absence of ἄλλων suggests that Nicias recognizes it is a bit of a stretch to include ὀπλομαχία among τὰ γυμνάσια (Leg.813D notwithstanding). τὰ γυμνάσια is here used in its narrow sense, as at *Tht.* 153B6. He is moving from the denial of the negative (τὸ μὴ ἄλλοθι, οὐδενὸς ... τῶν γυμνασίων, οὐδ' ἐλάττω πόνον) to the assertion of a positive, and from foil to cap, where the cap is announced, as often, with a superlative (μάλιστα). Considering the weight of the hoplite's equipment it is quite an understatement that ὀπλομαχία is “no less strenuous” than the activities of the naked gymnast, but by the same token it is something of a reach to think of it as gymnastic in the first place. The expenditure of πόνος is conventionally a topic of praise (Mr. Chance): cf. Pindar O.11.4-6: εἰ δὲ σὺν πόνῳ τις εὖ πράσσοι, μελιγάρυες ὕμνοι | ὑστέρων ἀρχὰ λόγων | τέλλεται καὶ πιστὸν ὄρκιον μεγάλας ἀρετῶν, and O.5.15; P.6.54, 8.73; N.6.24, 9.44, 10.24; I.1.42, 5.11.
- 105 ἐλευθέρῳ (182A1) trumps the concerns of the σῶμα (i.e., βέλτιον ἴσχειν) with a description of the personality, or the soul.
- 106 Tatham *ad loc.* rightly sees that by his comparison with ἵππικὴ (A2), Nicias means to remove ὀπλομαχία from the category of merely gymnastic pursuits (warranted by the used of the litotes) and places it in the category of “fashionable” activities (note the assertion of an intimate connection, done with τε ... καί).
- 107 οὐ γὰρ ἀγῶνος (A2) = τῷ γὰρ ἀγῶνι οὐ (a loose dative of reference with γυμνάζονται): Nicias “incorporates” the antecedent into the relative clause, in accordance with his riddling proleptic manner. With πόλεμον (A5) he finally resolves the riddle as to what sort of “gymnastics” he has in mind for the free man.
- 108 ἐσμεν and ἡμῖν (A3): The μάθημα will be appropriate not for any man but for a “free” man, and γὰρ indicates that the free are “we.” Though with πόλεμον (A5) he clarifies that the “we” he is referring to are soldiers, his prolepsis has left unclear whether we are soldiers because we are “free,” in the sense of being fully enfranchised citizens (who alone are qualified to fight), or whether we are “free because we are soldiers” – whether, that is, ἐλεύθερος has a characterological denotation and he is talking about an elite that aspires to high military distinction and office. In the former case the ἀγῶν that πρόκειται ἡμῖν denotes only the current exigency of the war with the Lacedaemonians and ἡμῖν merely refers to all Athenian citizens (in which case the dramatic date, if any, which already must be after Delium [424] but before the death of Laches [418], is further narrowed to a time before the fifty year Peace of Nicias was negotiated [421], after which the war no longer “loomed before us” until it started up again in 414). I prefer the latter sense and take ἀγῶν to refer to the higher destiny of the elite, a calling higher than gymnastic prowess (which sense does after all turn out to be Nicias's theme in the sequel), in which case πρόκειται has its special sense of awards in store for the victor (*Phdrs.* 247B6: Hes. *Scut.* 312; A. *Pr.* 257: Hdt. 1.126.2). The speech is not only epideictic but also paraenetic.
- 109 ἐν τούτοις (A4) creates in prolepsis a berth for περὶ τὸν πόλεμον ὀργάνοις – postponed for emphasis, as the warrant promised by γὰρ. The emendation of Christ (ὀρθῶς for οὔτοι, A3) only weakens Nicias's tactic of postponement. The

flight when the enemy is on the offensive and it is he that is on the defensive:<sup>114</sup> neither at the hands of one will the man who masters this skill suffer, nor even perhaps at the hands of several. Nay, in all areas of battle he will have the advantage.<sup>115</sup> And further, this study will bring him along so as to desire another study that is fine,<sup>116</sup> for everyone that learns to fight in armor comes to<sup>117</sup> desire the study that follows upon it, namely the study of formations; and once he has these studies down<sup>118</sup> and feels the ambition to excel<sup>119</sup> in them, he would be spurred on to the entire range of studies having to do with all aspects of generalship. Moreover it is clear and patent that the studies that these<sup>120</sup> lead to, as well as the practices,<sup>121</sup> are one and all fine and worthwhile for a man to study and practice, all of which this one study would usher in. And I will add<sup>122</sup> something (no mean addition indeed), that any

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fully equipped hoplite fights “in” some seventy pounds of armor consisting of helmet with nasal and cheek pieces, a breastplate, greaves of bronze, heavy bronze shield, short iron sword, and nine-foot long spear – presenting a visually striking contrast with the naked gymnast.

- 110 ἔπειτα (A5), in asyndeton, now looks back on what he has said so far and thereby aggregates it into a single point (*pace* Tatham *ad* καὶ ἅμα, A1). Thus the praise of ὀπλομαχία in comparison with gymnastic exercises was mere foil for drawing a distinction between them (whence also the riddle about ἀθληταί and ἄγών in the γάρ clause). In distinction from gymnastics, ὀπλομαχία like equestrian competence, befits the “freeman” whose destiny it is to fight with distinction.
- 111 μὲν τι (A5): Concessive μὲν and vague τι set up the climax done with superlative μέγιστον in the next clause.
- 112 μέγιστον ... ὄφελος (A7): My translation rather suppresses the fact that, in accordance with Nicias's proleptic manner, μέγιστον ὄφελος shall turn out to be the predicate of the sentence, the subject being the compound clause of potential optatives (B2-4), which accounts for the lack of connective with which it is introduced.
- 113 ἤδη (A8) designates a second phase in the battle. The supplemental τι is gratuitous, and appears (with τι at A5) to be a stylistic affectation of Nicias (cf. C8; I88B6; I95B1, C9; I97A6, B3; 200D4; and n. *ad* 200B5), so that there is no need with Croiset and Vicaire to accept Badham's emendation to τινά.
- 114 The elaborateness and symmetry with which the distinction is drawn (A8-B2) suggests a division in the study of ὀπλομαχία itself – defensive and offensive maneuvers of dodge and parry. We can imagine that the display included a pantomime of such maneuvers and that they have special names, like the names for maneuvers in wrestling. Perhaps the display culminates in a climactic flurry, warding off imaginary offenders from all four quarters with a continuous sequence of turns accompanied by sweeps of the sword.
- 115 ἐν ταύτῃ (B4): The very uncertainty of the demonstrative's reference drives the listener back to ἐν τῇ μάχῃ αὐτῇ, the topic with which this second section of the praise began, and thus, with his generalization by means of πανταχῇ, Nicias effects his closure. The sequence of scenarios is arranged in accordance with the degree of the dangers warded off with the aid of the skill (Mr Morrissey): it is this that justifies climactic ἀλλὰ πανταχῇ (B3-4). With the demonstrative pointing backward he proleptically creates a berth to be filled by the next heading of praise (the impulse to study, following skill in battle).
- 116 ἄλλου καλοῦ μαθήματος (B4-5): In his proleptic manner, Nicias first tells us that the study is *fine* and then that it is the *next* one. Only thereafter do we learn just what that next study is, the study of formations. Is it desirable because it is next, or is it next because it is desirable?
- 117 ἐπιθυμήσειε (B6), inceptive aorist: something happens within the student.
- 118 ταῦτα λαβών (B7): For λαμβάνειν in the aorist or perfect meaning to learn or master something, cf. (with λόγῳ, *vel sim.*) *Parm.* I35E3, *Rep.* 496D6; and (used absolutely, as here) *Phlb.* 62D2; *Phdo.* 75B6, 76C6; *Phdrs.* 263B7, C2.
- 119 φιλοτιμηθεῖς (B7), a second inceptive aorist (compare ἐπιθυμήσειε above). Only now does Nicias's diction reveal what he conceives to be driving the young man from study to study – a desire for honor (surely not for “knowledge,” *pace* Croiset followed by Emlyn-Jones *ad loc.*: *Charm.* I72B is entirely irrelevant) – whence the next is desirable *and* the desirable is what is next (cf. n. I16).
- 120 τούτων (C2) is expletive (*pace* Tatham). Its entire function is to provide an antecedent to the relative ὧν that comes at the end of the sentence, in extreme hyperbaton. We see a milder hyperbaton with ἐνταῦθα and the two subsequent οὐδ- clauses just below (C7). Ending the sentence with the idea that began the section (i.e., παρακαλεῖ, B4-5) again achieves closure but only at the expense of some redundancy. Cf. n. I26.
- 121 With μαθήματα πάντα / ἐπιτηδεύματα and μαθεῖν / ἐπιτηδεύσαι (C2-4) he borrows, or at least repeats, the tentative language of Lysimachus (cf. n.47). The first and third καί's are proleptic to the second and the fourth, with which they are correlated; the first pair create a duplex subject and the second pair a duplex predicate.
- 122 προσθήσομεν (C5), after the climactic generalization which closed the previous item, portrays this next point as

man would by no small amount<sup>123</sup> be made the more daring and the more brave at war than he would have been through the mastery of this,<sup>124</sup> and also the more poised (let us not disregard this though it might seem a small point to some)<sup>125</sup> in the one connection it will serve him well to appear more poised, namely where poise will make him more fearsome to his enemies.<sup>126</sup> So in my judgment, Lysimachus, as I said, one ought to teach this to the young, and<sup>127</sup> as to why I have stated my reasons; but from Laches, in case he has something besides this to say, I would as gladly hear as you would.”<sup>128</sup>

La. “Well, Nicias, in truth it is difficult to make the case that *any* study ought not to be studied,

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something of an afterthought, though he denies that it is.

123 οὐ μικράν and οὐκ ὀλίγη (C5, C7): Again his riddling proleptic negatives (cf. n.104, *supra*).

124 αὐτὴ ἢ ἐπιστήμη (C7): It is difficult to bring across in translation Nicias's penchant for prolepsis and hyperbaton, whereby he holds out the essential predication, whether it be conveyed by the subject or the verb, until the end (cf. πολλαχῆ, 181E2; εὐ ἔχει, E4; ἢ ἰππική, 182A2; περὶ τὸν πόλεμον, A4; μέγιστον ... ὄφελος, A7 [with n. *ad loc.*]; ὧν καθηγῆσαιτ' ἄν τοῦτο τὸ μάθημα, C4).

125 With καὶ εὐσημιονέστερον (C9) we must supply ποιήσειεν ἄν from above, despite the intervention of a new and extended independent construction in between (μὴ ἀτιμάσωμεν δὲ εἰπεῖν ... εἶναι), which in the event we are compelled to view as parenthetical. Nicias recognizes that the balletic element of the display in the gymnasium might be an object of ridicule (178A5) but seeks to offset that criticism by asserting that poise has great importance when the chips are down, namely in battle (the first οὐ χρή is proleptic and attributive, *pace* Emlyn-Jones *ad* 182C9: only the second is predicative).

126 διὰ τὴν εὐσημιουσίην (D2): Redundancy for closure, again. Cf. n.120.

127 τε ... καί (D3) links what his opinion is with the assertion that he has finished giving the reasons for it, a logically imperfect parallel drawn for the sake of the announcement (itself ushered in by μὲν οὖν) that he is finished. His speech began with a similar sort of compression (on πολλαχῆ cf. n.103).

128 Nicias's speech is long (35 lines) and presents our first exposure to his way of thinking and of speaking (180A6-8 was only a polite gesture). He announces in a formulaic way (πολλαχῆ, 181E2) that he will praise the study of fighting in armor under many heads, but in the event he merely describes how this study might lead (καθηγήσαιτ' ἄν, 182C4) a young man into becoming a general (preparation for battle, battle itself in all its moments, a desire to learn more military skills, and then to accrue all the skill of a general – with also an increase of bravery and resolution in battle along the way, as well as an increase of fearsome poise). The promised array of benefits (πολλαχῆ) narrows (at the same time that it broadens!) into a diapason of advantages *in battle* (πανταχῆ, B4), and then the praise devolves into the assertion that acquiring rudimentary battle skills will make each step toward generalship more likely because such studies will implant a desire for honor in the young man (ἐπιθυμίαν παρακαλεῖ, B5; φιλοτιμηθεῖς, B7; ὀρμήσειε, C1). Never does he argue that being a general is a good thing; instead he is assuming that the good for the young man is being like “us” (182A3), able and competent generals (182C1), brave and fearsome – that is, ἄριστοι, which though it is the superlative of ἀγαθός primarily denotes for Nicias military prowess (cf. 181A5, 179D7, 179B2). As to the young man's sense of values he assumes in passing that he will be overcome with φιλοτιμία. That exactly this motive and desire might tend to distract his father from attending to the upbringing of his son, he does not notice, just as Laches evinced no regret when he acknowledged the truth of Lysimachus's experience with his own father. However, it is just this sort of blind spot in his father's love that the son will notice, and just this that might drive him to look for values of his own, values often contrary in reaction, or just as soon to find in Socrates an avuncular and sympathetic guardian, as Lysimachus's and Melesias's sons appear to have done right under their fathers' eyes.

As to the style, his continual skirting of the question of value is betokened by the lack of logical specificity with which one recommendation closes and the next one is introduced (ἔπειτα, ἔτι δέ, προσθήσομεν δέ, μὴ ἀτιμάσωμεν). There is certain ineptitude in the use of pronouns (literally spatial ἄλλοθι followed by metaphorically spatial ἐν τούτῳ continued with causally spatial ὅθεν, 181E2-4; ταύτῃ for τοῦτο, 182B4; αὐτῷ referring to the μάθημα when it should be plural so as to refer to the points he has made, C5) and in the articulation of parallelisms (slovenly parallelism of οὐδ and ἐν οἷς, 182A2-3, χρή / δεινότερος, 182C9-D1); and there is a tendency toward inconsequential tautology (ἀγῶνος / ἀγών, 182A2-3; ἀμύνασθαι αὐτόν, 182B2; μαθήματα ... καὶ ἐπιτηδεύματα ... μαθεῖν καὶ ἐπιτηδεῦσαι, C2-4; προσθήσομεν / προσθήκην, 182C5; doubled litotes, 182C5,7; εὐσημιονέστερον [bis] plus εὐσημιουσίην, 182C9-D2; ὡςπερ λέγω / εἴρηκα, 182D2,D4); but most salient of all is an overuse of riddling prolepsis and hyperbaton (cf. nn.104, 107, 108, 109, 112, 115, 116, 120, 123, 124, 125), by which he continually places the *laudandum* in emphatic position at

since to know *anything* would seem to be a good thing – and so with this hoplite thing<sup>129</sup> of yours. Assuming for a moment that it truly *is* a study, as those who teach it claim and as Nicias himself has argued,<sup>130</sup> it ought to be studied.<sup>131</sup> But if in truth it is *not* a study and those who profess<sup>132</sup> it are being deceptive,<sup>133</sup> or if it does qualify as<sup>134</sup> a study but not as a particularly serious one,<sup>135</sup> why in the world<sup>136</sup> should one study it? I bring that up because of this. I fancy that if it somehow *were*,<sup>137</sup> the Lacedaemonians would hardly fail<sup>138</sup> to notice it, since (183) nothing else in life matters to them but to seek out and practice any study or exercise<sup>139</sup> that might enable them have an advantage in war. And even if it had escaped their notice,<sup>140</sup> it could hardly escape the notice of those teachers I just mentioned<sup>141</sup> that since the Lacedaemonians among all Greeks take such things most seriously, a person who should<sup>142</sup> win their respect for being able to train in these areas could also extract the hugest of fees from men of other cities,<sup>143</sup> the way it is with tragic poets who win our respect. But

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the end (182B4, C4, C7) and requires us to think his thoughts and essentially to agree with him in order to know what he is saying. What is merely sophisticated in his style does not “characterize” him (*pace* Emlyn-Jones) so much as to invite us to notice what his prolepsis and redundancy enable him to evade.

A similar constellation of skills comprised by στρατηγία is presented at *Euthyd.*273C4-7 as τάξεις, ἡγεμονία, ὅπλοις μάχεσθαι.

- 129 τὸ ὀπλητικὸν τοῦτο (D8): The neuter in place of the abstraction ὀπλομαχία, along with the second person demonstrative, are derogatory.
- 130 ὅπερ φασὶν (E1) is not quite the same as οἶον ... λέγει (*ibid.*). The distinction was drawn just now by Nicias: δοκεῖ χρῆναι (yes or no?) vs. δι’ ἃ δοκεῖ (why?).
- 131 μάθημα ... μανθάνειν (D7): The tautology in a μέν clause concedes in the weakest way possible that it should be studied, but also provides him the wedge he needs to undo even this: one may come out *knowing* nothing! The trick required him to leave out the other more general term, ἐπιτήδευμα, which Lysimachus had paired with μάθημα (and which Nicias had brought forward at C2-4: cf. n.121) exactly because he wanted to leave things open (179D7: cf. n.47).
- 132 ὑπισχνούμενοι (E7): For the pairing of this term with διδάσκοντες (cf. *Apol.*33B5-6, *Gorg.*447C2-3) but here the term Laches begins to call into question the honesty of the teachers.
- 133 ἐξαπατῶσιν (E3): The object is omitted in tactful brachylogy, since it would include anybody who was impressed by the display a few moments ago. The focus is cast instead on the exponents' attempt to deceive. Laches remembers Lysimachus's embarrassed worry about being sold a bill of goods (178A5-B3).
- 134 μάθημα μὲν τυγχάνει ὄν (E3-4): τυγχάνει, in contrast with paroxytone ἔστι above (E2), treats the claim of the μάθημα of being a μάθημα as somehow circumscribed, qualified, or factitious – as we do in English when we concede that something is “technically” true.
- 135 μή πάνυ σπουδαῖον (E4): If, that is, it is not οἶον Νικίας λέγει (E1-2): cf. n.130.
- 136 καί (E4) “responsive” (Denniston) adds a note of impatience (cf. 184D7), strengthened by the shift to the optative of “conception” in the apodosis.
- 137 εἴ τι ἦν (E6), sc. μάθημα, an abrupt brachylogy relying upon the expression above (εἰ μὲν ἔστιν μάθημα ...); though when Laches repeats the idea at the end (184A7), his expression forgoes even this and has become abrupt to the point of insouciance.
- 138 οὐκ ἂν λεληθέναι (E6): The perfect infinitive represents a pluperfect in the “original” direct form of the (n.b., *present*) irreal apodosis, just as a present infinitive would be used to represent an original imperfect.
- 139 ὅτι ἂν μαθόντες καὶ ἐπιτηδεύσαντες (183A1): Laches can now safely echo the full language of Lysimachus's request at 179D6-7 (cf. n.131. *supra*).
- 140 Reading ἐλελήθει (A2) with all mss. rather than Král's emendation λέληθεν accepted by Burnet and Emlyn-Jones. Laches does continue with the irreal formulation but ἀλλά...γε (like ἀλλ’ οὖν) breaks off to introduce something more than an irreal apodosis (cf. Stallb. and Cron *ad loc.*). If they *were* unaware of its worth, its teachers would be no less aware of what it would be worth to them to know about it. Hence also the factual present λέληθεν should be retained in A3, with the mss., against the emendations into pluperfect by Schanz and Christ.
- 141 γε (A3) is derogatory. The teachers promise more than they can produce according to his remark above.
- 142 ἂν (A5) does not go with τιμηθεῖς (*pace* Waterfield, who translates τιμηθεῖς as if it were τιμηθεῖν ἂν) but anticipates πλεῖστ’ ἂν ἐργάζοιτο (τιμηθεῖς stands for εἰ τιμηθεῖν).
- 143 The superlative πλεῖστα (A6) is inferred from the superlative μάλιστα. People would pay the most for military training valued by those who most care about it.

*mutatis mutandis*<sup>144</sup> nobody who fancies himself a good tragedian traipses around everywhere else from city to city to display his wares through all of Attica, but makes a bee-line<sup>145</sup> straight to us and promotes his work among the people here,<sup>146</sup> just as you would expect,<sup>147</sup> whereas when it comes to these fighters-in-armor of yours, I have seen them with my own eyes treating Lacedaemon as an inviolable precinct into which they dare not tread nor set foot,<sup>148</sup> but circumambulating it as it were<sup>149</sup> and preferring to offer demonstrations to anyone but them, and especially<sup>150</sup> to those who would readily acknowledge that many others are their superiors in matters of war!<sup>151</sup> Second, Lysimachus, it is not just a few of them have I been near<sup>152</sup> in very action<sup>153</sup> and I see what they are like.<sup>154</sup> I can put it in a nutshell.<sup>155</sup> By some telling coincidence<sup>156</sup> not a single man who had practiced this art<sup>157</sup> has achieved fame as a fighting man.<sup>158</sup> In all other fields the persons who achieve notoriety come from the group that had practiced it, whereas conversely these in comparison with the others<sup>159</sup> have an

144 τοιγάρτοι (A7) here conveys “the effect that the logical connexion is regarded as more important than the ideas connected” (Denniston, 566).

145 φέρεται (B2) passive (cf. *Phdrs.* 250E2, 254B6; *Rep.* 492C6): they are, as it were, driven by instinct.

146 τοῖσδε (B2) = τοῖς τῆδε (Cron).

147 For the late position of εἰκότως (B2) Stallb. gives *similia* from the orators (Aesch. 3[Ctes.]. 10; D. 21. 43). Cf. *παράνομως*, *Apol.* 32B4.

148 ἄβατον ἱερόν (B4), a metaphor bold for not being mitigated by the usual ὤς. The diction, with ποδί, is mock-tragic. ἐπι- with βαίνω suggests violation (Mr Chance).

149 κύκλω περιίοντες (B5) does not mean they “skirt” Sparta (*pace* Waterfield and Lane) or take a detour around it, but that they avoid it at all costs (*rôder*, Dorion) and “make a circuit” through other cities (Jowett), answering ἔξωθεν κύκλω above (A8). The *argumentum ex contrariis* is drawn in chiasmic order (not traipse around / make a bee-line // not set foot within / circumambulate). The indirectness led Emlyn-Jones to imagine a fallacy that is not present. Laches does not assume that all experts “gravitate toward the acknowledged centre,” so that their avoidance of Sparta proves they are not (p. 69 *ad* 183B6), but only that if they do not, the burden shifts to them as to why. He is not arguing they do not think they have an expertise, but (indirectly) that they know they do not and do not want to be found out.

150 μάλιστα (B6) caps μάλλον (B5).

151 περὶ τὰ τοῦ πολέμου (B7), a slightly pleonastic *variatio* of περὶ τὸν πόλεμον (A2), effecting closure.

152 ὀλίγοις ἐγὼ τούτων παραγέγονα (C1): Again ἐγὼ and its verb are obtrusively interlaced with the noun and its demonstrative: cf. τοὺς ... μαχομένους ἐγὼ τούτους ὀρῶ, B2-3.

153 ἔπειτα (C1) introduces his second argument as it did Nicias's, and like his it shifts from mere games to the real thing (αὐτῷ τῷ ἔργῳ [C2], cf. ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ μάχῃ [182A6]). There is an over-eager redundancy however in Laches's use of αὐτός with the essentially abstract term ἔργον. Cron says this is what we should expect from the mouth of a soldier, but his parallel (*Thuc.* 2.89.9) has only ἐν ἔργῳ. Moreover, it will be the soldier's mind and prejudices that will presently become the theme of the conversation.

154 With ὀρῶ (B3) Laches suggests that he is corroborating his arguments from likelihood with his first-hand empirical experience, as again below (C2) where he claims from seeing their outer behavior to know what they are by nature (ὀρῶ οἱοί εἰσιν). His *reductio* by argumentation had suggested (though it did not imply, as Emlyn-Jones saw: cf. n. 149) that the teachers are fraudulent charlatans. It is not out of decorousness that he avoids laying the charge explicitly, but out of gruff confidence that it is beneath himself to do so. The ensuing example of Stesilaus will suffice to bring the point home not λόγῳ but ἔργῳ.

155 For αὐτόθεν (C3) adducing something immediate or personally known that obviates the need for argumentation or examples, cf. *Phlb.* 53B10, and cf. τὰ ... χθὲς καὶ πρόην γεγονότα at *Gorg.* 470D. Compare the use of αὐτίκα (e.g., 195B3).

156 ὡσπερ ... ἐπιτηδές (C3): Schleiermacher translates, *recht als muesste es so sein*. The old notion that Cicero imitates this expression with *quasi dedita opera*, “as if on purpose” at *de Orat.* 1.20. (*nam primum, quasi dedita opera, neminem scriptorem artis ne mediocriter quidem disertum fuisse dicebat*) is something of a reach. Laches's own agenda in using this expression is to set up a satirical word-play below (D2-4).

157 The wordplay with ἐπιτηδές / ἐπιτηδευσάντων (C3-5) at the beginning and the end was I think first noticed by Newhall (*ad loc.*). Laches will make a similar joke about art defeating itself below, with his wordplay on ἐπίδειξις as putting on an artful show versus artlessly revealing (183D1, 3).

158 ἀνὴρ (C4) is part of the predicate. The term is never otiose in Laches's mouth: cf. 183D7 (ironic), 188C7, 189A2, 197D7.

159 τοὺς ἄλλους (C7) are those who did not *train* in ὀπλομαχία (with Sprague, *pace* Tatham).

equally pronounced tendency to meet with the most unfortunate of outcomes.<sup>160</sup> Take as an example your man Stesilaus, here, whose exercise you and I watched along along with this great crowd, and whose high talk about himself we heard.<sup>161</sup> Elsewhere<sup>162</sup> I watched a finer<sup>163</sup> demonstration by him in reality – a veritable exhibition<sup>164</sup> of his ability under circumstances that were not of his choosing.<sup>165</sup> One day the trireme on which he was serving as a marine collided with a cargo vessel. He was armed with a halbert, a truly special weapon<sup>166</sup> for a truly special man.<sup>167</sup> We can pass over much about the redoubtable fellow but the cleverness<sup>168</sup> about that scythe attached near the tip of the spear must be told. In the midst of his maneuvers<sup>169</sup> it somehow got tangled up with the rigging of the other ship and wouldn't come loose. Stesilaus tried to free it but he couldn't, and meanwhile the ships were passing each other. For a while he ran along the deck of the trireme yanking and yanking at the thing, but once the other ship had cleared his it began to separate him from it, spear and all.<sup>170</sup> The weapon (184) slipped through his hands until he had a hold on nothing but the cap at the very end of the shaft. The men on the other ship roared with laughter and applause<sup>171</sup> at the pose<sup>172</sup> he struck. Then somebody

160 δεδυστυχήκασιν (C8), another supercilious understatement (cf. n. 154, *supra*) as when we condescendingly say of an ungainly and unattractive person that he is “unlucky in love.” Laches's choice of the perfect tense laces it with a gratuitous grin. Note that once again his argument is *ex contrariis*.

161 τὰ μεγάλα περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντα ἃ ἔλεγεν (D1-2): That Stesilaus “bragged” is an event that Plato contrived we should not witness, for the action begins just after the display (τεθέασθε, 178A1). We are therefore left in the dark whether Laches's characterization is fair (the others had not mentioned it as offensive), nor do we know what Stesilaus did say. Did he, for instance, claim he was a good man for knowing it, or did he merely make the high claim for the value of his teaching that one would expect from anyone who teaches for pay (the sophistic ἐπάγγελμα), as when Protagoras with some diffidence, whether real or feigned, promises that studying with him will make you better every day in every way (Prot. 318A6-9), advertising the benefit to his student rather than his own ability to deliver. Laches's claim is crucial to his presentation, for in the sequel everything he says about Stesilaus is satire predicated on boasting being overtaken by action.

162 ἐτέρωθι (D2) means not *somewhere else* (i.e. ἄλλοθι) but in the *other* place, on the other side, etc. The underlying duality is the world of words and contrivance versus the world of action and luck, as presently becomes clear. From Laches's point of view “the tables were turned.”

163 κάλλιον (D2) is ironic. His ἐπίδειξις was of course meant to be καλή (successful), but the ἐπίδειξις Laches is about to recount was even more successful, in the very different, and “literal” sense (this is the sense of ὡς ἀληθῶς) that it succeeded to reveal the truth which his set exercise was able to hide. The world of real action (ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ἔργῳ, C2 = ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ C4, here brought forward by ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ) will not afford him the control of a set demonstration. Laches recurs to this theme of the truth coming to the surface with ἐπιφανέστερος, below (184B5).

164 ὡς ἀληθῶς means “literally” as often. ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ on the other hand means in the realm of reality (see prev. n.). Both expressions are to be kept, with BTW (*pace* Schanz, Croiset, Christ). I borrow “veritable exposition” from Shorey's summary in *What Plato Said*.

165 οὐχ ἐκόντα (D3-4) designates a display he was forced to make rather than a display he contrives under controlled circumstances and at will.

166 δορυδρέπανον (D5): We must imagine a spear (δόρυ) with a curved scythe (δρέπανον) affixed below the tip (λόγχη), like the medieval halbert.

167 ἅτε ... διαφέρων (D6) is satirical overstatement. ἅτε “states the cause as a fact on the authority of the speaker” (Smyth §2085), and now Laches according to his indirect manner inveigles his audience to conspire to agree with him by means of irony.

168 σόφισμα τοῦ δρεπάνου (D7): The genitive *should* be objective (the trick using the halbert) since the weapon is merely Stesilaus's organon, but ends up by a stretch being subjective, as if this clever invention had a mind of its own. It turns out likewise that Laches dispenses with telling about how the man handled the spear (περὶ τάνδρός, the approbative term [cf. C4 above]) in order to tell about how the spear handled the man.

169 μαχομένου γὰρ αὐτοῦ (E1) can hardly be read without recalling μαχομένους at B3. Is it a display of his prowess or is it the heat of battle that he is involved in?

170 ἐχόμενον (E6) abbreviates ἀντεχόμενον above (E5), according to the usual rule.

171 γέλως καὶ κρότος (184A2): The applause was “satirical,” making the laughter derisive.

172 σχήματι (A3) recalls Nicias's claim about εὐσχημοσύνη. In this case however his “pose” incited laughter not fear!

threw a rock at him that clapped on the deck near his feet,<sup>173</sup> and he up and lets go<sup>174</sup> the spear, so that even the men on his own ship could no longer<sup>175</sup> contain themselves but let out a whoop at the sight of how the halbert got stuck in the rigging of the cargo ship on him.<sup>176</sup> So there might be something to this study, as Nicias has argued,<sup>177</sup> but according to my own encounters with it, it is as I have described it. As I said at the beginning, if it holds such small benefits<sup>178</sup> as an actual study or if it is not a study in the first place but they merely claim it is so as to perpetuate the illusion that it is, it is not in either case worth trying to learn.<sup>179</sup> In all<sup>180</sup> it seems to me that if a timid man should believe himself to be a person<sup>181</sup> equipped with this skill,<sup>182</sup> then exactly because he would<sup>183</sup> thereby become the more daring his true nature would sooner come to the surface; whereas if a brave man should,<sup>184</sup>

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- 173 ἐπὶ τὸ κατάστρομα (A4): The person threw the rock at Stesilaus (this is implied by the instrumental dative, λίθῳ) but in the event the stone hit the deck instead. This significance of dramatic detail is unclear. Did the sound distract him from what he was doing and so he let the halbert go? Did it scare him and his letting go was a matter of recoiling from his task? Or is this a sort of dramatic “accident” within the story – an auditory interruption of the envisioned scene – that relieves the tension and surprises Stesilaus's own boat-mates, as well as Laches's audience, into laughter? As often, Laches is being unclear.
- 174 ἀφίεται (A4), a climactic historical present.
- 175 οὐκέτι (A5): ἔτι of course suggests even the men on his own side had been on the verge of laughter, but of course they did not also join in the derisive applause (κρότος, A2) of the enemy.
- 176 Reading, with Cron, the ἐκεῖνῳ of BTW (A7), an ethical dative referring to Stesilaus. The “remote” demonstrative is chosen for comic effect: the eyes of the sailors turn from the dangling halbert back to the man that had been wrestling with it. ἐκεῖνο (A7), the reading of the *recentiores* and adopted by Stallb. Schanz Tatham Hermann Burnet Croiset Vicaire and the translators is tenable as a back-reference to τὸ δὲ σόφισμα above (D7) and does effect closure for the anecdote, but is unacceptable against the unanimous witness of BTW.
- 177 With both τὶ and ταῦτα (A7) Laches brings forward his abrupt expression from above (182E6) allowing us to recognize that in the interim he has shown it might have been justified. There is a presumptive contrast between λόγος and ἔργον in Nicias's λέγειν and Laches's empirical ἐντετυχένα (which rings off his παραγέγονα at 183C1), though it is attenuated exactly because making the distinction explicit is the work of λόγος. Laches is so chary of argumentation that he in fact avoids a joinder with Nicias's contentions. Of a piece with this is his use of *reductio ad absurdum* which by its nature only shows that as long as argumentation itself is valid things are not what arguments claim them to be. The great irony, and it is a dramatic or “Sophoclean” irony since Laches appears at least not recognize that his story has refuted, or at least impugned, the theses of Nicias's speech almost point-by-point (cf. n. 191, *infra*). Perhaps he has contrived all this by hidden art. After all, the low style appears easy until you actually try to pull it off (Mr Chance).
- 178 οὕτω (B1) asserts, with an understatement, that the story of Stesilaus showed the benefits hardly to be large.
- 179 ὃ οὖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς εἶπον (B1): He reverts from his second to his first point and rehearses (B1-3) its two alternatives (cf. 182E2-4) in reverse order, all in a “chiasm of before and after” by which he indicates that his argument, if we may call it an argument, has been made.
- 180 καὶ γὰρ οὖν (B3-4) is both inferential and explanatory (Cron: *das folgende auch in Betrachtung kommt zur Begründung des Vorhergehenden in Uebereinstimmung mit demselben*). Laches will summarize by once again putting things into a nutshell (cf. ἀυτόθεν, 183C3 and n. 155), but the intervening anecdote about Stesilaus has proven more than the precept he had set out to prove: the ill-luck of the student of ὀπλομαχία (δεδυστυχήκασιν) consists not only in failing as a warrior (what we inferred was the sense of 183C3-6) but also in the increased scrutiny and ridicule his pretense elicits from others.
- 181 Reading αὐτόν (B4) with B (and Stallb., Tatham, Plaistowe/Mills), rather than Burnet's emendation, αὐτό (αὐτὸν δεῖν W : αὐτὸν δεῖν T). The accusative in dependent indirect discourse referring to the subject of the leading verb is not unparalleled (*Symp.* 175C2; *Hdt.* 1.34): cf. n. 623. The common ingredient in both eventualities Laches envisions was broached at 182D2, περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντα.
- 182 ἐπίστασθαι (B4) is oxymoronic since for Laches it is not a science or skill in the first place.
- 183 θρασύτερος ἂν ... γενόμενος / φυλαττόμενος ἂν (B5,6): In these cases the parallel participial phrases are causal and part of the apodosis, in contrast with τιμηθεῖς (183A5) which was conditional (and a virtual protasis: cf. n. 142). ἂν always wants to be early, and in the former case there was no subordinate if-clause, so that it could precede even the conditional participle.
- 184 εἰ δ' ἀνδρείος (B6) sc. ὃν οἴοιτο αὐτὸν ἐπίστασθαι. There is something of a fudge in Laches's antithesis: it is not the brave man's belief that he has mastered ὀπλομαχία but the others' sense of his pretense that he has, that draws their

then because he would come under the constant scrutiny of men,<sup>185</sup> even the smallest error would bring down great calumnies onto his head.<sup>186</sup> For the very conceit<sup>187</sup> of possessing this so-called mastery incites envy, so that if one does not prove wondrously superior to the others in virtue<sup>188</sup> there is no way he will escape becoming a laughing stock for claiming to possess it. It is something like this, in my opinion, Lysimachus, that accounts for any allure<sup>189</sup> this study might enjoy. But as I said to you at the beginning, you must not let my man Socrates off<sup>190</sup> but request that he advise you with his judgment about the question you have proposed.”<sup>191</sup>

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invidious scrutiny. In all strictness the “brave” man will be well-advised to study the subject for his own improvement but merely avoid bragging about it.

- 185 ἀνθρώπων (B6): Not ἄλλων or τῶν ἄλλων. Laches wants to distinguish his hypothetical ἀνδρεῖος (who for him is *ipso an anēr*) from the common run of men (ἄνθρωποι).
- 186 Reading ἴσχειν (B7) with the mss. Thuc. 1.3.2 shows that a compound dependent construction following δοκεῖ μοι can shift from finite to infinitive form, but in that case both dependent clauses were constructed “personally” with δοκεῖ (n.b. nominative τοῦνομα and ἐπικλησις). In the present case (*pace* Zimmerman), where we have the compounding of two complex constructions, the very construction by its nature provides no personal subject (the personal subject we would need to construe with δοκεῖ is a mere creature of the protasis εἴ τις): the *implications* are what seems true to Laches. Strictly, the apodosis, as the principle clause of the subordinate construction, should go into the infinitive so as to make that clause a substantive. This does not occur in the first of the two compounded conditions (we have γένοιτο) but we barely notice it since (a) so far we are only in the μέν-clause, which is almost always *semantically* subordinate or concessive, and (b) we are struggling with the local problem of construing the relation between hypothesis and inference. But it does occur in the second, and when it does the effect of the shift is to remind us of the governance of δοκεῖ announced at the beginning. The shift therefore has the effect of closing this complicated but epigrammatic construction and of making it a sentence. Schanz’s emendation to ἴσχοι for the sake of parallelism (paleographically more economical than the grammatically preferable emendation of γένοιτο into γενέσθαι), accepted by Croiset and Vicaire, is therefore a step backwards. It does not help to claim in the aftermath that δοκεῖ had been parenthetical in the case of the first clause but “asserts its rights” in the second (*pace* Newhall *ad loc.*, with which cf. Marchant’s comment on Thuc. 1.3 [London 1937]).
- 187 προσποίησις (C1), now of the person who has been trained. The same word was used just above of the trainers (B2).
- 188 τῆ ἀρετῆ (C2): Casually Laches uses this general word – the noun of ἀγαθός (cf. my n. to *Phdrs.* 253D2) – to cover prowess or ability in battle, and shows in this that he shares with Nicias the attitude Nicias unguardedly revealed near the end of his speech when he identified bravery as the only important good (182C6). Indeed the difference between the men’s two outlooks is more interesting than either of the outlooks themselves!
- 189 σπουδή (C5) is here derogatory (cf. *Gorg.* 502B3, *Phlb.* 15A, *Rep.* 604C1; cf. *Symp.* 181E1). It is now the “buzz” of fashionability, a subjective notion very different from the objective seriousness he was requiring it to exhibit at the beginning of his speech (σπουδαῖον, 182E4), and indeed something that the serious Lacedaemonians (σπουδάζουσι, 183A4) were not taken in by. The closure is however not contrived: Laches has forgotten his use of σπουδαῖον, and his unintended recursion to the etymon is another instance of dramatic irony (cf. n. 177). Indirectly Laches refers to the allure of anything that is ἐπίφθορος, like the allure that drives the moth to the flame. Cron appositely compares Protagoras’s remark about the scandal attaching to sophists (*Prot.* 316D). The translators’ attempts to mitigate the paradox by means of paraphrase (“my judgment of the desireableness,” Jowett; “my opinion on the interest taken,” Lane; “what I think about taking the subject seriously,” Waterfield) only replace Laches’s inadequately formulated idea with something bland.
- 190 μὴ ἀφιέναι (C6-7): Cf. 181A7.
- 191 Laches’s speech is 70 lines long, exactly twice as long as Nicias’s and even one-and-a-half times longer than Lysimachus’s opening speech. Indeed, aside from set-speech performances like that of Protagoras or that of Lysias and Socrates in the *Phaedrus* it is one of the longest speeches in the entire corpus of Plato’s *Dialogues*. As to its structure, it opens with a distinction that determines his *demonstrandum*. He concedes that if ὀπλομαχία is a real study and has the character Nicias has accorded to it, it is surely worth learning, but concedes it only in order to assert the contrapositive – that if it isn’t a study or isn’t a particularly “serious” one (σπουδαῖον), it isn’t. He then suggests the contrapositive is true with the observation (ἀποβλέψας) that the Spartans who love all things military ignore it, and notes as an aside that its teachers, moreover, avoid Sparta but choose cities more desperate to improve, which calls

Lys. “And I do request it of you, Socrates. In fact it seems to me our deliberations have need of an umpire. If these two were in agreement with each other our need for a person to play such a role would be less,<sup>192</sup> but in the event,<sup>193</sup> as you can see, Laches has cast a vote the very opposite<sup>194</sup> of Nicias's, and so it will indeed be well to hear from you also, with which of the two you cast your vote.”

Soc. “What,<sup>195</sup> Lysimachus? As soon as<sup>196</sup> a majority of us approves you will follow their advice?”

Lys. “What else is one to do?”

into question whether they themselves believe it can pass as an art. Instead of asserting openly the implication that they are frauds, he moves to what he calls a second argument by which he will show from his empirical experience “what sort they are” (i.e., frauds, the inference we are being asked to supply). But before reporting his experience he gives another categorical *reductio* from likelihood that becomes a *paradoxon*: none of its teachers have become famous warriors as they should have, but to the contrary that instead of becoming relatively superior they in fact become relatively “unlucky” in practice. This last aside he then illustrates from empirical experience (his *exemplum*), with a single but telling example, something that he did indeed observe: an event involving none other than the very Stesilaus who has just provided them the display (and, he does not omit to recall, wordily “talked big”). It is an event that “artlessly displayed the truth better than all his contrived displays could.” The scene he depicts is quietly identical to that of the morning's display at the gym: all eyes are on Stesilaus and only he is acting. In this case he makes himself become a laughingstock to his opponents when he tries to maneuver a special halbert, a fancy weapon for a fancy man, during a collision between his trireme with a cargo vessel, and in the end even his own fellows laughed at the figure he cut. Hereupon Laches abruptly returns to his opening division – “Nicias may be right to say it is a study but my experience points in another direction,” again avoiding to call the teachers fraudulent and now granting Nicias may be right in principle as though the single counter-example from his own experience were a sufficient justification not even to engage in discussion. But now he adds a coda, introduced with *καὶ γὰρ οὖν* (184B3). A timid man who studies it and therefore believes he knows something, becomes more rash so that all the sooner he shows “what sort he is,” whereas a brave man who studies it will only expose himself to invidious scrutiny and will suffer calumny at the least provocation. This coda presents itself as an epigrammatic antithesis (*εἰ μὲν δειλός / εἰ δὲ ἀνδρεῖος*) and leaves it up to us to see how it might be true. The first limb posits a man who is timid and becomes overconfident by investing faith in the study, only to hasten upon himself the comeuppance of circumstances which will reveal “what sort he is” (again Laches exploits derogatory under-expression), but the “sort” he is was – by hypothesis, timid – and the comeuppance of circumstance shows not that he is timid but that he is “unlucky” or perhaps incompetent. This limb in fact is relying upon the second aside above, to the effect that the students end up *less* “lucky” in action even than the man with no training (*τοὺς ἄλλους*, 183C7), the latter point having then been illustrated more fully in the digression on Stesilaus by the detail about his being spooked by the rock that landed at his feet. But rather than tarry Laches moves on to the second limb, which immediately announces itself as presenting an antithetical situation (with *εἰ δὲ ἀνδρεῖος*), and are told that if he was brave rather than timid, “his belief that he is a master of *ὀπλομαχία*” (*εἰ οἶοιτο αὐτὸν ἐπίστασθαι*, unstated but implied by the parallelism advertised by *μὲν / δέ*) will incite others to hold him to an impossibly high standard so that he will be unable to avoid ridicule for claiming to be a master – again an outcome that can be brought forward from his anecdote about Stesilaus since in the end even his own shipmates laughed at him. But it was Laches who inserted the claim that Stesilaus had not only displayed his art for them this afternoon (as we already knew) but that in addition he *bragged* about it (*καὶ τὰ μεγάλα περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντα ἃ ἔλεγεν*, 183D1-2), and he has imported this “manner” of Stesilaus into the anecdote, as though his fellow sailors thought him a braggart as well, with his gratuitous wisecrack about “the fancy man with the fancy weapon” (D5-6). The true purpose of this antithesis is to imagine an exhaustive bifurcation of persons whose different reasons for the study – to improve one's own courage and simply to improve one's skill – will in either case be self-defeating, in the sense that the former motive will defeat itself since the study is in fact worthless while even the latter will only incite others to expect more than the study can produce – so that no matter who you are (the bifurcation is meant to be exhaustive) things will come out badly. What is stunning is that with the addition of the detail about the rock his single anecdote proves both limbs! He then closes with a summary statement that ties the whole thing together. At the beginning he had wondered if the study were really serious (*σπουδαῖον*); now he infers that reason the study draws any attention at all is because of envy. One wants to be better than his neighbor and the neighbor is quite ready to let him try and fail. Despite the clumsiness of the antithesis between the timid man and the brave man, he now makes a surprisingly trenchant point, having to do not with the

Soc. “And what about you, Melesias?<sup>197</sup> Is this what you would do? If our deliberations should be about an athletic competition<sup>198</sup> and how your son should train for it,<sup>199</sup> would it be the majority of us three you would believe or would it be the man, no matter who he was, that had in fact undergone training and discipline under the regime<sup>200</sup> of a good trainer?”

Melesias:

“The man, in all likelihood, Socrates.”

question whether or not it is a serious art (σπουδαῖον, 182E4) but with the interest people show in it (σπουδή, 184C5). τοιαύτης' vagueness (an intentional vagueness we can by now call characteristic of Laches) requires us to fill in the sense, and to do so as follows: Both the timid man wants the others to think himself to be other than he is, and the brave man who might pursue the study in innocence only exposes himself to invidious scrutiny. The “proof” for both alternatives is provided by the anecdote about Stesilaus.

The coda therefore elevates his anecdote to the level of an object lesson, and endows it with enough emotional substance to constitute at least a reply to the argument of Nicias. Moreover, in a serendipitous sort of way (since he does not claim he has done so) Laches has in fact impugned with telling pertinence each of Nicias's main assertions. His experience with actual battle trumps Nicias's theoretical claims: (1) The study will may not enhance the hoplite's ability in action; (2) the desire to garner honor for studying the higher military arts may only incur invidious ridicule; (3) the increment of daring conferred by the study will only reveal the underlying man all the sooner; and (4) and as for Nicias's formidable εὐσχημοσύνη, Stesilaus's σχῆμα in the event incited only ridicule (184A3) even among his fellows. All that is left untouched was Nicias's initial argument, that ὀπλομαχία is no less fortifying to the body than other gymnastic skills, which was mere foil for the subsequent point about the athlete of war that sublated commonplace athletics. We are left to wonder whether he is conscious of how closely his speech tracks the points made by Nicias, but whether he is or not, his speech has demolished all of Nicias's claims.

Compared with the style of Nicias, Laches's expression is straightforward but perhaps affectedly so. One of its salient characteristics is its employment of presumptive vagueness, which we noticed before (τοιοῦτοι, 181B3: cf. n.84): “The sort Nicias says it is,” he allusively says (182E1); Is this study “something?” he asks (182E6: cf. 184C7); while its teachers achieve no military fame, he has seen “what sort they are” (οἷοι, 183C2: cf. τοιαῦτ' ἄττα, 184A8-B1); ἐτέρωθι, “under the alternative circumstances” is boldly unclear at first (183D2: cf. n.162). The understatement may be approbatory (182E1, E6: cf. 181B3, 189A3) or derogatory (183C2; 184A8, B6, C4). His manner is also high-handed: he employs a double *reductio ad absurdum* and elevates what is merely his own experience to the level of generalization (183B3, οἷοί εἰσιν – cf. 184A7-B1) and he identifies deed rather than word with “truth” (183D1-4, where he needs to explain his identification with ὡς ἀληθῶς). To say that these characteristics might be expected in the speech of a soldier explains nothing since they are not found in Nicias's speech who is no less a soldier than he: if anything they imply that Laches prefers logomachy. His use of δυστυχεῖν is condescending (183C8: cf. n.160), and his uses of κάλλιον (183D2: cf. n.163), of ἀνὴρ (183D7: cf. n.168), and of σοφισμα (which includes a virtual personification of the halbert: 183D7-E2: cf. n.168) are ironical riddles. To make his main points he devises to have the facts “speak for themselves,” but in truth the conviction they carry derives from their satirical presentation. It is he that planted the seed of envy in the way he tells the story about Stesilaus, by reminding his audience that he had bragged during today's display and following this up with his wordplay on ἐπίδειξις and his invidious wisecrack about the διαφέρων ἀνὴρ with his διαφέρον ὄπλον. In truth the halbert is a praiseworthy weapon as the commentators notice, though the commentators, too, have been taken in by Laches, when they judge the anecdote he tells about Stesilaus to be “amusing.”

192 ἦττον (D2) is a gentle understatement by which Lysimachus acknowledges that Socrates had doubted he would need to answer once the two older men had given their superior views (181D5-7). Whether we read τοῦ ἐπιδιακρινούντος with Ast Burnet Emlyn-Jones, or ἔτι τοῦ διακρινούντος with Heindorf Bekker Stallbaum Cron Schanz Tatham Hermann Newhall Croiset (over ἐπὶ τοῦ διακρινούντος, BTW), Lysimachus elevates Socrates to the higher position of arbiter between the two experts (cf. the role given to Minos at *Gorg.* 524A5), which by rights both of them had decided Socrates did not deserve. I prefer Ast's ἐπιδιακρινούντος over Heindorf's paleographically easier ἔτι τοῦ διακρινούντος only because the former, more specific term better justifies ὥσπερ, which in the typical Greek manner apologizes for the metaphor. As to the metaphor itself, Lysimachus has in mind only that Socrates will vote up or down but his term indicates doing more than this, and more than this is just what Socrates will do.

193 νῦν δέ ... γάρ (D2-3) is elliptical, as ἀλλά ... γάρ can be (sc. οὐχ οὕτως ἔχει). Cf. *Apol.* 38B2-3, *Prot.* 347A2, *Euthyph.* I 1C4,

Soc. “And would you sooner follow his advice than that of all us, even though we are four?”<sup>201</sup>

Mel. “Perhaps.”<sup>202</sup>

Soc. “For, I'd say, it is by knowledge and mastery<sup>203</sup> that the decision should be made, and not by

*Symp.* 180C6.

- 194 τὴν ἐναντίαν (D3) sc. ψήφον, fem. The gender is finally clarified by σύμψηφος (D4). The prolepsis brings home to the reader the complacency with which Lysimachus assumes voting is all Socrates needs to do.
- 195 Reading τί δαί (D5). Ast Stallb. Badham Cron Tatham Plaistowe/Mills Lamb print τί δαί without comment (Bekker reads δαί but does at least note the variant δέ in his apparatus). Schanz (1883) was first to report τί δέ as the reading of BT (noting τί δαί as being a *corr.* in B). Once δαί came to be thought a *falsa lectio* for δέ, editors have taken to printing τί δέ without comment. But the stronger expression of surprise is needed, here, for it explains why Socrates turns to Melesias and asks him if he wouldn't insist on expert counsel in case his son were competing for a prize, a question to which a “No” answer would surprise anyone. Commentators are too quick to “explain” Socrates's remark as something he can be expected to say merely because he says it elsewhere (esp. *Crito* 46C6-47B1); but surely the reason for Socrates's surprise is not that Lysimachus has not read the *Crito*. His surprise is a rhetorical technique for buying time to arouse Lysimachus from his complacent sense that the only recourse available is a tie-breaking vote without confronting him directly. After all the criterion for accepting the advice the two men receive is a question in which Melesias has an equal stake. Moreover, Socrates's advocacy of expert opinion in the *Crito* (namely, to oppose caving in to the overwhelming hostile majority) is quite a different thing from his reminder to Melesias that he would prefer an expert over his *friends'* advice.
- 196 Reading ὅποτε (D5) with BTW, which gives better sense despite hiatus, against Schleiermacher's elegant emendation to ὅποτερ', deservedly popular among edd. The antecedent to τούτοις is then οἱ πλείους. For the wide range of constructions χρῆσθαι may take cf. LSJ s.v. χράω (and for χρῆσθαι with persons, *ibid.* sub IV).
- 197 Socrates acknowledges (D8) Melesias's presence as a party to the conversation, and in particular the other person seeking counsel and therefore equally responsible to set the criteria for deliberation (*pace* Emlyn-Jones who [*ad loc.*] thinks Socrates turns to him to avoid being confrontational with Nicias and Laches). At the same time that Socrates eschews decision by majority he reaches out to get the involvement and the “buy-in” of all interested parties. This is the behavior of a competent referee.
- 198 ἀγωνία (E1), a new term, neither μάθημα nor ἐπιτήδευμα, nor even γυμνάσιόν τι (Nicias's special transitional term at 182A2), though closer in meaning to this than to the other two. In *Meno* 94B4-6, Pericles' sons were said to be taught ἰππέας (sc. εἶναι), μουσικὴν and ἀγωνίαν; and in *Gorg.* 456D2-3 ἀγωνία is the genus for πυκτεύειν, παγκρατίζειν, and ἐν ὅπλοις μάχεσθαι (cf. *Thg.* 122E10-11, παλαίειν καὶ τὴν ἄλλην ἀγωνίαν: I take the last term to generalize only the penultimate one). These passages associate the term with athletic events, but in *Rep.* 374B1-2, military ability (= ἡ περὶ τὸν πόλεμον ἀγωνία) is viewed as being as much a craft (τεχνική) as shoemaking, in opposition to Glaucon's hope that his feverish city might not need a military class (cf. Nicias's easy use of the metaphor of ἀγῶνα γυμνάζεσθαι in connection with war, and his expression, πολέμου ἢ καὶ ἄλλης τινὸς ἀγωνίας, *Lach.* 196A1). Moreover, the etymologically close term ἀγῶνες can include musical contests: γυμνικός, μουσικός, ἰππικός, *Leg.* 658A7 (cf. Stallb. *ad loc.*, 947E, 955A3; *Rep.* 412B3-4; *Menex.* 249B5-6). It would seem then that the term has both the general sense of a contest (which it owes to its etymon), and a specific sense of gymnastic (bodily) skill in contests (for which cf. *Rep.* 618A7-B2). That it is the latter sense that is meant here is decided by the term παιδοτρίβης, the athletic trainer, used in spelling out the question (E3). It is the prospect of his son's winning instead of losing a *contest* that enables Melesias immediately to desire expert help; but in the application (καὶ νῦν, 184E1 ff) Socrates will trump this high goal with a still higher but not unrelated one, the goal indeed that motivated Lysimachus and himself to invite Nicias and Laches to the display in the first place: πᾶς ὁ οἶκος ὁ τοῦ πατρὸς οὕτως οἰκῆσεται ... (A6-7). In either case it is again honor – one's standing as measured and viewed by others – that is the stimulus for Melesias and Lysimachus's efforts.
- 199 ἀσκεῖν (E1), another new term indisputably standing in for μανθάνειν καὶ ἐπιτηδεύειν. Like ἀγωνία this verb often inhabits the semantic field of the body and of the preparation of the body through exercise and strengthening, but it is used equally often by Plato for moral discipline (*Euthyd.* 283A4, *Gorg.* 527D2, the Saw of Phocylides at *Rep.* 407A8, *al.*). The

numbers, if the thing is going to be decided in an admirable way.”<sup>204</sup>

Mel. “Yes, how could it be otherwise?”

Soc. “And so in the present case<sup>205</sup> the first question we must ask is just that, (185) whether or not any one of us is in the first place skilled in the subject of our deliberations, and if one of us is, then we must follow that man's<sup>206</sup> advice even though he is only one and ignore the advice of the others. If on the other hand none of us is skilled, we ought to search beyond our ranks for a man who is. Or do you two think there is little at risk in what you two are now contemplating, you and Lysimachus? Isn't it rather about your most important possession of all?<sup>207</sup> After all, as one's sons turn out, whether worthy or the opposite of worthy, so does the father's entire household, taking on the same character as that of the sons.”<sup>208</sup>

adjective ἀσκητόν is used only twice by Plato, and only with ἀρετή (*Meno* 70A1-4 as one of the ways virtue might be acquired: διδασκτόν / ἀσκητόν / φύσει ἢ τινι ἄλλω τρόπῳ [such as divine intervention], cf. also *Cleitoph.*407B6-7). His use of the noun ἀσκησις outside the physical realm is also infrequent (note esp. *Rep.*518D9-E3, but contrast *Rep.*536B2 and *Leg.*791B7). Aristotle, in his only use of the adjective, identifies the ἀσκητόν of the *Meno* with ἐθιστόν (*EN* 9.1099B9-11, ἐθιστόν ἢ καὶ ἄλλως πως ἀσκητόν: for ἐθιστόν cf. 10.1179B20-21). Xenophon also uses the adjective only once, referring beyond the realm of physical prowess or ability (*Mem.*1.2.23: cf. the noun ἀσκησις at 1.2.20). The *Meno* passage suggests that διδασκτόν / ἀσκητόν is a pair corresponding to μανθάνειν / ἐπιτηδεύειν, a correspondence corroborated by *Leg.*831C8-9: μάθημα ἢ καὶ ἐπιτήδευμα ... μανθάνειν τε καὶ ἀσκεῖν. The parallel of the athletic contest is enough to arouse Melesias's standards while at the same time it is closely analogous to the question of raising competent sons.

200 For ὑπό with dative cf. *Rep.*391C2-3, 558D1, 572C1. πεπαιδευμένος καὶ ἡσκηκός is a variation on the pair μανθάνειν / ἐπιτηδεύειν (cf. nn. 47 and 199) under the influence of adjacent παιδοτρίβης. Cf. 185B3-4 below.

201 αὐτῷ / ἡμῖν, (E5-6): Note, with Newhall, that the opposing terms are placed first and last (cf. n.157 on ἐπιτηδές, 183C3).

202 ἴσως (E7) is (*pace* Hardy, 79) only slightly less affirmative than his previous answer (εἰκός γε, E4). The attenuation is due to Socrates raising the ante. In the previous question it had been “the majority of us” (τοῖς πλείοσιν ... ἡμῶν) whom the expert would trump, which up to this point has been envisioned to be two over one depending upon how Socrates would “vote,” but in the present question Socrates goes much further in order to elevate the consideration to a question on principle: τέτταρσιν οὖσιν envisions unanimity of all the parties Melesias would have to face, and thereby eliminates all consideration of cronyism.

203 ἐπιστήμη (E8): Again the Commentators hear Socrates voicing his own opinion because he has said this elsewhere (n.195), but at the moment it is just as much Melesias's opinion that Socrates is voicing as his own, and in particular he is elevating that opinion to the level of a principle with the abstract terms ἐπιστήμη and πλῆθος, an opinion which he has elicited from him by adducing the hypothetical case of seeing to it that his son win a game.

204 καλῶς (E9), of competent or artful conduct. Cf. *Phdrs* 263C1, 266D1, 271B6; *Rep.*353A4; *al.*

205 καὶ νῦν (E11) moves not to the “next logical point” (*pace* Emlyn-Jones) but from the imaginary case (the optatives of 184D8-E2) to the actual problem at hand, which is the target. By dint of this substitution, the imaginary case will next be referred to with an irreal condition (185B1-2).

206 ἐκείνῳ (185A2), the “honorific” demonstrative repeated from above.

207 κτήματος (A5): To refer to one's family or even a family member as a possession might sound strange to our ears but is common in Greek, which places honor deriving from family (γένος) within the category of external goods (cf. *Alc. I.*104A4-C1; *Apol.*20B6; *Charm.*157B7-8; *Lys.*207C2-D2, 211E2-8; *Meno* 71B6-7; *Prot.*319C3-4; *Phdrs.*239E4, 233D3; *Rep.*494C5-D2; *Symp.*178C6-D1). Moreover, it is not entirely clear whether it is the sons or the reputation of the family (i.e. the οἶκος) that Socrates is assuming that Lysimachus and Melesias judge to be their greatest possession (Jowett's “for children are your riches” decides the point but only by adding words to the Greek ones), though the singular right up against the plural ὑέων, as well as πᾶς (A6) after μέγιστον (A5) and αὐτοῦ (A9), suggest the latter, as does also the wording of 187A5-6, below.

208 The fame of the family depends on the way its father's sons turn out (A5-7). By now identifying their most cherished κτήμα Socrates reveals not his own “moral earnestness” (*pace* Emlyn-Jones; Hardy [80] takes a similar line) but rather

Mel. “True.”

Soc. “And so one ought to devote a good deal of thought to the matter?”

Mel. “Quite.”

Soc. “How then would we be conducting<sup>209</sup> such an investigation – if, as I was just saying, we were wanting to determine which of us is the most skilled at a competitive game<sup>210</sup> – would it not be the one who had studied it and practiced it<sup>211</sup> and who had had good teachers of just this subject?”

Mel. “I think so, yes.”

Soc. “And even before that<sup>212</sup> must we not investigate the nature of this thing of which<sup>213</sup> we are seeking teachers?”

Mel. “What do you mean by that?”<sup>214</sup>

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the true motivation behind Lysimachus and Melesias's agenda. Cf. nn.248 and 262, *infra*.

209 ἐσκοποῦμεν ἄν (B1): The question is irreal; translators take it to be ideal. Socrates is not suggesting they decide which of themselves is most qualified at ἀγωνία, but is continuing to countenance the more palpable example of athletic competition so as to imagine *in principle* how to choose from what persons counsel should be sought.

210 ἀγωνία (B2) indicates that ὁ ἐγὼ ἄρτι ἔλεγον refers to 184D8-E3, from which passage the term is brought forward. On the sense of the term cf. n.198.

211 ὁ μαθὼν καὶ ἐπιτηδεύσας (B3): Socrates now brings forward the broader expression introduced by Lysimachus (179D7, 180A4) and subsequently continued by both Nicias (182C2-3) and Laches (183A1). The addition of teachers also as a criterion is based on and brings forward the recent mention of the παιδοτρίβης (184E3).

212 ἔτι πρότερον (B6) corrects πρῶτον in 184E11 and thereby brings forward the construction with χρῆ (pace Tatham *et al.*, who bring forward the irreal construction from the previous question [ἐσκοποῦμεν ἄν], somehow treating it as if it were ideal or past potential). We must find an expert, but even before that we must of course decide what he is to be an expert “about.” The back-reference to πρῶτον separates this second correction Socrates suggests from the first one and therefore dissociates τίνος ὄντος τούτου from αὐτοῦ τούτου, which most commentators and translators take to be its antecedent (see next n.). The indirect question is thus expressed by the subordinate construction (cf. 191E9), namely with a genitive absolute that later becomes absorbed in the syntax: “investigating being what we are looking for teachers of it” – i.e. what it is we are looking for teachers of).

213 Reading οὗ (B6) with the mss. against its elision by Jacobs, who was followed by Schanz Lamb Burnet Vicaire. Its relative clause presents the true antecedent of τούτου, canceling the interpretation (of Zimmermann) that αὐτοῦ τούτου above (B4) is the antecedent. We begin with τούτου in a genitive absolute phrase (pace Newhall *et al.*, who think the genitive is continued from αὐτοῦ τούτου); the function of the relative is to indicate its construction with διδασκάλους, namely that it is a genitive dependent upon it; but then the meaning becomes ambiguous since διδάσκειν takes a double object. Translators (except for Ast Burges and Hardy) disambiguate by adding a word: it is an “art” or “subject” whose teachers we are seeking (Jowett Plaistowe/Mills Lamb Sprague Dorion Lane Waterfield). But Socrates's question is unclear and it is meant to be. We have no better idea what he means than Melesias does. Only in the event will we discover that Socrates is referring to who/what is doing the learning (namely, the souls of the young) rather than what is being learned.

214 Socrates first questions the assumption that anybody who is asked is qualified thereby to give counsel about

Soc. “I might make my meaning clear this way.<sup>215</sup> In my opinion we failed to start off by coming to a settled agreement what it really is<sup>216</sup> that we are deliberating about, so as to take the trouble to investigate<sup>217</sup> which of us is competent in it and got teachers for the sake of it, and which of us isn't and didn't.

Nicias (intervening):

“But come<sup>218</sup> Socrates, aren't we are inquiring about hoplomachia<sup>219</sup> and whether or not our youths should learn it?”

Soc. “Quite so, Nicias, but when somebody 'inquires about' a drug for eyes<sup>220</sup> and whether it ought

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something (184E11-185B5), and then even more unexpectedly questions the assumption that it is truly about *ὀπλομαχία* that counsel is being sought (185B6ff). Of course Melesias does not understand this second question. Tatham's notion (*ad loc.*) that Melesias's inability to understand indicates that Plato is telling his reader that Socrates's question is important, is not quite right. It is rather the fact that we, too, cannot understand the question that gives it prominence. The causal interpretation that Tatham subsequently imposes upon the question (*ad* 185C, *infra*) – that they are deliberating about the effect of the drug on the eyes and the effect of *ὀπλομαχία* on the soul, rather than the effect of eyes on the drug and the effect of the soul on *ὀπλομαχία* – is, moreover, both unwarranted by Socrates's words and nonsensical.

215 ὥδε ἴσως μᾶλλον κατάδηλον ἔσται (B9). His designedly unexpected and intentionally unclear question buys him time to go back to the very beginning and challenge the foundation of the conversation with an unforeseeable *distinguo*. The unclear question is one of Socrates's techniques for maintaining forward dialogical momentum when even the first questions must be re-examined. For intentionally unclear questions cf. below 190E10ff, 191E9-12; and *Euthyphr.*10A2-3; *Gorg.*447D (does ὅστις mean “who” or “what type?”), 466C3-467B10; *Leg.*668D1-3ff, 686C7-88A1 (687E5), 776C4-5; *Lys.*217C4-D1, 218E1; *Phdo.*65B1, 93A11-13; *Phdrs.*257C8-258A9 (and my comm. *ad loc.*), 270A9; *Phlb.*53D3-E9; *Prot.*311B5; *Rep.*341E, 412E6-7 (τραγικῶς ... λέγειν buys him time to introduce a dihaeresis τριχῆ), 459A1-5, 507C6-8, 510B, 523B5-6; and cf. Diotima's treatment of Socrates at *Symp.*202B10-C2ff.

216 ἔστι (B10) is paroxytone per mss., *pace* Cron.

217 Reading καὶ σκεπτόμεθα (B11) with the mss. (and Bekker Stallb. Tatham Plaistowe/Mills Croiset Vicaire Dorion) against the deletion of Ast (accepted by Burnet Lamb Emllyn-Jones). The καὶ is illative and the anacoluthon is mild: “about which we began deliberating and got involved investigating who was competent in it” (σκεπτόμεθα brought forward from B2). Socrates's περί is vague, just as the genitive οὗ was, and Nicias now intervenes with an incorrect guess as to his meaning, which requires (or allows) him to clarify it.

218 γάρ (C2) takes exception to what is being said by feigning to agree with its opposite. The dramatic motivation for Nicias's interruption is that he wants this study to win the approval of the others because he wants them to agree that it is a good thing for a young man's soul to be drawn toward a military career, and he does not want the topic of the deliberation to be changed until he has made his case. Sprague's surprise (23 n.16, followed by Dorion and Emllyn-Jones) that Nicias out of familiarity with the Socratic procedure does not already know what Socrates's riddling question means, i.e. that Socrates is suggesting that the company move on to a study of “the whole man,” ignores the dramatic horizon of the discussion. It is not to a study of the “whole man” that Socrates here “moves on to” but the larger objective question of what will be helped by *ὀπλομαχία*; conversely, what Nicias later describes as the usual Socratic initiative is to re-orient the discussion away from putative objects of discussion to the subjectivity of the questioner (187E7-188A2). The important thing to notice is that Socrates in the sequel, with Nicias's help, achieves the agreement that even Nicias's advocacy of *ὀπλομαχία* was for the sake of the young man's soul, so that he in turn can elevate that notion, too, to the level of principle.

219 The importance of the distinction between the unreal example of athletic competition and the target question of *ὀπλομαχία* is evidently missed by Hardy who here translates ἐν ὀπλοῖς μάχεσθαι with *Kampfsport*, which more exactly is an interpretation rather than a translation.

220 Preferring τις τοῦ (C6) of BW with Bekker Stallb. Badham Schanz Tatham Plaistowe/Mills Croiset (and Hardy, who translates with *Augensalbe*) to the emendation τίς του (Cron) accepted by Burnet Newhall Lamb Emllyn-Jones

to be rubbed onto them or not, do you think his deliberation is about the drug or about the eyes?”

Nic. “About the eyes.”

Soc. “And when one 'inquires about' a bit for a horse – whether to put it on him or not, and when to do so or not – is he deliberating about the horse and not about the bit?”

Nic. “That's right.”

Soc. “And to put it into a single formula,<sup>221</sup> when somebody 'inquires' about something for something, his deliberation is really about that<sup>222</sup> something *for which* he was<sup>223</sup> inquiring, rather than about this something he was looking into for that other thing.”

Nic. “Necessarily.”

Soc. “And so one must investigate the counselor, as to whether he is skilled in the taking care of<sup>224</sup> that 'thing for the sake of which,' which is what we are really busying ourselves to inquire after<sup>225</sup> in

Waterfield. Socrates's case is more easily made when the hypothetical drug is defined by its purpose.

- 221 ἐνὶ λόγῳ (D5) is one of many expressions Socrates uses to generalize from examples (cf. *Leg.*942C1, *Phdo.*65D13, *Phlb.*29B8 [ἐν ἐνὶ ... λαβών]). Others include ὡς ἔπος εἰπεῖν (*Phdo.*66A4), συλλήβδην (*Charm.*167D7; *Gorg.*476D2, 477C3-4), ὅλως (*Rep.*437B7), κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν λόγον (*Crat.*393C9, *Gorg.*460B4, *Lys.*215E8), ἐν κεφαλαίῳ (*Euthyd.*281D2, *Ion* 531E9, *Rep.*437D11), τούτου τοῦ τύπου (*Tht.*171E2), ὅσα ἀκόλουθα (*Rep.*580E4), ὅσα ἔπεται τούτοις (*Tht.*185D3, *Tim.*24C3, 42B1), ὅσα σύμφωνα (*Phlb.*11B4-6), τὰ τούτου συγγενῆ (*Leg.*820B9, 897A4; *Phlb.*11B7-8), ὃ βούλομαι λέγειν τὸ εἶδος (*Rep.*477C4). The conceptual parallelism of his examples, which warrants the generalization, is not borne out by syntactical and semantic parallelism in *form* (χρή [C6] is varied with the verbal noun προσοιστέον [D2] and πρὸς ὀφθαλμούς with the dative of interest ἵππῳ that becomes an indirect object; the construction with the repeated verb σκοπῆται is varied, first with περί [C5] and then with direct accusative [D1]; and εἰ [C6 and D1] is elaborated in the second example with ὅποτε [D2]), but conversely the *material* content of the two examples is thematically relevant to the target question, which is after all what “medicaments and reinings-in” should be adopted for managing one's children.
- 222 ἐκείνου (D6), referring not to the “former” (i.e., τι, D5), though disambiguating that string of indefinites would have been a good service for it to do, but to what has now been shown to be the more important thing, the goal (i.e., τινος, *ibid.*). Conversely it is τούτου (in the form of τοῦ) that refers to the former item (τι). The formulation of the conclusion, like that of the examples, saliently forgoes formal means (see previous note) and relies instead on the thought of the interlocutor (and the reader) to be understood.
- 223 ἐσκόπει (D6), imperfect. A distinction is drawn between the intention that preceded the act and the actual essence or goal of the act subsequently taken. The piggybacking, by which one inquiry is made out to be for the sake of another, will next be carried forward with σκοπούμενοι σκοποῦμεν (D10-11).
- 224 θεραπείαν (D10) plus objective genitive suddenly expresses semantically, for the target case, a relation that had been expressed by the varied syntax of both the examples and the inductive generalization (cf. n.221). Once the generalization had been reached the conceptual relation between the ancillary entity (e.g., salve) and the entity it was serving (e.g., eyes) can be expressed explicitly, with θεραπεία. The term is at first sight strikingly concrete as an expression for what had been implied and expressed abstractly: it is again the content of the examples rather than their form that supports and justifies its introduction, since salve for the eyes, as an instrument to heal them, and the bit for horses, as an instrument for taming them, are both *therapeutic* instruments.
- 225 Reading σκοπούμενοι σκοποῦμεν (D10-11) with all mss. The middle here designates the inner and controlling

our inquiry.”

Nic. “Quite so.”

Soc. “Are we now in agreement that we are making an investigation about study undertaken for the sake of the soul<sup>226</sup> – the soul, that is, of the young men?”

Nic. “Yes.”

Soc. “And so whether one of us is skilled<sup>227</sup> at taking care of soul as such,<sup>228</sup> and is able to render care to it admirably,<sup>229</sup> and which of us had good teachers – this is what we must investigate.”

Laches (interrupting)

“What’s this,<sup>230</sup> Socrates? Have you never yet seen<sup>231</sup> people turning out to be more skilled

intention of the investigation which according to the argument provides the true goal being reached by the organon of the outer investigation. Cron’s emendation (ὁ σκοποῦμεν for σκοπούμενοι), accepted by edd., is unneeded.

226 ψυχῆς (E4): It might seem something of a leap by Socrates to identify the true object of their inquiry as the *souls* of the young men (though he does this often and without provocation by his interlocutors, as e.g. *Gorg.*453A5, *Apol.*29D8-E3), since the studies or exercises or disciplines they have been conceiving of so far have consistently tended toward the gymnastic, though even the case of Nicias’s praise of ὀπλομαχία for its gymnastic benefit was something of a throwaway (cf. nn.104 and 110). His real thesis had to do with higher competencies, with a course of learning (182B4-C4), and with the formation of the personality (C5-D2; cf. also his remarks on Damon and n.69). That Lysimachus had placed such emphasis on ὀπλομαχία for the general betterment of his sons was his own mistake, but even for him it is the soul that τρυφᾷ (179D1). Tatham is therefore wrong to point to the highly recondite and paradoxical conclusion Socrates finally reaches with Glaucon in Book Three of the *Republic* – that gymnastic is for the soul, not the body after all – as though it explains Lysimachus’s ignorant assumption that ὀπλομαχία will make his boy a significant man. Socrates has not made a leap (or a “shift,” *pace* Waterfield *ad* 186A) from body to soul but has merely made explicit what was implicit in Lysimachus’s original request, which is the sort of thing he always does and has been doing all along (cf. nn.202,203,207,218; and *Gorg.*453A5). He emphasizes the focussing here by his hyperbaton of τῆς τῶν νεανίσκων (E2). This sort of focussing specification is fundamental in Socrates’s dialogical method, since conversation becomes possible only when the parties agree to isolate and identify their ideas, *i.e.*, “what in the world it is we are actually talking about” (τί ποτ’ ἔστι, B10: *n.b.* Croiset tr. “*l’objet précis*”) – which in fact is exactly what Laches’s habit of sidestepping to articulate his own beliefs (cf. nn.137,154,162,177) prevents from happening.

227 τεχνικός (E4): The language of the τεχνικός and that “first” question (πρῶτον, 184E11: “Which of us is skilled?”) is now brought forward, since the question prior even to that one (πρότερον, B6: “Skilled at what?”) has now been answered. That “first” question had casually included the presumptions, to which Lysimachus agreed (B5), that the τέχνη is learned (ὁ μαθὼν καὶ ἐπιτηδεύσας, B3) and that as such it calls for good teachers, presumptions to which Socrates had already secured the agreement of Melesias (184E2-3, E4), the other party who needs to adopt proper criteria for an advisor.

228 Anarthrous ψυχῆς (E4) confirms the isolation of the idea, as does anarthrous θεραπείαν. Socrates is tying together what has been assembled in this interlude. καί (E5) is illative and expresses in plain language what they have discovered.

229 καλῶς (E5), again in the special sense of “artful,” inferred from τεχνικός. Cf. n.204.

230 Reading δαί (E7) on similar authority as above (184D5). Laches, a potential advisor, now challenges the criteria to which Lysimachus and Melesias have agreed!

231 ἑώρακας (E7): Again we encounter Laches’s favorite criterion of knowledge, a perception that appropriately takes the “factual” construction with the participle. πῶ, moreover, asserts that even if Socrates has not “seen” the cases that Laches believes to be dispositive counterexamples, it is only a matter of time before he will. After all, the main theme of his speech was that study might *worsen* a person’s competence (cf. 183C2-8 and the ensuing anecdote). With his

without teachers than with them, in some areas?”

Soc. “Yes I have, Laches, the very<sup>232</sup> people whose *claim* to be competent practitioners you would not trust unless they were able to show you the product of their skill successfully produced in *deed*, and not just a single such product (186) but several.”<sup>233</sup>

La. “This much you say is true.”<sup>234</sup>

Soc. “So it is in our case, Laches and Nicias. Lysimachus and Melesias have summoned us to counsel them about their sons,<sup>235</sup> out of eagerness that their souls become as virtuous<sup>236</sup> as possible. If on the one hand we claim to have any,<sup>237</sup> we must point out to them just *which* were our teachers,<sup>238</sup>

interruption, which has a dramatic motivation parallel to that of Nicias (cf.n.218), all four of the stake-holders have joined Socrates in the discussion, and he can next close and summarize the results with a speech (186A3-187B7) that articulates the roles they must play in the ensuing conversation, if the conversation is to achieve substantial agreement.

232 The γε in ἔγωγε (E9) limits Socrates's agreement, and the subsequent γε with οἷς spells out the limitation. Even those who learned without a teacher would need to give Laches empirical evidence of their competence before he would agree they are ἀγαθοὶ δημιουργοί, so that his objection against teachers *per se* (which he had floated in his long speech) does not in itself disqualify their students any more than not having a teacher qualifies the autodidact.

233 καὶ ἔν καὶ πλείω (185E11-186A1): Denniston (291-2) thinks of καὶ as *climactic* (cf. 190A7-8, σύμβουλοί γε ... καὶ ἰατροί; *Tht.* 173E4 σμικρὸν καὶ οὐδέν; *Apol.* 23A7, ὀλίγου ... καὶ οὐδένοσ), but also notes that the second item can mitigate insistency with a weaker alternative, as in expressions like αὐτὴ καὶ τοιαύτη and χθὲς καὶ πρόην. The first “correlative” καὶ is rare in this idiom.

234 With solitary μὲν (186A2) Laches agrees to Socrates's point but withholds resigning the role of empirical critic that he arrogated to himself in his objection. His preference for ἀληθῆ λέγεις in answer (cf.nn.379,439) is part of his pretense of empiricism.

235 αὐτοῖν (A5) is a dative of interest referring to the sons. Cf. 190B4 (with n. *ad loc.*).

236 ὦ Λάχης τε καὶ Νικία (A3): Socrates incorporates into his conclusion the results of both Nicias's and Laches's interventions, above. From the latter he has adopted the empirical criterion (which bodes well for the discussion since so far we have seen little more than an exhibition of opinion for its own sake, even from Laches himself); with the former he reached the clarification that it is the souls of the youths that they are deliberating about, and just so, constructed as it is with τὰς ψυχὰς (A6), ἀρίστας now takes on the meaning of psychic virtue, shaded away from the more externalized Homeric and traditional notion of military prowess and contrasted instead with the expression Lysimachus had used in his original request for help (ὅτι ἄριστοι γένοντο [sc. the νεανίσκοι], 179D7), to which Socrates is here referring.

237 εἰ μὲν φαμεν ἔχειν (A6): Supply διδασκάλους (with Ast), as B2-3 will presuppose. At 185B3-4 and E5-6 Socrates had broached the idea of having teachers as a credential; Laches has just claimed that people can become competent without teachers, insinuating his prejudice that teachers are frauds; and now Socrates brings that claim as if Laches were arguing for *two* criteria that would legitimate competence. That there should be two explains the presence of μὲν, but heavy work is laid upon φαμεν ἔχειν to imply by itself that its unexpressed object is διδασκάλους, especially with σύμβουλον in the neighborhood. Tatham understands ἐπιδειξαι with ἔχειν, which fails to be parallel with ἔργα ἔχει below and steals the thunder from the ἐπιδειξαι that immediately follows, placed in hyperbaton for emphasis and completing the construction with δεῖ. ἢ εἴ τις ... γέγονασιν (B1-5) should not be regarded as parenthetical (*pace* Tatham, followed by Newhall) since it lays out the alternative or complementary credential. For the pairing of these credentials cf. (with Dorion) *Gorg.* 514AE.

238 Reading ἡμῶν γέγονασιν and πρῶτοι (A7) with the mss. (though hitherto we had had the possessive dative with γέγονα in this connection: 185B3-4, 185E5-6). The two subsequent participles are governed by πρῶτοι (in its “personal” construction, *pace* Stephanus) and provide exegesis as to the identity of the teachers (οἵτινες) before they thereupon (ἔπειτα) became our teachers for all to see (διδάξαντες φαίνονται). τεθεραπευκότες is an “empirical” perfect (cf. *Rep.* 400A6 with my n.). For ἔπειτα connecting, as here, an ordinate construction with a subordinate participial phrase that denotes a prior or background state of affairs cf. 192B6-7, below, and *Apol.* 20C6-8; *Charm.* 163A6-9; *Gorg.* 456D7,

themselves competent<sup>239</sup> from the get-go and coming with a record of having helped many young men's souls, who thereupon were observed<sup>240</sup> teaching us. Or, if one of us denies he ever had a teacher on the subject, but does<sup>241</sup> at least have deeds<sup>242</sup> of his own, he must describe and show<sup>243</sup> who – whether it be Athenians or foreigners, whether slaves or free – would corroborate<sup>244</sup> that it was through his action<sup>245</sup> that they were made competent in fact. But if we come with neither kind of credentials on hand, we must instruct them to seek counsel from others, and ourselves not risk<sup>246</sup> to cause corruption<sup>247</sup> among the very sons of our fellows, and thereby to bear the heaviest kind of opprobrium from men who are our closest familiars.<sup>248</sup>

“I will answer about myself first,<sup>249</sup> Lysimachus and Melesias, and say that I never had a teacher

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461E3, 519E5, 527D6; *Phdo.*90D1 (and Burnet *ad loc.*); *Prot.*343C7-D1 (*n.b.* πρώτον), 358C1; *Rep.*331B3 (with my *n. ad loc.*), 336E8, 337E5 (with πρώτον), 434B1.

239 ἀγαθοί (A8) sc. δημιουργοί (from 185E10).

240 The participial construction with φαίνεσθαι (ὄντες, θεραπευκότες, διδάξαντες, A8-B1) treats these effects as empirically verifiable (and even “reproducible.” *n.b.* πολλῶν, A8), in accordance with the criterion Socrates attributed to Laches at 185E10-186A1. Socrates in this long speech first addresses Nicias and Laches on how to answer (A6-B8) and then Lysimachus and Melesias as to how to interrogate them (D5-187B5). He takes upon himself the role of constellating the interlocutors so as to enable them to have a fruitful dialogue.

241 Reading αὐτός and ἔχει (B2,B3) with the mss. (and Ast Bekker Stallb. Badham Hermann Schanz Tatham Plaistowe/Mills Lamb Croiset Vicaire: cf. Zimmermann and Cron *ad loc.*) against the ἔχειν of the *recentiores* and the αὐτόν conjectured by Stallb. (both read by Burnet and Emlyn-Jones, and so translated by Burges Dorion Waterfield Hardy). Laches has required not that he claim to have works but that he have them to put on display.

242 ἢ εἴ τις (B1) is not the εἰ δέ τις that Tatham expected (*ad loc.*) because it resumes the μέν clause (as Denniston [378] almost sees). The δέ clause Tatham expected is then begun by ἀλλ’ οὖν (so that this instance should be classed under “(5)” at Denniston, 444). If we claim no teachers at least we have works that we must describe and show. Place comma after ἔχει (B3), parallel with the comma at A6. Croiset and Vicaire without comment (and to all appearances unintentionally) omitted the καί between εἰπεῖν and ἐπιδείξαι (B3).

243 εἰπεῖν καὶ ἐπιδείξαι (B3): Mere claim or assertion (εἰπεῖν ~ λόγος) must again be supplemented (ἐπιδείξαι ~ ἔργον).

244 ὁμολογουμένως (B4) means that those he describes and points out would agree, looking back, if asked (“would acknowledge,” Waterfield). Thus the shift of perspective implicit in the “third person” or remote demonstrative, ἐκεῖνον (if we read Coislin.) or ἐκεῖνων (if we read BT), for which the widely accepted interpretation that they are good “by general agreement” cannot account. It is not whether they are good that is in question but whether he and his efforts caused it.

245 Reading ἐκεῖνων (B4) with BT rather than the correction to ἐκεῖνον in the Coislinianus (read by all edd. to my knowledge). The difference between their saying that it was because of him or through his efforts that they were improved (as some do translate) is too slight to oust the better attested reading. The genitive suits the notion of a process of improvement denoted by γεγονότες.

246 κινδυνεύειν (B6): For the construction of κινδυνεύειν with ἐν compare the proverb below (187B-2). For ἐν plus dative = “in the case of” cf. *Ar.Phys.*211B30.

247 διαφθείροντας (B7) is surely one of those rueful allusions to Socrates's personal fate that our elusive author sprinkles through his *Dialogues*, but at the same time in itself the remark is dramatically verisimilar. Although it is uncertain that “corrupting the youth” was recognized as a justiciable complaint by itself, the αἰτία Socrates mentions is not a legal charge but only the sort of resentful indignation felt by parents, of the sort depicted in Aristophanes' *Clouds*.

248 οἰκειοτάτων (B7): The connection of familiarity was the grounds for Lysimachus's request and even demand (cf. δίκαιος, 180E1 and n.98) that Socrates join in with Laches and Nicias (181A5-6), and now Socrates shows that the incumbency of such familiarity is two-edged. The οἰκεῖος must be as unwilling to harm as he is willing to help.

249 πρώτος περὶ ἑμαυτοῦ λέγω (B8-C1) does not mean (*pace* Jowett Burges Lamb Sprague Lane Nichols Dorion Waterfield) he is “the first to say it” in the sense of volunteering to confess his inferiority (this is an English idiom), but “*wenn ich dabei den Anfang machen soll*” (Hardy, cf. tr. of Allen), fulfilling his own suggested agenda (this is the antecedent of *dabei*).

of this subject, though a desire<sup>250</sup> for this thing<sup>251</sup> is something I have felt ever since a boy. But I never had the money to hire sophists, who are the only persons I know of that would promise to be able to make me a right and good person;<sup>252</sup> and as for discovering the skill by myself, I've proven unable, at least so far. If Nicias or Laches have either discovered it or learned it<sup>253</sup> I would not be surprised. They have more money at their command so as to be in a position to learn it from others, and also they are older so as by now to have discovered it.<sup>254</sup> They do seem to me able to teach a man. For they wouldn't dare hold forth on which exercises are worthwhile for a young man and which are a waste of time if they did not trust in themselves that they had an adequate grasp of the matter. In principle<sup>255</sup> I would put my trust in them, too – though the fact that they disagree with each other is something of a surprise. So let me counter<sup>256</sup> the request that Laches made to you a moment ago encouraging you not to let me loose but to ask me questions: I now encourage you not to let Laches and Nicias loose but to question them by saying:

'Socrates claims to be clueless<sup>257</sup> about the whole affair,<sup>258</sup> and therefore is not able to decide which of you is correct<sup>259</sup> given the fact that he has neither discovered them nor was anybody's student in these matters – but you, Laches and Nicias, come and tell us for your part each of you with what very clever person did you associate in the study of bringing up the young. Tell us whether it was by learning from somebody that you have the knowledge you do or by discovering it on your own, and if it was from learning (187) who your teachers were, each of you, and who are the others in their guild, so that just in case you haven't the time, given the pressures of your public activities, all of us here might approach those others instead

250 ἐπιθυμῶ (C2): The present denotes a desire that constitutes a life-long orientation (“the present of present and past combined” [Smyth §1885]), which has made him in maturity the person that Plato the author relies upon us already to know, an orientation that has been evinced by everything he has said so far – in particular his introduction of criteria that Laches and Nicias must meet if they are to hold forth, and which Lysimachus and Melesias are to hold them to if they are to hearken to their advice. Socrates's commitment Laches has indirectly corroborated (ἐνταῦθα ἀεὶ τὰς διατριβὰς ποιούμενον, 180C2-3), whereas the fact that Nicias and Laches have not found what Socrates desires despite their greater age and wealth implies without saying it that this is not their desire. Moreover from what their speeches have shown us (namely, the ἐπιθυμία described and confessed in Nicias's speech at 182B6 and 7 [cf. n. 119], and Laches's overwhelming aversion to ridicule) we already know something about what they do and have desired: honor and public eminence, desires to which Socrates alludes below (187A2).

251 τοῦ πράγματος (C2) adds a sense of substantiality or active involvement beyond its merely being a topic (τούτου πέρι, above). I sense it would repay study to look through all uses of πρᾶγμα in Plato.

252 καλόν τε καὶ ἀγαθόν (C4) is a formula that by its insouciant redundancy demurs to insist on the sense of either term (cf. n.285). The sophist's ἐπάγγελμα always relies on evasions; Socrates's description of what they offer is here gracefully ambivalent.

253 ἤυρηκεν ἢ μεμάθηκεν (C6): Note chiasm “of before and after.” (cf. C1, C5).

254 ὥστε in both cases (C7-8) denotes result. In place of the correlative adverb οὕτω (so rich, so old) we have the comparatives δυνατώτεροι and πρεσβύτεροι.

255 τὰ μὲν ἄλλα (D3-4) here almost means *ceteris paribus*.

256 ἀντιδέομαι (D5) means “to request in turn.” The emphasis is upon ἀντι- not δέομαι and the reference is to 184C9, the beginning of this section of the conversation. There is no redundancy or repetition of the verb in παρακελεύομαι as Tatham and Newhall claim. To the contrary παρακελεύομαι answers διεκελεύετο (whence Croiset tr., “imitant Lachès”).

257 ἐπαίειν (E1), a new word substituting for being a τεχνικός (looking backwards, 186C5, 185E11, E4, D9, B11, B2, A1). It connotes an ability borne of time and experience to recognize immediately what's what with things, the way a cobbler might very clearly recognize what is amiss in a painter's depiction of a cobbler at work – e.g. that he is holding his hammer wrong. Often used, as here, in the negative with sense like the English to “have no clue.” (cf. *Apol.* 19C5, *Gorg.* 518C2, *H.Maj.* 289E1). Cf. my n. *ad Phdrs.* 268C4.

258 περὶ τοῦ πράγματος (E1): Again the more substantial noun: cf. C2.

259 διακρίναι (E1), another reference back to the beginning of the section (184D1).

and try to persuade them, with gifts or favors or both ways,<sup>260</sup> to take care of both our children and yours,<sup>261</sup> lest they heap embarrassment<sup>262</sup> upon their respective parents by turning out poorly. Or if, according to the alternative, you qualify as discoverers<sup>263</sup> of the truth of this matter on your own, show us an example of the others you have transformed with your care from nobodies into men good and fine. After all, if it is only now that you are beginning to take up the matter of educating your sons,<sup>264</sup> you must be wary that it is not a Carian that you are putting at risk<sup>265</sup> but your sons and the children of your friends, and also beware that the old proverb of starting ceramics with a pithos might apply to you.<sup>266</sup> Tell us therefore which of these credentials you claim you come with<sup>267</sup> and which describes you more suitably, and which you deny.'

“That, Lysimachus, is what you have to get out of them ... and<sup>268</sup> don't let these worthy men slip through your fingers!<sup>269</sup>”

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- 260 ἀμφοτέρα (187A3), an adverbial accusative of manner following the datives of means (as at *Gorg.*477D, 525B). For the pair δώροις / χάρισιν cf. *Crat.*391B, χρήματα ἐκείνοις τελούντα καὶ χάριτας κατατιθέμενον.
- 261 Socrates now imagines that Laches and Nicias have and have had the ability to raise their sons but not the time, for he recalls Laches's evasive or self-forgetful answer at 180B1-7.
- 262 κατασχύνουσι (A5): Socrates recalls Lysimachus's attempt to minimize and sublimate his feelings with the *hapax* ὑπασχυνόμεθα at 179C6, and now calls a spade a spade. In truth, Lysimachus was *mortified* (κατασχύνουσι) when he saw how little he had to say about his sons in the company of his peers, enough so that he is finally moved to do something about it. Compare Socrates's frankness at 185A5-7 and n.208.
- 263 εὔρεταί (A7) suggests they have earned title to having discovered the therapy of the soul, something stronger than saying they happened upon it. Cf. Lamb: “if you have made the *grand discovery* yourselves,” and Croiset, “*si vous avez trouvé par vous-mêmes la vraie méthode.*”
- 264 πρῶτον ἄρξεσθε (A8): In now exhausting Lysimachus's legitimate criteria for even accepting counsel from Nicias and Laches, Socrates remembers Lysimachus's remark at 179A7-8, ἀλλὰ νῦν δὴ καὶ ἄρχεσθαι αὐτῶν ἐπιμελείσθαι καθ' ὅσον οἴοι τ' ἐσμέν – for they, too, in rendering their opinion would be starting “only today.” He has found an indirect way to warn Lysimachus himself that late might not be better than never, just as he had put him in mind that a close friend might be reluctant to render counsel if he thinks himself incompetent (cf. n.248).
- 265 Proverbial (ἐν Καρπὶ τὸν κίνδυνον e.g. *Euthyd.*285C1, *Eur.Cycl.*654: cf. *Paroem.Gr.*1.70-71 [=Zenob.359]): The Carians were foreign mercenaries and therefore “dispensable.”
- 266 Again proverbial (ἐν πίθῳ τὴν κεραμίαν, e.g. *Gorg.*514E6-7, *Ar.*f.469 [Kock]): cf. *Paroem.Gr.*1.73 [=Zenob.365], 2.28-9 [=Diogen.265]), of the novice that skips the primer and goes directly to the larger or more difficult exercises. The pairing but even more the juxtaposition of the two proverbs describes with trenchant poignancy the dilemma of every father. For συμβαίνειν constructed with supplementary participle cf. Smyth §2105 and (with LSJ) *Crat.*412A7, *Phlb.*42D3, *Soph.*244D8-9.
- 267 ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν (B5) is repeated from 186B5, and here expanded with προσήκειν.
- 268 τε καὶ (B6) closely links the verbs but their objects are repeated. With a certain urgency Socrates warns Lysimachus that Nicias and Laches might immediately shirk or evade his challenge. By varying ἀφίεσθαι (middle) with μεθιέναι (active) he shifts the emphasis from the object's attempt to escape to the willingness or insouciance of the subject to let it happen, adding thereby an admonitory increment of culpability. Compare the shading of the terms revealed in *Phlb.*62DE.
- 269 Socrates's intervention in the conversation begins with the denial that he will play referee by merely casting a deciding vote and ends with his having played referee for all four parties in a very different way from what Lysimachus had envisioned and in ways that could never have taken place if Nicias and Laches had agreed about hoplomachia. He has now summarized the product of his interchange with all four of the others in a speech of some fifty lines, first reviewing the credentials to be required from any advisor (186A3-B8), then spelling out his own lack of these credentials in comparison with Nicias and Laches (B8-D5), and finally telling Lysimachus exactly how to ask Nicias and Laches to present theirs, including to remind Lysimachus of the motives he had revealed in his opening speech, with the varnish removed (D5-187B7).

Lys. “I for one approve what Socrates has said, my friends, but whether you two find yourselves willing<sup>270</sup> to be asked and to answer the questions<sup>271</sup> you have heard him laying out is for you to decide.<sup>272</sup> As for Melesias and me, we find ourselves<sup>273</sup> quite pleased by the prospect of your being willing to answer step by step all of what Socrates has asked. As I said at the start, it was for just this reason that we called upon you to advise us, namely that we believed you had likely given your attention to these things,<sup>274</sup> especially since your children are about as close to the age of being educated as ours are. If it is all the same to you, please say so<sup>275</sup> and join in Socrates's inquiry – in an exchange, that is, of questions and answers with him. After all he is right when he says that we are now deliberating about the most important of what is ours.<sup>276</sup> But enough from me:<sup>277</sup> look to whether you ought do this or not!”

Nic. “Let me say, Lysimachus, that it does seem your only acquaintance with Socrates is through your relationship with his father, as you said, and that you have not spent time with him<sup>278</sup> since he was a child, but perhaps met him in the company of your townsmen when he came along with his father to a temple or to some other gathering of the deme. Now that he has gotten older and become a man<sup>279</sup> you have never been in his company – that's obvious!”

Lys. “Just why do you say that, Nicias?”

270 βουλομένοις ὑμῖν ἐστί (C1): This periphrastic construction in the dative conveys a deferential request. Note the echoing with ἡδομένοις below, C4.

271 ἐρωτᾶσθαι τε καὶ διδόναι λόγον (C1-2): Lysimachus shows he recognizes the radical and renewing force of Socrates's contribution to the conversation – in short that he has made a true give-and-take conversation of it (note τε καί), rather than a series of holdings-forth, and that this is how the counseling will continue. He stresses the radical difference again with the expression λόγῳ διεξιέναι at C4-5 (cf., with Cron, Prot.320C3-4: πότερον μῦθον λέγων ... ἢ λόγῳ διεξελλθῶν) and with κοινῇ ... σκέψασθε and διδόντες τε καὶ δεχόμενοι λόγον at D2-3. These metaphorical expressions and others of similar import are used throughout the *Dialogues* to describe Socratic conversation in distinction to persons holding forth one after the other. Minor variations in terminology indicate only that Plato does not put technical terms into the mouths of his interlocutors but prefers instead to depict them speaking naturally. To assert or deny from his use of such expressions that Lysimachus is already familiar with a “Socratic method” (Dorion, Emlyn-Jones) asserts and denies more than what is warranted by what has happened. Socrates, with whom he has never spoken, has just now engaged himself and each of the others in question and answer, and Lysimachus realizes this new kind of engagement requires from those who participate in it a greater commitment (all the infinitives and participles with which he describes it [C1-2, C5, D2] are conative presents) and that it entails a new vulnerability, so that Nicias and Laches deserve to be asked all over again whether they will continue, whereas he is careful to exempt himself from joining in (n.b., παρ’ ἀλλήλων, D3). That Lysimachus adduces the issue of the μέγιστον (I87D3-4) is another index of his awareness of the difference and the challenge it entails.

272 γινώσκειν (C2) recalls his expression of confidence, at I78B3-4, in their ability and willingness to make judgments, but now Lysimachus finds himself asking for more.

273 ἡδομένοις (C4): The dative construction designedly echoes βουλομένοις ὑμῖν above. Lysimachus is hoping they feel the same way, and this is an index of his regard for what Socrates has said.

274 He refers to I79A8-B2.

275 εἶπατε (D1): This first aorist form is preferred over the second aorist form, in Attic, for the 2<sup>nd</sup> pl. indicative and imperative (LSJ, s.v. εἶπον), as also in the 3<sup>rd</sup> sing. imperative passive (εἰπάτω, e.g. *Phlb.*60D4).

276 περὶ τοῦ μέγιστου τῶν ἡμετέρων (D3-4) brings forward Socrates's expression from I85A5 (τῶν ὑμετέρων τὸ μέγιστον), maintaining its vagueness.

277 ἀλλ’ ὀρᾶτε (I87D4): Lysimachus is addicted to completing his requests with this sort of self-interruptive imperative (cf. I81A1, I81C3-4, 201B8).

278 συγεγονέναι (D6) is the verb for “having a συνουσία,” as at I86E5.

279 ἀνήρ (E4) is again not otiose.

Nic. “It seems you don't know that anybody who comes into close relation with Socrates in conversation as well as in family<sup>280</sup> and enters into dialogue with him<sup>281</sup> – that even if he starts a conversation with him on another topic, I daresay<sup>282</sup> any other, he will inevitably be turned around<sup>283</sup> by him in the conversation until sooner or later he finds himself giving an account on the topic of *himself*, and discussing how (188) he is living his life and what he has done with it up until now.<sup>284</sup> And once he finds himself doing that, that he won't be let go before this Socrates fellow puts all that he says to a right good<sup>285</sup> test. I, on the other hand, am quite familiar with him and know that the treatment is inevitable, and also that I'll be undergoing it again in the future, as will others.<sup>286</sup> You see, Lysimachus, I enjoy being in his company and think it not at all bad that we be made mindful of the ways<sup>287</sup> we haven't and aren't behaving<sup>288</sup> well. To the contrary a person will perforce be more mindful in his future life if<sup>289</sup> he does not avoid this treatment but instead is willing to follow the dictum of Solon and value

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- 280 λόγῳ ὥσπερ γένοι (E7) is present in all mss. and is read by Ast Bekker Stallbaum(1834) Zimmermann Schanz Plaistowe/Mills Croiset Vicaire (Badham inserts σύ before γένοι), but is athetized by Cron, followed by Burnet Lamb Emlyn-Jones and trr. (Schleiermacher, followed by Tatham and Newhall, athetized only ὥσπερ γένοι). Also (it is a separate note in his apparatus) Burnet wonders as Burges had whether καὶ ... διαλεγόμενος should be athetized (but see next n.). The latter phrase, however, explains the metaphor ἐγγὺς εἶναι λόγῳ, so both are needed (as Schleiermacher saw), but ὥσπερ γένοι is also needed (*pace* Schleiermacher) to make the link between ἐγγύτατα εἶναι and the πλησιάζειν of his previous remark. Nicias is hearkening back to Lysimachus's failure to recognize Socrates (180D4-181A2) and is bringing forward the double theme of friendship and advice-giving that Lysimachus there introduced, and which Socrates himself had just criticized (186B6-8).
- 281 καὶ πλησιάζει διαλεγόμενος (E7): This sort of exegetical restatement introduced by καὶ is a habit of Nicias (*pace* Tatham) and therefore should not be athetized as redundant: cf. 182A3, 182A7, 182C2 and 3 (καὶ *primum*), and 188A8 and 188B3 (*bis*), below. His use of διαλεγόμενος suggests in a nutshell his own familiarity with Socratic conversation (contrast n.271 and compare n.329).
- 282 With ἄρα (E8) his mind is coming to recognize how true is what he has started to say.
- 283 περιηγόμενον (E9): *unaufhörlich von diesem in der Rede herumgeführt wird, bis er dahin kommt, über sich selbst Rechenschaft zu geben* (Hardy). It is nonsense to say (with trr.) they are “led about” or “around and around” or “headed off” until they are trapped into talking about themselves: the course of the conversation at Socrates's hands is not being depicted as aimless but as leading inevitably to the same place, and Nicias could hardly find deceptive shenanigans welcome (χαίρω, 188A6). Protarchus's remark at *Phlb.* 19A3-5, cited by Cron and Newhall, that Socrates's questions οὐκ εἰς φαῦλόν γε ἐρώτημα... κύκλω πὺρ περιγαγὼν ἡμᾶς ἐμβέβληκε is not parallel. There he has moved his interlocutors away from the original question into a digression that leads back to it (whence κύκλω, which is absent in our passage); but here the notion is a reversal of direction or περιγαγωγή from the object of the question back toward the subject being questioned. *On est forcé ... de se ramener par le fil de l'entretien à des explications sur soi-même* (Croiset) is relatively close but fails to tr. ὑπὸ τούτου (i.e., Socrates). In the instant case (184D5-187B7) Socrates started by asking for credentials of the advisors, and then in connection with confessing that he himself lacked such credentials despite his desire, he suggested the others' lives might have provided them a better chance to have accrued them.
- 284 νῦν τε ζῆ ... καὶ βεβίωκεν (188A1): The compounding of present and perfect recalls Socrates's phrase ἐπιθυμῶ τοῦ πράγματος ἐκ νέου ἀρξάμενος (186C2: cf. n.250) and his subsequent speculation about how Nicias and Laches might have spent (C5-9) and might be spending (187A2) their time. The order of the terms is the order of experience in the Socratic encounter: how one is living (ζῆ) comes to be understood as a result of past choices (βεβίωκεν).
- 285 εὖ τε καὶ καλῶς (A3), the adverbial version of the phrase καλός τε κάγαθός (cf. 186C4 and n.252). The order of the terms is reversed for euphony (cf. *Phdrs.* 259E4, *Rep.* 400E2-3). Its colloquial character is well illustrated by this passage.
- 286 αὐτός (A5) = *ich wie jeder andere* (Cron), but the point is that Nicias herewith consents to Lysimachus's request.
- 287 The ὅτι in Burnet's edition (A7) represents ὅ τι (*pace* Sprague and Lane), an orthographic convention Burnet adopted throughout his OCT edition. Ast's old emendation into εἶ τι against the unanimous reading of the mss. is only more idiomatic.
- 288 ἢ πεποιθήκαμεν ἢ ποιούμεν (A7): Now the order of learning (A1-2) is replaced by the order of understanding, in a “chiasm of before and after.” The first plural is not a royal we (*pace* Allen) but refers to “us all.”
- 289 τὸν ταῦτα μὴ φεύγοντα (B2): The negative indicates the participle is conditional.

learning as long as he lives,<sup>290</sup> rather than imagining that old age by its very approach<sup>291</sup> will confer good sense onto him.<sup>292</sup> So for my part there is nothing unfamiliar nor again unpleasant<sup>293</sup> in being tested by Socrates – All along I just knew that since he is here our discussion would not be about our boys, but about ourselves. For my part I am ready to go through this exercise<sup>294</sup> with Socrates as ever he wishes to manage it. But as for Laches here, you'll have to see<sup>295</sup> how he feels about this sort of thing.”

La. “My feelings are simple when it comes to talk,<sup>296</sup> Nicias – or, if you will, not simple but double, since I might seem to someone to be a lover of talk and then again a hater of talk. The reason is that whenever I hear a man conversing about virtue or some kind of sophistication,<sup>297</sup> if he himself is truly

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290 Nicias's remark echoes Lysimachus's remark that he and Sophroniscus never had a falling out as long as he was alive.

291 Reading αὐτό (B4) with VV (and Stallb. Badham Hermann Cron Schanz Plaistowe/Mills Croiset Vicaire and trr. Sprague Lane Nichols Waterfield) rather than αὐτῷ with BT (and Ast Bekker Tatham Burnet Lamb Dorion Hardy and trr.).

292 καὶ ἀξιούντα (B3): Once again Nicias clarifies his meaning with an exegetical parallel introduced by καί (cf. n.281). His reference is to Solon's famous γηράσκω δ' αἰεὶ πολλὰ διδασκόμενος (18 West), which he interprets to mean not that aging is inevitable but that the accrual of wisdom is not.

293 ἀηθής / ἀηδής (B5) is not an idle or gratuitous paronomasia. He has made the two points separately (as αὖ stresses): συνήθης (A4) / χαίρω (A6). With μὲν οὖν (“and so,” not “anyway,” *pace* Waterfield) he launches into a closing summary.

294 συνδιατρίβειν (C2) brings forward the use of διατρίβειν to describe Socrates's activity at the gymnasium (Laches's διατρίβειν [180C2: cf. n. 66] which Nicias had there picked up with συνδιατρίβειν [D3]). The grownups have now moved into the boys' position in the learning exercise with Socrates – namely, διαλέγεσθαι (187E7).

295 Nicias's ὄρα (C3) passes Lysimachus's ὄρατε (187D4) back to him.

296 ἀπλοῦν (C4): He hopes to be able to say his attitude about arguing is less abstruse than argument itself. He is suspicious of talk, but immediately he requires a *distinguo* (διπλοῦν) to articulate his straightforward attitude! It is not a “*dilogia haud inelegans*” or an intentional word-play (*pace* Stallb. Newhall Lamb Rainey and Hardy [90]) but another instance of his speech revealing he has not thought things through (“dramatic” irony, therefore: cf. nn. 191, 189, 177, 163, 157, 154).

297 περὶ ἀρετῆς ... ἢ περὶ τίνος σοφίας (C7): The two terms do not constitute a doublet and their juxtaposition is awkward. The addition of τις adds no clarity as to Laches's meaning. It might (despite its position) make σοφία refer to a specialized skill (rather than the ἀρετή of wisdom), or (by dint of its position before σοφία) it might have one of the two “adverbial” senses that τις has when infixed into a list, either (1) to express indifference as to the additional item (“or, for that matter”: cf. *Leg.* 941B4-5; *Phdrs.* 230D7, 235C4, 248D5, 251A3, 255A4-5; *Polit.* 261D8, 296B7; *Thet.* 174D4-5; cf. England *ad Leg.* 647B7-8 and Riddell, *Digest* §52 [calling it the “this or that” sense]), or (2) to invite the mind to linger over the specificity of the item it introduces (*Leg.* 633B8 and 9 and D2, 889C5-6; *Phdrs.* 248E1, 255C4; *Phlb.* 21C6-8, 56C1; *Polit.* 311A8-9; *Rep.* 440E3-4; *Symp.* 221E4-5). The generalizing tr. “any sort of wisdom” is too strong (*pace* Jowett, Lamb, Lane, Hardy [*jirgendein*]). Conversely, merely to talk about “*quelque science*” as Croiset translates, could not rise to beautiful speech nor decline into boasting so as to stimulate or to annoy Laches, until the axiological component (ἀρετή) becomes involved. Overall he is, and enjoys being, suspicious of all art (cf. nn. 157, 162, 163, 168). But as often as not he leaves it to his audience to understand his meaning. We might help him by remembering that the last time he complained about big talk was in reference to Stesilaus's presentation that day (183D1-2), which probably included the assertion that the special skill of ὀπλομαχία imparts manly virtue – the sort of argument we would associate with the ἐπαγγέλματα of the Sophists. I therefore suggest that he is making a thinly veiled reference to that presentation as an example of the sort of thing that bothers him, but unfortunately spends an important word to say so little. Indeed the keynote of the anecdote by which he ridiculed Stesilaus for his high talk was the opening joke, διαφέρον δὴ ὄπλον ἄτε καὶ αὐτὸς τῶν ἄλλων διαφέρων (182D5-6), in which he himself ironically connects ἀρετή (Stesilaus is διαφέρων) with σοφία τις, in the sense of the σοφισμα (D7) of the διαφέρον ὄπλον.

a man<sup>298</sup> and equal in worth<sup>299</sup> to what he is saying, I am overjoyed by the spectacle of the speaker and what he saying being so appropriate to each other and fitting. Such a man is plainly musical, attuned according to a most beautiful sort of melody, not in a lyre or some other mere toy but attuned in the very way he lives,<sup>300</sup> himself attuned to his life, a life in which his words are in harmony with his deeds – obviously in the Dorian mode rather than the Ionian, nor I would say the Phrygian or Lydian, but in the one and only mode that is truly Hellenic.<sup>301</sup> A man of this sort gives me joy by the very sound of his voice,<sup>302</sup> which would make me seem to anybody<sup>303</sup> a lover of talk, given how eagerly I accept and receive the arguments that he makes out of what he is.<sup>304</sup> But he whose behavior is the opposite of this<sup>305</sup> gives me pain, and the better he seems to talk the more he pains me, so that in turn I am made to seem<sup>306</sup> a hater of talk.

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- 298 ὡς ἀληθῶς ὄντος ἀνδρός (C8), as if we had not noticed his use of ἀνήρ just above (C7), which by now we certainly knew was not otiose! It is more of Laches's bluffing carelessness, requiring his audience to agree with him in order to understand what he means (as soon as possible he reverts to his allusive τοιοῦτος [D3]); but after ἀνδρός above the circularity according to which his believing things makes them true comes closer to the surface than he notices (see prev. note). It is unclear whether Laches has the equipment or for that matter any desire to formulate his own ideas in language, but only can, or only will, *point*.
- 299 καὶ ἀξίου τῶν λόγων ὧν λέγει (C8): As an exegesis of ἀνδρός, ἀξίου is compact and a little too swift, for it leaves unclear what is the measure of the speech's worth that the man's personal stature must equal. Is the man's speaking something that is itself praiseworthy (εὖ λέγει), or does his speech contain a praise of something good so that it is a praiseworthy deed, or is his speech in fact a praise of himself? Without an axiological component in the speech itself the speaker could not in himself be worthy or unworthy of saying it. Still and again we must think of Laches's criticism of Stesilaus's μεγάλα περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγειν (183D2, where Laches pitted his words against the action of his demonstration), a speech-act which the entire anecdote about the halbert was designed to ridicule by showing that Stesilaus did not (and perhaps therefore could not) live up to it.
- 300 τῷ ὄντι (D4-5), like ἀληθεία, can easily for Laches be identified with ἔργω, which is its meaning here (cf. 183C2 with D3 and nn. 163, 162, 154, 153). So, “*dans les faits*,” Croiset; “*tatsächlich*,” Hardy. He verges in this speech on saying that facts are the only truth.
- 301 For the ethical character of the Doric mode, in contrast with the others, see Socrates's eloquent and spare description at *Rep.* 399A5-C4. The names of the other modes are indeed borrowed from foreign lands.
- 302 φηγγόμενος (E1): That Laches should describe his enjoyment of the speech by praising its sound is characteristic of his aversion to thought, the content of the speech. In Socrates's mouth this metonymy, by which sound is allowed to trump sense, tends to be derogatory (*Rep.* 493B4, 527A9) or ironic (*Phdr.* 238D, 241E), or is used in a context where the inquiry is making its way from phonemes to lexemes (*Crat.* 429E-30A, 435A; *Soph.* 237B, 244A, 257D, 263E, etc.).
- 303 δοκεῖν ὀψοῦν (E4) brings forward δόξαμί τῷ (C5-6), stressing that it is merely the opinion of the onlooker that he is a lover of speech (he stresses it again just below, E4).
- 304 ἀποδέχομαι παρ' αὐτοῦ τὰ λεγόμενα (E2), not ὑπ' αὐτοῦ – as if the λόγοι were excrescences of his inner virtue. Laches (negatively) rejects listening to frauds but he can have this only at the expense of listening to any man he deems virtuous. If as usual Socrates will “turn this assertion around” as Nicias put it (187E9), the Socratic question he does not see coming is whether a virtuous man (which he considers himself to be) can (positively) himself produce any λόγοι that are worthy of *himself* – or, to “cut to the chase,” whether a virtuous man, *eo ipso* and *solo ipso*, can say what virtue is (cf. 190C6-7).
- 305 τὰναντία τούτων πράττων (E2-3): Laches uses an attributive participle (ὁ πράττων) so as quietly to avoid characterizing this “counterpart” with a noun (over against ἀνήρ). What is the antithesis to which τὰναντία blithely refers? Presumably that the person acts or has acted poorly but makes a “worthwhile” speech (though this too is fraught with ambiguity), but that he should act well but speak poorly is also logically possible, and is even countenanced by Laches when he says how eagerly (i.e., uncritically) he will accept (σφόδρα ἀποδέχομαι, E1) whatever a man says if only he acts well. For this insouciant and clumsy use of antithesis compare 184B4-7 and nn. 184, 191. The intervening reference to the Dorian mode tends to moot the question by enjoining a *minimum* of speaking.
- 306 ποιεῖ αὐτὸ δοκεῖν... μισόλογον (E4): With αὐτὸ Laches refers back to δόξαμί τῷ φιλόλογος at C5-6. His “simple” attitude about λόγος now pushes to the surface. The two-sidedness is *mere appearance*. He despises λόγος *per se* unless the speaker happens to be admirable; but surely the speaker cannot become admirable in his eyes by dint of what he says or what he thinks. Rather it is his ἔργα that make him a real man (ἀνήρ: C7 and C8) and *eo ipso* worth listening to. The full implication becomes completely explicit just below (189A1: cf. n. ad loc.)

“Now when it comes to Socrates I have no experience<sup>307</sup> of his talk<sup>308</sup> but I have, as it would appear,<sup>309</sup> tested him in the area of deeds, and in *that*<sup>310</sup> realm I (189) discovered him to be a man quite deserving to make fine talk<sup>311</sup> -- indeed, to say absolutely whatever<sup>312</sup> is on his mind. And if moreover this is the way things are, I do join the man<sup>313</sup> in what he wants<sup>314</sup> and would be most pleased<sup>315</sup> to be investigated by him, given the sort<sup>316</sup> he is, and would not be loathe to learn from him. I, too, yield to the counsel of Solon – if I may add just one thing to it. To be “learning many things as I age” I am willing, but only from worthy men. Let this also then be granted to me, that the teacher I am to learn from be also virtuous<sup>317</sup> in himself,<sup>318</sup> or else I would seem slow to learn because the learning would be painful. If on the other hand the teacher is younger, or has not yet achieved eminence, or something

307 ἔμπειρος (E5): Laches continues to speak as though his knowledge and even his cognition of the nature of arguments is unmediated by thought but directly *empirical* (cf. ἀκούω [C7], κομιδῆ [D3], φθεγγόμενος [E1], λυπεῖ [E3], and so below with ἠῦρον, a verb of virtual perception that takes the participle [189A1]). So much for his attitude about λόγος! But the claim is empty since the manliness of the man (C7, expressed less compactly below as the goodness of the man, 189A6), upon which his whole notion of harmony depends, is inaudible and invisible. His claim of empiricism is therefore the testimony of a kind of synesthete that sees his own opinions as visible facts. We witnessed this aspect of his thought, or expression, above, in his abrupt but vague assertions about “seeing what sort they are,” etc.

308 τῶν μὲν λόγων (E5): Though the remark is primarily meant to set himself apart from Nicias and his familiarity with Socrates, Laches unbeknownst to himself reveals that he does not recognize Socrates's intervention (184D5-187B7) as consisting of λόγοι that characterize him. In fact the intervention instantiates almost all that Socrates ever “does” by way of λέγειν and it has had a more telling effect (ἔργον) than anything and everything that had been said before. Presumably Laches is thinking of a λόγος as an ἐπίδειξις, a holding forth, a self-expression, a bestowing upon others of one's opinion. This is why he is sensitive to what we would call hypocrisy, a “discrepancy” (indeed we too employ his auditory metaphor!) between preaching and practice.

309 ὡς ἔοικε (E6), as below at 189C1, *de re certe positum* (Stallb.). Cf. with Ruhnken (*Tim. Soph.*, 281) *Soph.*241C2 “*et sexcenties alibi*,” and with Cron, *Phdo.*61C1. Also *Rep.*372D2 and my n. *ad loc.* It is not here “irony” (Newhall), of which Laches is strictly incapable, but his usual bluffing but also self-effacing penchant for understatement.

310 ἐκεῖ (E6) of the proximate (ἔργα) rather than the remote antecedent (λόγοι), since for Laches ἔργα always trump λόγοι. So also ἐκείνης, below (189B4).

311 ἄξιον ὄντα λόγων καλῶν καὶ πάσης παρρησίας (189A1): λόγων καλῶν is “talk as pretty as you like.” Lane's translation has Laches finding Socrates's “conduct” to be “worthy of a man of high principles and total frankness,” and Waterfield imitates this, finding Socrates's “conduct” on that occasion to be “the equivalent of words of high principle and utter candor.” Both translations are inconsistent with what Laches has said above (λόγοι are not “principles” but mere talk as opposed to action: Waterfield tried to repair this), but they are also incorrect, for ἄξιον modifies Socrates as a man not his “conduct,” for which there is no correlate in the Greek. ἐκεῖ modifies ἠῦρον not ὄντα, and designates not where Socrates was ἄξιον but where, according to his empiricism, Laches can say he discovered him to be so (for which cf. ἐκείνης at B4, below). Hardy's tr. of ἄξιον “*von ihm* (i.e., Socrates) *schoene und offene Worte zu erwarten sind*,” makes the man the measure of his speech, which is the converse of what Laches had said when he used ἄξιος before (C8), and is therefore probably wrong, but given the semantics of ἄξιος it is not impossible since Laches may change horses if he wants. Hardy's translation brings up a question that underlies all that Laches is saying. Are the good man's λόγοι true because he is good, or are they good because they are true? (cf. n.304). Laches will not heed a bad man's λόγοι even if true (as he next says), and he will heed a good man's λόγοι even if they are false.

312 πάσης παρρησίας (A1): The doubled πάς expresses how very great was Socrates's behavior, in his estimation, so that he can listen to him no matter what he says. Just as Laches is more pained by a worse man talking big (E3-4), he rejoices to hear absolutely anything (no matter how pretty) from a man that acted as admirably as Socrates had. His admiration is inordinate since instead of being mediated by reason it gives Socrates *carte blanche* to say and think, and reason, whatever he wants. Perhaps Alcibiades's assertion at *Symp.*221A7-B1 -- how much greater was Socrates's plomb (τῷ ἔμφρων εἶναι, *Symp.*221B1) than that of Laches, and how this steady calmness was so formidable to the enemy that the Athenians could retreat in an orderly manner, so that Socrates saved their lives -- is not just soldierly oneupmanship by Alcibiades but something Laches himself believes and yet cannot quite admit since it places himself in a less heroic light. Cf. 181B1-4 and n.84 *ad loc.*

313 τάνδρι (A2), of course.

314 συμβούλομαι (A2) = *assentior* (cf. *Euthyd.*298B7, *E.Hec.*373) formally announcing his answer to Lysimachus's main question (εἰ βουλομένοις ὑμῖν ἐστι ... 187C1), which Nicias for his part had answered with οὐδὲν κωλύει ...

else like that,<sup>319</sup> I do not mind it at all. Just so, I offer myself up to you, Socrates, to teach me and examine me as ever you wish, though also to learn what I for my part know.<sup>320</sup> This<sup>321</sup> is how you have stood in my estimation ever since that day we weathered those dangers together under my command and you gave yourself over to a test of virtue of the kind that a man must give if he is going to give the test that justice requires.<sup>322</sup> Say then whatever you please<sup>323</sup> and don't let any<sup>324</sup> consideration of our age give you pause."<sup>325</sup>

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συνδιατρίβειν ὅπως οὗτος (i.e., Socrates) βούλεται (188C1-2). Add to this Laches's remarks below, at B3 (ὅ τι ἂν βούλη) and B6-7 (ὅ τι σοι φίλον). I take τάνδρι to be Socrates not Nicias (with Jowett Lamb Croiset Sprague Lane Nichols Waterfield Hardy, *pace* Cron Newhall Dorion). This approbatory term (cf. C7) brings forward the characterization of Socrates that are his grounds for acquiescing in his suggestion, a characterization that is continued with τοιούτου in the next line.

- 315 καί (A2) infers from the fact that he agrees (συμβούλομαι) that he is willing potentially to be tested (ἥδιστ' ἂν ἐξεταζοίμην), which is (again) the substance of Lysimachus's question.
- 316 τοῦ τοιούτου (A3): As usual he avoids articulating what he values but relies on litotes and understatement. Cf. nn.309, 160, 154, 84.
- 317 ἀγαθὸν καὶ αὐτὸν εἶναι (A6): καὶ αὐτόν adds, to the virtue he teaches (περὶ ἀρετῆς, 188C7), that he himself also be virtuous (ἀγαθός here functioning as the adjective of ἀρετή; cf. n.188). Laches seems not to realize that the stipulation he wishes to add to the saying of Solon has already been suggested by Socrates and adopted by the group (αὐτοὶ πρῶτον ἀγαθοὶ ὄντες, 186A7-8). The context reveals that for him virtue may only consist in a record of deeds.
- 318 καὶ αὐτόν (A6) means ἔργω (not just λόγῳ – i.e., not only in the teacher's fine λόγοι).
- 319 τῶν τοιούτων (B1) is again characteristically vague (cf. nn.307, 191 [*sub fin.*], 177, 84). Croiset adds “*désavantage*” to spell it out for him. Laches assumes his audience knows the trend of his thought, since he can hardly imagine anybody disagreeing with him. After all he only believes what he sees, which must of course be true.
- 320 Burges (*ad* B3) finds it absurd that Laches should imagine Socrates learning anything from him, and ingeniously guesses Plato wrote ἀναμανθάνειν instead of μανθάνειν ... αὐ, “unlearning” being hard for an old man to do. For all the ingenuity, ἀναμανθάνειν appears only once in Classical Greek (Hdt.9.101.2, where it means “*erkunden*” [Passow]), and the trajection of the force of αὐ across several words is quite unlikely. Laches is older, after all, and can hardly be expected to suppress his own emulous tendencies entirely. Moreover the overall program envisions and fosters dialogical give-and-take, which he has already exploited with his lesson about who one should talk with, and his request that the parties allow him to qualify Solon's proverb (μοι συγχωρεῖτω [A6], requested as if in exchange for συγχωρῶ [A4]: it is not only for Solon's permission he is asking but also that of Nicias who adduced him and of the group at large). The emphasis upon being questioned up to this point is due to the vulnerability described by Nicias and already anticipated by Lysimachus (on the basis of his eye-opening experience of Socrates's intervention) as he revealed by his request whether they will assent to continue (187C1-2).
- 321 οὕτω (B4) points back to εἰ οὖν τοῦτο ἔχει (189A1-2), the disposition that Laches requires in a man before he can enjoy listening to him.
- 322 τὸν μέλλοντα δικαίως δώσειν (B6): We must bring forward the construction with σαυτοῦ πεῖραν ἀρετῆς. In submitting himself to a test of his virtue (both genitives depend independently upon πεῖραν) Socrates has offered from himself only what the circumstances indicated (δικαίως). Again Laches predicates his praise of Socrates in battle upon a dispraise of those who did less than they should have (cf. 181B1-4 and n.84) as if studiously to avoid draping his own values in high and purple tones – though at the same time he avoids articulating those values in terms that could be subjected to dialectical scrutiny. For the rhetoric compare the remark of Adm. Vm. F “Bull” Halsey: “There are no great men, just great challenges which ordinary men, out of necessity, are forced by circumstances to meet.”
- 323 ὅ τι σοι φίλον (B6-7) is an invitation to the παρηρησία he said he would welcome, at 189A1: Socrates's recounted actions give him license to say whatever he wants.
- 324 μηδέν (B7) adverbial with ποιούμενος with μή rather than οὐ in the context of the ordinate imperative.
- 325 Laches's speech (188C4-189B7) is in two parts. First he presents his criterion for talking (188C4-E4) and then he applies that criterion to the prospect of talking with Socrates and answers whether he will participate (E5-189B7). He does answer Yes, but only after spending half his speech telling us why he might not have, and this, for all his skepticism about speech, makes his speech half again as long as Nicias's (35 lines as opposed to 22). He does not like listening to

Soc. Well! We won't be able to complain that for your part you are not both of you<sup>326</sup> ready and willing to join in the deliberations and investigate the matter together!

Lys. “Then let's move on to *our* part,<sup>327</sup> Socrates – for I count you as one of *us*. Conduct the investigation in my stead as to what we need to learn from these two on behalf of the young men, and carry out the deliberations<sup>328</sup> in a dialogue<sup>329</sup> with them. For I forget what I wanted to ask, at my age,<sup>330</sup> as well as what answers I have heard, and if other arguments arise between the questions and answers

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people whose speech is “better than they are” (188C4-E4) and leaves it to us to figure out what this means. Since this objection does not, according to him, apply to Socrates, it is strictly irrelevant for him to bring it up, except to indicate that if it *had* applied to Socrates his answer would have been No. As it is, he is willing to acquiesce in Socrates's plan (συμβούλομαι, 189A2) even to the point of being tested by him (ἦδιστ' ἂν ἐξεταζοίμην, 189A3 is a polite overstatement). This indeed answers the brunt of the question he has been asked, but along the way he has revealed that he accords to λόγος no *inherent* value. Moreover he follows Nicias' Solonic reference and is willing to be taught something despite his age – as long, again, as his teacher is a worthy and good man (χρηστών, A5; ἀγαθόν, A6). As such even if the teacher be, like Socrates, young and unknown, he will acquiesce to be taught by him – and perhaps he will teach him something in turn (A7-B3). He has held Socrates in high respect ever since that day at Delium he had mentioned earlier (181A7-B4). Laches owes his worthwhile rule that a man should not speak big, and his sentiment that any big talk immediately bothers him (whereas from a virtuous man he will accept and countenance criticism even if he is young and unknown, just as he will acquiesce in his saying anything and everything), to a huge blind spot, namely that he bars serious consideration of anything a person says whom he does not already and instinctually think is worth listening to before he opens his mouth. It is not what a person says but who or what he “is” that Laches heeds. Once again (cf. n.307) his huge reliance on *seeing* what's what borders on the delusional, for a man's virtue is not really visible (even risky behavior at war might be foolhardy). We may now see the full import of his concession to Nicias at 184A7-B1, following 183C1-2) that ὀπλομαχία may be a μάθημα (τὸ λόγῳ, if you will) but he can only tell us what he has seen (τὸ ἔργῳ). Thus at the end of the speech he minds not at all talking himself into a vicious circle when he says, by way of praising Socrates, that he has seen Socrates tested in action where he acted as a man who was ready for a just testing of his mettle would act (cf. n.322). Finally, we may observe that as in his previous speech he seems to be borrowing words and thoughts from the speech of Nicias, sometimes unconsciously, as for instance in his use of χαίρω (188D1), his remark οὐκ ἔμπειρος (188E5) which at least partly compares himself with what Nicias has just said, his use of ἦδιστ' ἂν (189A2-3) echoing Nicias's χαίρω in sense, his καὶ ἰ καὶ ἐγὼ (189A3), and repeating Nicias's of ἀηδῶς (189A7, cf. 188B5) though in a different connection. As to the ultimate substance of his speech, it is stony praise for Socrates, in the same way that the ultimate substance of his first speech was satirical derision of Stesilaus. Given his obsession with bestowing praise and ridicule one begins to wonder what he thinks – or better, what he would say – about Nicias.

326 τὰ ὑμέτερα (C1): The essential predication lies in the plural. Socrates adds Nicias's first person singular τὸ μὲν ἐμόν (188C1) to that of Laches (188C4) and gets a first plural.

327 ἡμέτερον ἔργον (C3): A clever retort to Socrates's ὑμέτερα. Nicias and Laches's willingness to engage in the inquiry entails an incumbency upon Lysimachus – more exactly his helpmate, Socrates – to conduct it. The notion of incumbency is added by the word ἔργον, as is well illustrated by the *similia* collected by Valckenaer *ad E.Phoen.*447, namely *Tim.*17A6 (with Chacidius *ad loc.*), *A.Prom.*635, *S.Phil.*15, *E. I.T.*1079, *Hdt.*5.1.

328 Note the chiasm of before and after (C2-5): First (Soc.) συμβουλεύειν / συσκοπεῖν, and then (Lys.) σκοπεῖ / συμβούλευε.

329 διαλεγόμενος (C5): Lysimachus just has learned from Nicias (187E7) this most succinct way of referring to the Socratic kind of conversation. He has moved Socrates out of the position of a third counselor and over to his own side as a solicitor of advice, and in doing so clarifies even further than before (cf. n.271) the dyadic manner of dialogue that he anticipates witnessing. All that remains unresolved is how Socrates can have a dialogue with two persons at the same time.

330 διὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν (C7): Once again Lysimachus begs off for his age (180D5-6) and once again it seems a matter of laziness and unmanly indolence rather than real disability. And once again we should remember Cephalus, the other old man we meet in Plato did not stay around to defend his own outlook but bequeathed his position to Polemarchus his son to defend it for him (*Rep.*331D2-E2). The sons of Lysimachus and Melesias have once again witnessed their fathers

I barely remember them, either.<sup>331</sup> So you all carry on the discussion. Go step by step and back and forth with each other through these questions<sup>332</sup> we have set before ourselves. I will listen, and once I have heard Melesias and I will carry out whatever decision you reach.

Soc. “Obey we must, Nicias and Laches, the request of Lysimachus and Melesias. Now as to what we set ourselves<sup>333</sup> to investigate – what teachers we had in educating the young or which persons other than ourselves we might have improved – it may not have been a bad idea to examine each other on such topics as these also,<sup>334</sup> but I have another inquiry to suggest that I think will lead to the same result but might also be starting a little closer to a beginning. For if, speaking generally,<sup>335</sup> we know in fact what thing it is that, by coming to something, makes the thing better by virtue of coming to it, and if in addition we are able to make that thing come to it, then it is clear that we know that

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evading the job of bringing them up according to their fathers' own best lights, but by now it is painfully obvious they are ashamed to show their insides the way Nicias described was inevitable in the encounter with Socrates.

331 The flip-side of forgetting what was just said is suddenly remembering something said some time ago – as we saw Lysimachus doing near the beginning of the dialogue (180E4-5). Note that it is competence to manage the characteristic events of dialogue (question, answer, interruption) that Lysimachus disowns, showing once again how quickly he has grasped what is distinct about the Socratic kind of conversation.

332 λέγετε καὶ διέξιτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς αὐτοὺς (D1) repeats one final time his request for a dialogical sort of counsel-taking. Cf. nn. 271, 329.

333 ἐπιχειρήσαμεν (D5) does not assert that they “have made an attempt” to test (which they have not, *pace* Lane and Waterfield), but that they chose to “put their hand” to doing so (compare the use at *Phdrs.*265E2 and my n. *ad loc.*).

334 καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα (E1): I take καί to be proleptically correlative with καὶ τοιάδε, supported in this role by the doubling of μέν (cf. Cron *ad loc.*). It is read by all edd. (although Heusde [*Spec.Crit.*,124] emended to κατά), but only Nichols translates it (“also scrutinize”). The skepsis they had put before themselves (ἐπιχειρήσαμεν σκοπεῖν) would constitute a testing of each other personally (ἐξετάζειν ... ἡμᾶς αὐτούς, the object not, *pace* Vicaire and Emlyn-Jones, the subject) about their relation to other persons, but now he suggests replacing “that sort of thing” (τοιαῦτα rather than ταῦτα pointing back to ἃ already begins the dismissal) – i.e., a skepsis involving “personalities” – with one of a new sort that he now has in mind (correlative τοιάδε pointing forward: for the pointing forward and backward cf. *Apol.*37A4-5 (οὐκ ἔστιν ... τοιοῦτον ἀλλὰ τοιόνδε μᾶλλον); *Crat.*408D6-7; *Crito* 48B3-4; *Meno* 81D6-E1, 90C11-D1 and St.George Stock *ad loc.*; *Rep.*423C6, 440D8), which will reach the same goal (which, *pace* Dorion *ad loc.*, is still to test their qualifications: cf. n.349) but that “comes from a source *instead*” (μᾶλλον ἐξ ἀρχῆς: cf. *Apol.*37A4-5, quoted just above). The latter expression must be given a “plain” meaning. Socrates is not suddenly talking philosophy or mouthing to these people a distinction we learned from Aristotle (*pace* Cron), though surely he is pushing the discussion into a realm it had not yet reached on its own. Soon enough its meaning will become clear but at present it functions as the polar complement of εἰς τι φέρειν: whence the argument is to take its starting point, as opposed to whither it is meant to lead (i.e., toward evaluating whether we are qualified to give counsel for the betterment of the boys's souls). In the event, biographical and personal considerations will have been replaced by what is a question of principle. The interpretation that μᾶλλον means Socrates is proposing to go “further back” entertains the misleading notion that the argument will revert to the question of teachers and experience on its way back. Vicaire's ingenious contrafactual interpretation “peut-être devrait-elle, de préférence (à l'autre), être adoptée dès le début,” would have required the indicative rather than the optative (probably ἦν: cf. Smyth §1788) with ἄν.

335 ὅτουοῦν (E3), “about anything whatsoever” (Sprague), by its prominent position, begins to fill in what μᾶλλον ἐξ ἀρχῆς might mean, immediately indicating that it is general. This impression is continued by παραγενόμενον, from which we learn that ὅτουοῦν was neuter, raising the remark to a theoretical level.

very thing<sup>336</sup> which our counsel would enable<sup>337</sup> a person to acquire in the best and fastest way.<sup>338</sup> In case you don't get<sup>339</sup> what I am saying, you might do so if I put it this way. (190) If in fact we do know that vision, when it comes to the eyes, makes them work better by coming to them, and in addition we are able to cause it to come to the eyes, then clearly we do know just what this thing vision is, in itself,<sup>340</sup> about which, in the role of counselors, we could advise a person as to how he might acquire it in the best and fastest way.<sup>341</sup> For if we don't even know what this thing, vision, really is – or what hearing is<sup>342</sup> – we can forget<sup>343</sup> about becoming counselors worthy of the name as doctors are,<sup>344</sup> about the eyes or the ears<sup>345</sup> and by what means a person might best acquire hearing or sight.”<sup>346</sup>

La. “That's true, Socrates.”<sup>347</sup>

- 336 *αὐτό γε* (E6). The idea is that the expertise they could try to establish would itself presuppose the abilities of knowing what is needed and how to bring it about, and both those abilities would presuppose grasping the nature of the thing needed, so that this grasp is first, the ability comes second, and the credentials follow third. This is what *μᾶλλον ἐξ ἀρχῆς* as well as *εἰς τι φέρειν* end up meaning. The inferential sequence becomes explicit in its application, below (190B8-C2).
- 337 *οὐ περί* (E6) is now used of the means rather than the end, as opposed to the way Socrates required his interlocutors to use it of the end, a moment ago (185B10, 185C5-D11) – indeed in the way Nicias there incorrectly presumed he was using it (185C2-4).
- 338 Socrates continues (E5-6) in a generalized vein. If the problem is to get something, the ability of the counselor is conceived of as knowing the best and fastest way (*ῥᾶστα καὶ ἄριστα*) to acquire that needful thing (*αὐτό*).
- 339 *μανθάνετε* (E8). In live conversation *μανθάνειν* used of the interlocutors often means to “get” what is being said. Cf. 191E11, 194D7-8, 196A4; *Phdrs.*257E7, *Rep.*372E2 and my nn. *ad locc.*
- 340 *ὅψιν γε ἴσμεν αὐτήν ὅτι ποτ' ἔστιν* (190A4) with *γε* Socrates brings forward, and with *αὐτήν* and *ὅτι ποτ' ἔστιν* expands upon and clarifies, *αὐτό γε ἴσμεν* from A3, repeating the “theoretical” neuter. All these ancillary expressions stress the conception of the thing as separate and in itself on its own terms (compare the use at 185B10 and n. *ad loc.*).
- 341 The articulation of the example (A1-5) follows the general formula (189E3-7) very closely, in both semantics and word order. Contrast the *ἐπαγωγή* at 185C5-D7 (on which cf. nn.221 and 222). For Socrates to establish such a “matrix” of terms with studied parallelism is not uncommon (cf. *Phdo.*105B5-C7, *Rep.*333Bff), even to the point of straining the diction (*Charm.*168A3-4 [paronomasia]; *Rep.*333B [θέσις]; or appearing sophistical (*Crat.*416D1-5, *Thg.*125B7-D7), but in the present case the scrupulous *repetition* of the structure can be associated with the salient *variety* of expressions (see prev. n.) by which the isolation of the “concept” is being achieved.
- 342 *ἢ ὅτι ἔστιν ἀκοή* (A6-7): Given all the stress he puts upon focussing on the essence of *ὄψις* he must at the same time remind his interlocutor that it is merely an example. The last-minute addition of an extra example to free the focus from an exemplary case and/or to confirm the generality of what can be concluded from it, is common in Socrates's management of dialectical interchange. We have another instance below (193AC); cf. also *Crito* 47B9-10 (eating/drinking); *Gorg.*475A1-2 (*μαθήματα*); *Leg.*658A7 (*ἱππικόν*), 720E2-3 (*γυμναστής*); *Phdo.*64D, 96D8-E1; *Polit.*306C10-D3 (*γραφικὴ*), 293B5-6, 296B7; *Prot.*356C5-8 (acoustic); *Rep.*475E1 (*τοὺς τῶν τεχνυδρίων*). A similar effect is gotten within a list by generalizing the last of a series of specific items with *πᾶς*, *vel sim.* (e.g., *Phlb.*21D9-10: cf. *Rep.*393B5 and my n. *ad loc.*).
- 343 Reading *σχολῆ* (A7), with all edd. since Ast (*σχολή* BT). The dative is formulaic in the *argumentum a fortiori* (cf. *Rep.*395A1 and my n. *ad loc.*).
- 344 *καὶ ἰατροί* (A8): The *καί* is unusual (Badham condemned the two words). It means “that is to say,” linking an appositive (Denniston 291); cf. *Gorg.*461C6, *Rep.*609A3-4. Lane's “as doctors” gets the sense.
- 345 *περί* (A8, *bis*) now casually resumes its reference to the end rather than the means (cf. n.337). Both to use language that needs to be clarified and to forgo clarification for clarification's sake diminishes the need for technical terms.
- 346 Note chiasm “of before and after” (*ἀκοήν / ὅψιν* [B1] // *ὀφθαλμῶν / ὠτων* [A8]), as well as the trajectory of *τις* from the beginning (at A5 and at 189E7) to the end (B1), indicating that the grounds have been presented for what had merely been a claim, so that it has become a conclusion. At the same time *ῥᾶστα καὶ ἄριστα* (A5, 189E7) is compendiously brought forward with *κάλλιστα* (B1). Jowett Lamb Croiset Sprague Lane translate out the chiasm.
- 347 That Laches should answer (B2) does not need a dramatic motivation, *pace* Emlyn-Jones. It is Laches of the two of them that was last to agree to speak with Socrates (cf. n.96). That Plato should have both of them answer somehow would be awkward and unnecessary; but Socrates does take Laches now to be his interlocutor, as he indicates with the

Soc. “But, Laches, in the present case these two men have called upon us to counsel them for their sons as to how virtue might come to their souls and make them better?”<sup>348</sup>

La. “Quite so.”

Soc. “And so we must have on hand<sup>349</sup> knowing what this thing virtue is?<sup>350</sup> For if we do not even<sup>351</sup> know virtue at all,<sup>352</sup> what it is in fact,<sup>353</sup> by what means could we become counselors to anybody as to how he might best acquire the thing?”<sup>354</sup>

vocative (ὦ Λάχης) at the beginning of his next remark.

348 ὑέσιν / ψυχᾶς (B4-5): Both the sons and the souls are in the dative (BT), unless with Schanz Croiset Vicaire we read ψυχᾶς from Vat.1029. Ficinus and most subsequent translators give *animis filiorum* (or similar). Ast and Jowett tr. ψυχᾶς as a dative of respect and take ὑέσιν with παραγινομένη (cf. the construction below at 190E1), but at 185E1-2 we agreed that it was the sons' souls we were ministering to and so it should be here. The general matrix presented above (189E4) specifies that the ministering consists of causing something to be present to something, so that in all strictness it is to the soul that we are trying to make the something (i.e., ἀρετή) present. Therefore with Rainey, I take τοῖς ὑέσιν to be an ethical dative (really it goes with παρεκαλεῖτον εἰς συμβουλήν: Socrates is bringing forward what he said at 186A4-5: Λυσίμαχος καὶ Μελησίαις εἰς συμβουλήν παρεκαλεσάτην ἡμᾶς περὶ τοῖν ὑέοιν, προθυμούμενοι αὐτοῖν ὅτι ἄριστοι γενέσθαι τὰς ψυχᾶς), and I construct only ψυχᾶς with παραγενομένη (ἀμείνους is therefore feminine). Lane's “adding goodness to their sons and thereby improving their characters” and Nichols's “virtue through being present in their sons might make their souls better” are impossible as translations and needlessly destroy the matrix of the argument, according to which whatever the thing is added to is the thing that is improved. Zimmermann (followed by Cron and Newhall) with ingenuity perhaps misplaced adduces the σχῆμα καθ' ὅλον καὶ μέρος but that “poetic” language is out of place here. Plaistowe/Mills interpret similarly without reference to the schema (“The datives are in apposition (*sic*), both governed by παραγενομένη”).

349 ἡμῖν ... ὑπάρχειν (B7): Read ἡμῖν, reported and read by Burnet (1903) and Tatham (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1905) from the very old Arsinoitic papyrus, iii, b.c. (= *Flinders Petrie Papyri* 2.50 [ed. J.P. Mahaffy, 1893] containing 189D3-192A9). Socrates reverts to the term he used for a *credential* the counselor must have on hand (186B5 and 187B5), replacing the more proximate expression τυγχάνομεν ἐπιστάμενοι he used just above, both in the general formula (189E3) and its exemplification (190A1). As such, ὑπάρχειν means not “start from” as Tatham and Dorion say, nor “our first requisite” with Lamb, but “[already] possess.” ἡμῖν secures the back-reference (though in any case it will be understood even if not found in the text as for instance by Plaistowe/Mills in their comment and by Croiset in his tr.). Lane's tr., “so the qualification we need,” and Waterfield's “we have to already know” are exactly right. The question of their qualification reappears below (in the expression ἰκανῶς, C10). It has not been excluded from consideration, nor has Socrates gone backward to a more primary step (*pace* Emlyn-Jones's emphatic “before,” p.93: cf. my n.334, *supra*), but has been refined or based upon a consideration of knowing what things are rather than who taught you and what you have done.

350 εἰδέναι ὅτι ποτ' ἔστι ἀρετή (B7-8) is virtually equivalent to εἰδέναι ἀρετὴν αὐτήν (194A4, 189E7). In both cases the ancillary language surrounding the key term invokes the mental act of isolating the object and focussing on what it is all by itself, an act for which the “Theory of Forms” is meant to give the grounding or justification, but is already an essential prerequisite of rational conversation *per se* (cf. n.226). The use of the neuter emphasizes the reference (*Bedeutung*) of the feminine noun over its syntax, as a name.

351 Emphatic δέ in μηδέ (B8) is carefully brought forward, from the articulation of the general principle (μηδέ, A6) to the presentation of the target case.

352 τὸ παράπαν (B8-9) = “at all,” (*penitus*, Ficino). Its position tells against the interpretation *nam si plane* given by Ast (Sprague's attempt to mitigate the problem with “not absolutely” introduces a sense that παράπαν cannot have) but instead emphasizes the completion of the first step of knowing what the thing is (by abhorring the contrary – a sort of argument *ex contrariis*), reproducing the emphasis on the first step (knowing τί ποτ' ἔστι) that σχολῆ (A7) had expressed with an *argumentum a fortiori*.

353 ὅτι ποτε τυγχάνει ὄν (B9): τυγχάνειν added to the neuter still further sets out the object in isolation: cf. my nn. to *Phdrs.* 266C8 and 269C9-D1.

354 αὐτό (C4): The neuter again reifies the object referred to by the name, as Cron noticed, citing e.g. *Prot.* 330C4-5 and

La. “We could by no means, I would say, Socrates.”

Soc. “And therefore we do claim that we know what it is in itself.”

La. “So we do.”

Soc. “But if it is something we know,<sup>355</sup> we can presumably say what it is.”

La. “How not?”

Soc. “We will do quite well,<sup>356</sup> my best of men,<sup>357</sup> not to go straight<sup>358</sup> to an investigation about virtue is as a whole – that would be quite a large task – but instead some part of it, for the sake of seeing<sup>359</sup> whether we are sufficiently knowledgeable.<sup>360</sup> Besides, this way, the investigation will go easier for us.”

La. “Nay, let's do that, Socrates, just as you wish.”<sup>361</sup>

332A4-5 where *πρᾶγμα* is added. For the abstracting or “isolating” use of the neuter cf. 189E3, 190A4 (with n.), 191E9 (with n.); *Parm.* 130B4 (reading ms.T), *Symp.* 199D2-5. and my notes to *Phdrs.* 265C9 and 266D4 – and expressions like *αὐτὸ δικαιοσύνη* (e.g., *Rep.* 363A1 [cf. Stallb. *ad loc.*: “*ut rem in se spectatum significet*”], 472C4-5, 612B2). Also *Rep.* 377A12, 382E6, 436E3, 458D5, 582A10.

355 ὃ γε ἴσμεν (C6): *γε* is causal or “*vi termini*,” (it does not matter which) and is accompanied with a shrug. Socrates does not mean to commit Laches to some “epistemological” position (as *δήπου* goes on to emphasize and Laches’s answer evinces) but is just suggesting a way they might be able to get down to business, which is to test whether Laches is qualified to counsel Lysimachus.

356 τοίνυν (C8) in the very face of negative *μή*, positively garners all of Laches’s affirmation that they must be able to articulate what they know.

357 ὦ ἄριστε (C8): As often, the vocative expresses Socrates’s attitude about how the conversation is going as an attribute of his interlocutor (cf. *Rep.* 348E5 and my n. *ad loc.*). An important step has been taken.

358 εὐθέως (C8) is a little unclear. Ast reports it to be a *scribitur* and does not read it (but does add *statim* to his tr.) and Bekker omits it without citing an authority; but since then it has been read by all editors. It acknowledges that it is incumbent upon them to be able to describe virtue as a whole, but in a commonsensical way entertains an indirect or piecemeal approach as less formidable. We must not infer from the expression that Socrates and Laches share a doctrine that virtue “has parts,” much less that Plato reveals he has such a theory and has forgotten who is talking. Such considerations (*pace* Cron Newhall Emlyn-Jones, *ad loc.*) are only a distraction from the present conversation.

359 ἴδωμεν (C10): Through a sort of chiasmic construction Socrates has tolerated anacoluthon. To the original complement of *σκοπούμεθα* (namely, *περὶ ὅλης ἀρετῆς*) he offers an alternative complement (*μέρους τινὸς περὶ*, where note backward-looking anastrophe) and then for that alternative complement brings in an alternative verb (*ἴδωμεν*).

360 εἰ ἱκανῶς ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸ εἰδέναι (C10) is not mere periphrasis for *εἰ ἱκανῶς εἴδομεν αὐτό*. The purpose of the inquiry is to check whether we ourselves are knowledgeable enough about virtue (*περὶ*, C8) to be counselors, not whether our knowledge is in itself up to snuff, let alone to discover what virtue is. Thus the sequel is not a search for the truth about bravery but a challenge to articulate our presumed knowledge of it.

361 ὅπως σὺ βούλει (D3), strengthened by *ἄλλᾶ* and by the inclusion of the personal pronoun, reasserts Laches’s emphatic announcement (at 189B3, *ὅτι ἂν βούλη*) of his willingness to follow Socrates’s wishes (for which cf. also *συμβούλομαι* [189A2] and n. *ad loc.*). The reading from the *Ars. pap.* (*ὅπως σὺ*, according to Blass) gives a clearer echo

Soc. “Then which of the parts of virtue shall we select?<sup>362</sup> Doesn't it make sense to choose the one that the study in armor would seem to be related to? Most people would judge it relates to bravery. Am I right?”

La. “They certainly do!”<sup>363</sup>

Soc. “So, Laches, let us set it before ourselves<sup>364</sup> first to say what virtue is in itself, and then only in the aftermath<sup>365</sup> of this will we go on<sup>366</sup> to investigate how it might come to the young men, to the extent that it is possible for it to come to them by means of practicing and learning.<sup>367</sup> Come and try to describe, as I am saying, the brave man.”<sup>368</sup>

than the ὡς σύ of the mss. and therefore should be read.

362 τί οὖν ἂν προειλοίμεθα τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς μερῶν (D3): The prefix προ- indicates not that they choose it as their favorite but that they choose it for their own purposes. The question not only presumes that ἀρετή does have “parts,” a commonsense belief that the readers of Plato's other dialogues (though not Laches nor Greeks in general) will recognize as hard in fact to sustain, but, more pertinent to the present context, it presumes that Laches would share with Socrates some convened list of them. Elsewhere of course we hear of four – temperance, bravery, justice, and wisdom (cf. n.577). As for wisdom, we must by now realize, as Socrates must also, that Laches would not be happy to hold forth on that (cf. esp. the awkward expression περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς ... ἢ τινος σοφίας a few moments ago [188C7] and n.297 *ad loc.*); but by exactly the same token – i.e. his aversion to fancy talk – it might be bravery that he would most prefer to discuss. He had after all casually identified it with ἀρετή at 184C2 (where cf. n.188).

363 καὶ μάλα δὴ οὕτω (D6): Laches, with οὕτω, agrees not with the thesis (*pace* Croiset) but with Socrates's claim that it is widely believed (*sic* Lamb Sprague Dorion Waterfield Hardy). Socrates's unobtrusive demurral to aver the relevance of ὅπλομαχία to bravery by adducing majority opinion, sets into relief Laches's strong avowal (with Lamb) that the rank and file do believe it, a belief with which he disagrees. Indeed for him it might be nothing but a σοφισμα (183D7).

364 ἐπιχειρήσωμεν (D6), ringing off the verb with which Socrates's second programmatic intervention in the conversation began (189D5), and indicating thereby that it is time to move from program to execution.

365 Reading τὸ (D8) with the Ars. pap. over the mss. See next note.

366 σκεψόμεθα (D8): Future indicative, not hortatory subjunctive. Socrates is again stressing, with semi-redundant μετὰ τοῦτο added to ἐπειτα, that they must complete the first step before going on to the second. Cf. σχολῆ (A7), τὸ παράπαν (B8-9), and n.352.

367 ἐξ ἐπιτηδευμάτων τε καὶ μαθημάτων (E2): By now bringing forward the language of Lysimachus's first and only question (he had begun to bring it forward at D4-5, where he referred to ὅπλομαχία as ἡ ἐν τοῖς ὅπλοις μάθησις), whether to teach them ὅπλομαχία in order to make them virtuous, Socrates gently commemorates that he and his interlocutors have in the interim come to see that knowing the nature of bravery as a virtue is *prerequisite* to answering the question whether ὅπλομαχία or any other study might bring it into the possession of the boys. He insists one last time on the priority of this first step with πρῶτον, ἐπειτα, τὸ μετὰ τοῦτο (reading τό with the Ars. pap., omitted by the mss., as properly more emphatic), and καί, and the shift from hortatory subjunctive to future indicative; and καθ' ὅσον goes even further by broaching the possibility that such a second step might have limited potential (rather than as foreshadowing “Plato”'s opinion on the matter, *pace* Cron and Newhall). The emphasis on the first step is of a piece with the wide spectrum of expressions he has used for focussing on virtue and then bravery *as such*, from the purely logical adjectival αὐτός (A4,A5,A6), to the stipulative indirect question ὅτι ποτ' ἔστι strengthened by ποτε (A4,A6, B7, D8, and cf. C4), to the almost anti-logical ὅτι ποτε τυγχάνει ὄν (B9) and the nominalizing “factual” use of the neuter, αὐτό (C1, C4; cf. also ὄν at B9).

368 I read τίν' ἀνδρείον or τὸν ἀνδρείον (E3) on the basis of the Ars. pap. which has τὸν ἀνδ[ with enough room for ρεῖον after it, according to Mahaffy (*n.b.*, Burnet's representation that the Ars. actually *has* τὸν ἀνδρείον contravenes Mahaffy's assertion there is only space for an ι between τ and ν). BTW have τί ἐστὶν ἀνδρεία, the perfect *lectio facillior*. The request to say 'who is brave' is something of a surprise after all that Socrates has done to focus on τὸ ἀνδρείον αὐτό, but this is the question Laches actually answers, and for the expression denoting a definition in the usage of Laches, cf. 196A6. Socrates's interlocutors often give him the wrong sort of answer when he asks for the essence (in the manner of the question represented by mss.) but (1) the very fact that we think the reading of the Ars. asks the wrong question

La. “But<sup>369</sup> Socrates, Zeus be my witness it is not hard to say! If a person should be willing to hold his position in formation and stand his ground against<sup>370</sup> the enemy rather than flee, you can be sure he would be a brave man.”

Soc. “You have spoken well, Laches, but perhaps I am to blame, having spoken unclearly, that you have not answered the question I intended to ask you but another.”

La. “Whatever do you mean by that, Socrates?” (191)

Soc. “I’ll try to express it if somehow I can. Brave I do presume<sup>371</sup> this fellow of yours to be, as you also say, who stays in formation and battles the enemy.”

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proves he has already succeeded to make his meaning clear, (2) the form of Laches's answer (ἀνδρείος ἄν εἴη) fits the form of the question exactly, (3) Socrates's response to a faulty answer often makes light of or ironically compliments an interlocutor's error (e.g., εὐτυχία, *Meno*72A6; ποικιλία, *Th.* 146D4) but here his complimentary remark that Laches has spoken well (whether εὖ with BT or καλῶς with the Ars.) is unaffected, and must refer to *something*, and (4) his subsequent apology for the discrepancy between what he said and what he meant (οὐ σαφῶς εἰπὼν ... ὃ διανοούμενος) uniquely *blames* himself and in particular asserts that he has *misstated* his question (an apology he repeats at 191C7-8). Contrast what happens below when Nicias is faulted for answering the wrong question (199C3-4). To give Socrates the “right” question (from the mss.) and then explain away Socrates's apology for asking the wrong question with the assertion he has a no-fault policy since the discussion is a joint effort (so Emlyn-Jones *ad* E7-9) goes far afield and ignores the actual contours of the give-and-take.

The Ars. (containing 189D-192A, as presented in the ed. of Mahaffy [2.50]) gives alarmingly many readings superior to the unanimous consensus of BT (namely, twelve: 189D7, 190B7 [ἡμῖν: cf. n.349, *supra*], 190B9, 190C1[αὐτό], 190D2 [cf. n.361, *supra*], 190D8, 191B6 [*bis*], 191B8, 191C7, 191C8 [cf. n.380, *infra*], 191E1, 191E4 [cf. n.389, *infra*]; cf. also 189D4 where it shares the correct reading with T over B, 191D1 where it shares the correct reading with BW over T, and 191D6 where it shares with W the correct reading [γάρ σου] over BT, and 191D6 where it shares an inferior reading with W against BT), and seventeen readings discrepant with but equal in value to the consensus of BT (189D3, 189D6, 189E2, 190B7 [τι], 190C1 [*bis*], 190C3 [οὐδέν’], 190C4, 190C5, 190E7, 191A6, 191A8, 191D4, 191D5 [*bis*], 191E3, 191E9 [πυθῶν], 191E10 and 192A6). It gives faulty readings against them only eight times (190D2 [lacuna], 190E5 [τος for τοῦς], 191A2 ταζει for τάξει], 191D1 [τος for τοῦς], 191D2, 192E9, 10 [σου for ὄν], 192A2). Overall, these statistics suggest that Ars. is a witness both independent of and superior to the mss., and as such should, *ceteris paribus*, be given precedence. Croiset massively under-reports and under-utilizes its testimony and Dorion dismissively refers to it as “*un papyrus*” and criticizes it for disagreeing with the unanimity of the mss. (*ad* 191B6), though he himself had read it against the mss. without notice three times (189D7, 190B7, 190C1), and will do so two more times below (191C7, 191E1).

369 By doubling his denial with οὐ and adding an oath (E3), Laches takes strong exception to all the worry Socrates has been expressing about whether they can take that first step. His opening expression of confidence echoes that of his last speech (ἀπλοῦν τό γ’ ἔμὸν, 188C4).

370 ἀμύνεσθαι (E5): Laches's notion is not of a soldier on the charge but a soldier holding his own against attack and staying in formation. It is the very picture of what he saw Socrates do so stalwartly at Delium (cf. 181B1-4 and n.84).

371 ποῦ (191A1) does not announce an assumption but confesses a presumption, marking the assertion it introduces as one the speaker so easily believes his auditor shares with him that he does not think to ask for permission. It is even weaker than “I presume you would agree.” Therefore do not translate “I assume” (e.g. with Lane, here and E1), nor even “let us take” (Lamb: cf. his “I take it” at E1). Socrates is not imposing his own assumptions onto his interlocutor as commentators tend to presume. Nor does it mean “*j’imagine*” (Dorion here and at E1) which is far too colorful a modality to add to it, and certainly does not mean the burden-shifting “according to you” (Waterfield). Croiset’s “*sans doute*” is fine.

La. “I at least do aver this.”

Soc. “Yes and so do I. But what about this type, the one who battles the enemy by fleeing, rather than staying in formation?”

La. “How in the world by fleeing?”<sup>372</sup>

Soc. “Both in the way the Scythians<sup>373</sup> are said to do battle no less in flight than in pursuit, and in Homer, where he praises the horses of Aeneas “darting back and forth” for knowing “how to chase or to recoil” and also praised Aeneas himself for this very thing, for his knowledge of fear, calling him “fear-counselor.”<sup>374</sup>

372 πῶς φεύγων; (A7) is abrupt. Laches's assertion that he had been with Socrates during the flight from Delium and that if the others had been as brave as he, things might have turned out otherwise (181B1-4) says not that Socrates was brave in flight (on the interpretation of Emlyn-Jones, who now wonders how Laches could have forgotten the incident) but that retreat might have been avoided (οὐκ ἂν ἔπεσε τότε τοιοῦτον πῶμα) had the others acted as he had, by facing the onslaught with aplomb instead of panicking: cf. my account of the battle at n.84.

373 οὐκ ἦττον φεύγοντες ἢ διώκοντες μάχεσθαι (A8-9). Herodotus gives a relatively full account of the Scythian people in preparation for his narrative of Darius's invasion (4.1-87), praising them first and foremost for their ability to preserve themselves against invaders. As competent archers from horseback and having no established buildings but carrying their homes with wagons horse-drawn, no invader who comes against them gets out alive nor can he track them down (ἀποφυγεῖν τε μηδένα ἐπελθόντα ἐπὶ σφάας, μὴ βουλομένους τε ἐξευρεθῆναι καταλαβεῖν μὴ οἶόν τε εἶναι, 4.46.2-3). Against Darius, the Scythians sought to persuade their neighbors to join them in a defensive alliance (4.102) but when this failed they adopted the tactic of dividing their forces in two (4.120), with the larger division “fleeing” so as to draw Darius in the direction of those of their neighbors who refused the alliance, while the smaller part was to draw Darius's army up the coast of Lake Maotis in case he attacked, or to attack him in case he retreated (τούτους μὲν ὑπάγειν ἦν ἐπὶ τοῦτο τράπηται ὁ Πέρσης ... ὑποφεύγοντας, ἀπελαύνοντός τε τοῦ Πέρσου ἐπιόντας διώκειν, 4.120.2). This second passage not only impletes the first passage cited with an example but resembles it in its antithetical structure and deft syntax. It may be to this report and even its antithetical formulation that Socrates is referring to with λέγονται ... οὐκ ἦττον φεύγοντες ἢ διώκοντες μάχεσθαι.

374 Socrates has in mind the moment (Bk. 8.78ff) when Hector is on the attack and everyone including Odysseus flees out of fear, except for Nestor. Diomedes, sweeping by, calls the old man away from battle and bids him hop onto his chariot to see how well his horses, which he stole from Aeneas, “know the Trojan ground so as to be able deftly to do whatever is needed, whether to charge or to flee” (ἐπιστάμενοι πεδίοιο | κραιπνὰ μάλ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα διωκόμεν ἠδὲ φέβεσθαι | οὐς ποτ' ἀπ' Αἰνεΐαν ἐλόμην, μῆστωρε φόβοιο; *Iliad* 8.106-8). Socrates quotes the acc.sing. μῆστωρα, which is represented in some minor mss., but Aristarchus and all edd. read μῆστωρε (the dual referring to the two horses given to Aeneas, as we learn at 5.272: τὸ δὲ δυ' Αἰνεΐα δῶκεν, μῆστωρε φόβοιο, where Aristarchus reads the accusative dual rather than a dative singular). The phrase Socrates imports (i.e., μῆστωρα φόβοιο) is elsewhere used as a compound epithet for a fearsome warrior rather than horses, of Diomedes at 6.97 and 6.278 and of Hector at 12.39, and there, whether used of men or horses, the fear they urge or advise or arouse (μῆστωρ being from μῆδομαι) must be flight and fear in the enemy (whence Ast tr. *effector terroris*).

Socrates, by dint of the etymological proximity of φέβεσθαι to φόβος, and “remembering” an accusative singular μῆστωρα rather than a dual nominative, deconstructs the idiomatic compound and creates a denotation it never bears in Homer, the “admonisher of fear” in one's own men. His intervening expression, φόβου ἐπιστήμη, with the Attic genitive importing the Attic sense of φόβος (fear rather than flight, which was its primary denotation in Homer) provides the middle term for an “interpretation” that Homer is praising Aeneas for a “knowledge of fear” (not, with Ast, a *terrendi scientiam* but, with Ficinus, *metuendi scientiam*; Jowett “translates” the transitional phrase with “knowledge of fear or flight”) analogous to the horses's knowledge how to beat a retreat because of their familiarity with the Trojan plain (ἐπιστάμενοι ... φέβεσθαι). To make his argument μῆστωρ must carry the import of ἐπιστήμη and ἐπιστάμενοι, a sense that it surely bears when it is used absolutely (i.e., without φόβοιο), as for instance of Zeus the “high counselor” at 8.22 (Ζῆν' ὑπατον μῆστωρ) and in the phrase θεόφιν μῆστωρ ἀτάλαντος, used of Priam (7.366), Perithoos (14.318)

La. “And correctly for sure. He was talking about chariots.<sup>375</sup> And as for your instance of the Scythians, that is about cavalry. Those are the ways you fight when horses are involved. But for hoplites it's as I say.”

Soc. “With the possible exception of the Lacedaemonian hoplites. They say that when these<sup>376</sup> came up against the men with wicker shields<sup>377</sup> in Plataea, they would not fight against them by holding position but fled,<sup>378</sup> but that once the formations of the Persians were broken in pursuit they wheeled back upon them, the same way a cavalry does, and in this way they won the battle there.”

La. “Yes, that is a true account.”<sup>379</sup>

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and Patroclus (17.477) and, in the *Odyssey*, of Patroclus (3.110) and Neleus (3.409). The only other use of the noun is in the phrase μήστωρες ἀυτῆς of persons “urgent for battle” of warriors on the verge (4.328; 13.93, 479; 16.759), a sense that underlies its metaphorical use with horses. By misquoting the passage and then deconstructing the idiomatic compound Socrates has reassembled the two words in a new sense: Neither Aeneas nor his horses are threatening flight in the enemy; rather he is counseling apprehensive retreat. As for translations of the compound epithet, Ficinus's uncharacteristically epexegetical *metuendi fugiendique peritum* (cf. Jowett's “author of fear or flight”) bridges the derivation, but Ast's *effectorem terroris* and Burges's “expert in flight” (followed by Newhall and Croiset) fail to traverse the morphing of φεβέσθαι into φόβος. Lamb, conversely, reads the fear of φόβος back into the first term, φεβέσθαι, and has the horses, who are μήστορα φόβοιο in the true text, fleeing in fear so that the ἐπιστήμη can be a “knowledge of fright” and the μήστορα φόβοιο a “prompter of fright,” a person (he explains in a note) that knows how to frighten the enemy since he knows the feeling himself (as though his ἐπιστήμη was a μία δύναμις τῶν ἐναντίων). Tatham (followed by Newhall and Emlyn-Jones) leaves Socrates and Laches high and dry by hypothesizing a desire by “Plato” to satirize the appropriation of Homer by his contemporaries, a desire that has no relevance for their discussion. Sprague (followed by Dorion) similarly remarks that “Plato distorts the meaning to serve his own purposes,” without telling us what those purposes might be; Lane detects “gentle intellectual humor” but leaves me wondering who is meant to laugh..

375 With καὶ καλῶς γε (B4), granting Socrates what he has said, Laches reveals that he has heard only the idiomatic sense, “prompting flight,” and does not notice the suggestion that Homer is praising Aeneas for mediating his fear with knowledge (“wise at apprehensiveness”). Instead Laches's entire purpose in answering is to defend his tactical axiom that hoplites must not break rank, for Homer is talking only about the tactics of cavalry while he is talking about hoplites. Though the response also introduces the operation of science as what governs behavior, his grip on the notion of a hoplite holding his ground only becomes more stolid and his “definition” or vision of a man's bravery, as hoplite behavior, becomes all the more narrow.

376 Reading τοῦτους (B8) with the *Ars*. (so does Hardy: tr. *ihnen*) over redundant Λακεδαιμονίους of BTW.

377 γερροφόροις (C2): Socrates shifts his ground to meet Laches on his own, at the same time introducing another way that the mediation of sophistication might alter expected or conventional conduct. The wicker shields of the Persians invited an opportunistic modification of the usual tactics of hoplite warfare since they were affixed to the ground so as to form a palisade (cf. Hdt. 9.61, 9.99, and commentators *ad locc.*), so that a *tactical* (not fearful) breaking of ranks by the Spartans led to a tactically *imprudent* (not fearful) breaking of ranks by the Persians who then could not re-plant their shields in time when the Spartans wheeled back onto them..

378 φεύγειν (C2): The present inf. (along with ἐθέλειν before and μάχεσθαι after) is dependent upon φασιν, and represents an imperfect describing *der Vorgang* that leads up to the *Erfolg* (Cron), itself done with aorist (νικήσαι). Socrates repeats the term ἦθελον ... μένοντες from Laches's description (ἐθέλοι ... μένων, 190E5), to contradict it with οὐ, but its meaning has changed. There it meant “have the will to” and here it means “resolve (not) to.”

379 ἀληθῆ λέγεις (C6): Socrates's examples are here highly circumstantial and historical rather than paradigmatic or generic as usual, such as the examples of applying eye salve or bridling a horse used above or the behavior of the investor and the doctor used below. We must remember that Laches is interested in facts not theories, and hence his response to Socrates is that what he says is *true*. This is his preferred formula for agreeing (cf. n.439).

Soc. “Well then as I was just saying, I am to blame for you not answering well, since I did not put you<sup>380</sup> the question well.<sup>381</sup> I was wanting to get information from you not only about the men<sup>382</sup> who are brave in the division of hoplites, but also those in the equestrian divisions and in the military in general, and not just those at war but also the men who stand out as brave among those who face the dangers of travelling at sea,<sup>383</sup> and all those who prove brave in the event<sup>384</sup> of disease, all those facing poverty or even the dangers of politics, and still more, not only those who are brave about pain and fear<sup>385</sup> but also able to battle desires and pleasures, too, whether by strongly holding their ground or by clever reversals.<sup>386</sup> For you know, Laches, there are people that are brave in these connections, too.”<sup>387</sup>

La. “Yes, and very brave indeed.”<sup>388</sup>

Soc. “So, by bravery<sup>389</sup> that all of these are made brave, but for some it is in the face of pleasures,

- 380 Reading οὐ καλῶς σε (C8) with the Ars. (σε *om.* BTW), echoing μὴ καλῶς σε ἀποκρίνεσθαι so as to corroborate the assertion.
- 381 More corroboration for reading the Ars. (at 190E3), *pace* Cron *ad loc.* (writing in 1868), who without benefit of the Ars. (publ. c.1895) finds Socrates's apology urbane; and *pace* Croiset, who ignores the pap. and finds Socrates's remark “pure politesse” mixed with a little irony (his p.107, n.1). If Socrates *had* there asked τί ἐστὶν ἀνδρεία (with BT) the fault would not have lain with him, as he keeps saying, or at least not with him only.
- 382 τοὺς ... ἀνδρείους (D1): Still more corroboration for the reading of Ars. (at 190E3), since Socrates speaks as if he had been asking about brave men rather than bravery in the abstract.
- 383 ἐν τοῖς πρὸς τὴν θάλατταν κινδυνεύουσι (D4), again accepting the reading of the Ars. (κινδύνοις B<sup>2</sup>TW : κινδύνους B), moves not from army to navy (σύμπαντι dismissed all fighting) but to the paradigmatic riskiness of sea travel *per se* (*Charm.*173B1ff, 174C6-7; *Euthyd.*279E4-280A1; *Leg.*709B2-3, 961E1-962A7; *Polit.*298D1-3; *Tht.*170A9-10), which is often adduced to illustrate the existential need for expertise in the captain.
- 384 νόσους (D5): This and the subsequent plurals denote concrete cases and circumstances of disease, poverty and political office.
- 385 λύπας ... φόβους (D6-7) expresses the (negative) object and the (negative) reaction to it, setting up ἐπιθυμίας ... ἡδονάς (D7) to express the obverse positive reaction to the obverse positive object, the terms being ordered in self-reflective chiasm.
- 386 Reading καὶ ἀναστρέφοντες (E1) with the Ars. as reported by Burnet (and previously conjectured by Král) over the flaccid ἢ ἀναστρέφοντες of BTW: “both to hold ground and (to fall back and) come about.” The superficially opprobrious step of falling back (φεύγειν, C3) can now go unmentioned since it is merely the means to the end of “coming about” (cf. C4) once the enemy has broken ranks, and yet its implicit presence as the logical complement of μένοντες is registered by corresponsive καὶ ... καί.
- 387 The list (D1-E1) is improvised by Socrates on the spot. Though it achieves some closure by reverting to the formula μὴ μόνον ... ἀλλὰ καὶ (D6-7, cf. D1-2), the order of the items is loosely associative rather than logical and the anacoluthon at the end (εἰσὶ γὰρ που ..., E1-2) shows he is mentally out of breath by the time he gets there. The open-textured structure evinces the scattered plurality of things in which, as he wishes to emphasize, the single element uniformly appears. For other lists where the form yearns for a unifying perspective, compare *Leg.*782A5-B2 describing the wide range of things that have happened over a long stretch of time, and cf. *Charm.*173B7ff; *Leg.*842D3-5, 881C7-D1; *Meno* 71E1-72A1 (the “swarm”); *Polit.*299D3-E2; *Rep.*561C7-D2ff, 596C1-3; *Symp.*183A4-7.
- 388 καὶ σφόδρα (E3): Laches agrees with the wide extension Socrates suggests for ἀνδρεία, and vehemently so, though Tatham (followed by many others since) does not, and thinks (with Sprague) that Aristotle would not (cf. *EN* 1115A), and Emlyn-Jones thinks Laches himself should not (because of his “general position and assumptions” and his “conventionality” [?]). Perhaps Socrates's intention is to draw out Laches's inordinate admiration for this virtue (e.g., 192C7: cf. n.410, *infra*) before submitting his notion of what it is to a test, as he also does by padding the examples at 193B5-10 (with n.424, *ad loc.*, *infra*). Irrelevant (again) to the argument is the question whether “Plato” believes what the interlocutors agree to.
- 389 Reading ἀνδρεία μὲν πάντες οὗτοι ἀνδρεῖοι (E4) with the Ars., over ἀνδρεῖοι μὲν πάντες οὗτοι with BTW and edd. Anarthrous ἀνδρεία is the proper antecedent for the use of the article at E6, and provides a finer parallel to the

some in the face of pains, others in the face of desires, and still others in the face of fears<sup>390</sup> that they are in possession of bravery. And then again, I imagine, there are others who have timidity in these areas.”

La. “Quite so.”

Soc. “But by virtue of each of this pair being exactly<sup>391</sup> what? That is what I am trying to learn from you. So go back and try again to say what single and selfsame thing bravery is in all these connections. Now do you see what I am getting at?”

La. “Not quite.” (192)

Soc. “Let me put it this way. It is as if I were asking you about just what speed is, which we might possess in running and in playing the cithera and in speaking and in learning and in many other things, where in all cases we possess some self-same thing that deserves to be spoken of as such, whether in connection with the things that hands do or limbs do or the mouth or voice or our thinking do.<sup>392</sup> Don't you also speak this way?”

La. “Quite so.”

Soc. “Alright then, if somebody should<sup>393</sup> ask me, 'Socrates what do you mean by this thing you refer to as being present in all these connections, with the term speediness?'<sup>394</sup> I would tell him that the ability to carry out many things in a short amount of time is what I call speediness, whether in connection with the voice or running or all the others.”<sup>395</sup>

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complementary and anarthrous δειλίαν at E6. Moreover, the singular ἀνδρεία before μέν draws the kind of contrast called for by μέν / δέ (δέ here done with ἀλλά). Conversely, the reading of BTW, contrasting the many men that are brave with the many ways they are brave, is flaccid.

390 Looking back (E4-6) Socrates sees the cases in reverse order, danger now coming last, and pairs object to object and reaction to reaction (contrast n.385). For the reversed order cf. *H.Maj.*288E8-9, *Meno* 88D4-5 (resuming 87E6-7), *Thg.*124C1-D7ff., *Tht.*172B2-3; but the opposite can also happen, as at *Rep.*479A4-5 (cf. 476A1) and 480A2-3 (for 476B4-5).

391 τί ποτε ὄν (E9): Both the neuter (Rainey) and ποτε begin to bring back the emphatic language of conceptual isolation he used in the run-up to his original question (cf. 190D8, 190C4, 190B9, 190B7-8 and nn.354, 353, 350).

392 Another loose-textured list (192A2-6), again including anacoluthon and chiasm, where the loosening of form has the same purpose as it did in the list above (191D1-E2).

393 ἔροιτο (A9): In this case what is admitted at first to be unreal (imperfect indicative ἠρώτων, A1) becomes an imaginary case for the sake of argument (ideal or “future less vivid” optative ἔροιτο), whereas at 184D8ff what was initially ideal (εἶη, 184E1) was later rejected as unreal (ἔσκοποῦμεν, 185B1) upon the return to the real question.

394 ταχυτήτα (A10): “ταχυτής belongs to the person, τάχος (A1) to the action” (Newhall). For ὀνομάζειν with εἶναι cf. *Apol.*23A3, *Parm.*133D2, *Prot.*311E4-5, *Tht.*160B8-9.

395 φωνήν / δρόμον (B2): Note both casual abbreviation in the review of cases and chiasm in the answer (σκελῶν / φωνῆς, A5-6), a version of the chiasm “of before and after.”

La. “And you would be speaking correctly.”<sup>396</sup>

Soc. “So now you, Laches: Try to speak the same way about bravery. By virtue of being what sort of power that is the same in pleasures and in pains and in all the other connections<sup>397</sup> we were just listing off, does it then<sup>398</sup> come to be called bravery?”

La. “For myself, then, I will answer it is a persistence<sup>399</sup> in soul, if we must speak of the single element that operates<sup>400</sup> in all the cases across the board.”

Soc. “But assuredly we must speak so, if we are going to give the answer to the question we have asked ourselves.<sup>401</sup> For myself this seems to be the case,<sup>402</sup> that it is not all persistence that seems to be bravery to you. I take my indication from this: I am nearly certain, Laches, that you would class bravery among things particularly admirable.”

La. “Know rather<sup>403</sup> that I class it among the *most* admirable.”

396 In saying ὀρθῶς (B4), not καλῶς or εὖ, Laches refers to proper use of terms (ὀνομάξεις, A10). His answer acknowledges that the question is a matter of thought and logic and speech, and not fact (cf. n.379).

397 ἐν ἡδονῇ καὶ ἐν λύπῃ καὶ ἐν ἄπασιν (B6-7): Compare I91E4-6 and n.390. The “diapason” of cases (C1 below) is now referred to by a summary polar doublet (referring in *Rückblick* to the last items in the previous list: I91D1-7) plus a generalization in πᾶς (compare Leg.813D8-E3, 816A6-7; Rep.412B3-4). The original case, fear in battle, falls out of focus for better or worse.

398 ἔπειτα (B7), introducing a second step for which the first is prerequisite (for the construction cf. I86A7-B1 and n.238). In this case it is the sameness of the determinative item (i.e., ἡ αὐτὴ δύναμις) that leads to its being called by one and the same name, ἀνδρεία.

399 καρτερία (B9) as a strength was perhaps suggested to him by Socrates's use of δύναμις in the parallel case (B1) and in the targeting question (B6). It is the opposite of μαλακία, and a suitably approbatory term.

400 πεφυκός (C1) is difficult, and the presence of περὶ ἀνδρείας makes things worse. Badham conjectured EITHER τό γε διὰ πάντων μέρος περὶ ἀνδρείας πεφυκός OR τό γε διὰ πάντων πεφυκός (Burnet reports only the latter emendation, the one he accepted). Tatham tr. τό ... περὶ ἀνδρείας πεφυκός with “the nature of courage.” Others delete περὶ ἀνδρείας and tr. “the essential characteristic of courage that pervades them all” (Plaistowe/Mills), “the universal character that pervades all” (Newhall), “the natural quality that appears in all” (Lamb), “what it is by nature throughout all cases” (Rainey, followed by Dorion), “*sa nature en général*” (Croiset). Sprague and Allen have “its nature;” Lane “the element essentially present in all cases;” and Emlyn-Jones “naturally present;” and Hardy “was ... *Gemeinsames ist.*” But “essentially” “universally” and “naturally” hardly belong to Laches's way of talking. Perhaps he is responding to Socrates's suggestion that bravery is an ability or a power (cf. prev. n.). Elsewhere there is evidence of a semantic overlap between δύναμις and φύσις, cf. I96E8 below, *Crat.*393E2/E7, *Gorg.*447C2 (with Stallb. *ad loc.*), *Leg.*643A5, *Tim.*28A8, and *Phdrs.*246D6, 248C1, 270D6-7, and 271C10 (with my nn. *ad locc.*).

401 ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς (C3) is a loose ethical dative (not a dative of agent, *pace* Rainey) that looks behind who is playing questioner and who is playing answerer so as to stress their partnership (Lamb's tr., “if we are each to answer the other's question,” however, is nonsense). By this remark (along with his repetition of Laches's εἴ γε in retort) Socrates acknowledges that the answer does answer the question, and indicates that τὸ διὰ πάντων πεφυκός is exactly what he is asking for.

402 τοῦτο τοῖνυν ἔμοιγε φαίνεται (C3) answers, in friendly retort, the language Laches had just used in hazarding to give his own opinion (δοκεῖ τοῖνυν μοι, B9), just as Socrates's intervening “if-clause in clarification” echoes that of Laches, going still one step further back: if we are to answer the question we are asking ourselves we must tell the διὰ πάντων πεφυκός, and if we are to tell the διὰ πάντων πεφυκός we will have to say it is a kind of καρτερία τῆς ψυχῆς.

403 μὲν οὖν (C7), with Plaistowe/Mills, is *corrective*. For the asseveration cf. *Apol.*26B7, and for the accompanying advance to the superlative, cf. *Prot.*349E5-6 (cit. Cron).

Soc. “Is the persistence that is accompanied by sound-mindedness<sup>404</sup> a thing admirable and good?”

La. “Quite so.”

Soc. “But what about the persistence that is accompanied by mindlessness? Isn't it, on the contrary, harmful and evil?”

La. “Yes.”

Soc. “Will you assert such a thing as that to be fine, being evil and harmful?”

La. “That would certainly not be *right*, Socrates.”

Soc. “So you will not allow<sup>405</sup> that this kind of persistence is bravery, if in fact it is not admirable, given that bravery is an admirable thing.”

La. “What you say is true.”

Soc. “So it is *mindful* persistence<sup>406</sup> that would be bravery, according to your<sup>407</sup> argument.”

La. “So it seems.”

Soc. “Then let us ask, 'Mindful about what?' Mindful about each and every thing whether large or

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404 μετὰ φρονήσεως (C8): The idea that intelligence is involved in bravery is not entirely new (*pace* Rainey, Dorion). It was broached by the suggestive translation of Ionic φοβοῖο (flight) into Attic φοβοῦ (fear) at 191B2 (cf. n. *ad loc.*) and was even implicit in Laches's assertion in reply that the tactics of flight are different for different military divisions (cf. n.375). But the following converse question by which φρόνησις is opposed to ἀφροσύνη now shades its sense toward mindfulness not calculation, and toward the virtue of σωφροσύνη rather than σοφία (*pace* Vicaire *ad loc.*: contrast φρονίμως λογιζόμενον below [193A4 with n.416] by which he shades it toward σοφία). As for Laches's agreeing to the suggestion, we might again recall the eye-witness testimony of Alcibiades (quoted in n.312), that Socrates's being ἔμφορον during the retreat at Delium was what deterred the enemy for mowing down both himself and Laches. The Athenians on the right panicked and suffered heavier losses (cf. n.84 on the tactics of retreat).

405 It would not be δίκαιον (D6).

406 ἄρα postponed (D10) emphasizes φρόνιμος.

407 κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον (D10): As always Socrates attributes the argument to the person who avers it, i.e. the answerer. Whether it is “also his” as Emlyn-Jones asks us to ask, meaning whether Socrates also would aver it, is entirely irrelevant to the present discussion and belongs to the dubious speculations on Socratic doxography.

small?<sup>408</sup> For instance if one persists in laying out his money mindfully, in the sense that he knows that though he spent it he will be getting more,<sup>409</sup> would you call this fellow brave?”<sup>410</sup>

La. “By Zeus not !!”

Soc. “But what about somebody who is a doctor,<sup>411</sup> and his son or someone else<sup>412</sup> is stricken with pleurisy and pleads with him to give him something to eat or to drink, (193) what if he will not be swayed but shows persistence.”<sup>413</sup>

La. “Nor in any way would that be bravery.”<sup>414</sup>

Soc. “But a man<sup>415</sup> showing persistence in war and willing to do battle mindfully calculating<sup>416</sup> his

408 καὶ τὰ μεγάλα καὶ τὰ μικρά (E1-2): Emlyn-Jones is right to say Socrates does not tell us what is, for him, small and large: in not doing so, however, Socrates indicates that are to presume he is using the notion in its conventional sense, a sense presumed also by his reference to τὰ μέγιστα elsewhere. The μέγιστα are the καλόν, ἀγαθόν, and the δίκαιον, and these are seen as values related to soul – unless perhaps he is using it in a sense fitting to the present interlocutor, who, he may infer from 180B1-7, views τὰ τῆς πόλεως as the μέγιστα (whence the remarks at 197D6-E2). The lesser values would in either case be an individual's bodily and external goods, the category described in Aristophanes as πλουθυγεία (Av.731, Eq.1091, Vesp.677). The pair is adduced often and usually serves as foil for a third and highest category of goods: cf. Alc.1 104A4-C1, 107A10ff; Charm.157B7-8; Euthyd.280B8-D7, 289A; Gorg.459A1-E1, 517D; H.Maj.291D9-E2; Leg.631B6-D1, 660E2-5, 661A5-B4, 715B8-C2, 716A5-6; Meno 78C5-7; Phdo.64D, 114E1-4; Prot.319BD, 354B3-5; Rep.443E3-4, 445A6-8, 494C5-7, 491C1-4; Tht.174D3-175A5). The ensuing first two examples, about money and health (E2-193A2), bear out this (and only this): the anticipated third, psychic virtue, is here replaced by the deeds of war.

409 Whether we read πλέον ἐκτίσεται (E3) with BW or πλεονεκτῆσεται with T (read by Tatham following the formalistic argument of Rutherford [New Phryn.,408]), it comes to the same. That the man spends his money knowing it would lead to “having more” or “profiting” implies that he made an investment. Such behavior would be φρονίμως alright, and since all investments are risky it would also be courageous (pace Hardy's unwarranted guess *kein Wagnis eingeht*, p.106), especially in the sanguine eyes of Laches. Succeeding in these points the reason it fails as *courageous* behavior is that the stakes are *only* monetary (it relates to τὰ μικρά). The ingenuities of Dorion (p.159), and Emlyn-Jones (love of money saps one's moral energy) and Hardy (that the physician undergoes only a slight risk) are strictly *ignorationes elenchi*.

410 τοῦτον ἀνδρεῖον καλοῖς ἄν (E4): Once again Socrates slips into letting the question turn on what kind of man Laches would call brave the man rather than what the “essence” is (cf. n.382).

411 ἰατρὸς ὄν (E6): Being a doctor (of course) stands in for the relevant φρόνησις.

412 ἢ ἄλλου τινός (E7) is mistranslated by Ast (*alio quo morbo*).

413 μὴ κάμπτοιτο ἀλλὰ καρτεροῖ (193A1): Note that the term under scrutiny is interpreted by the term that precedes it and itself is placed in second position, so that we are forced to supply a complement for καρτεροῖ such as ἀναινόμενος. The pattern will be repeated below, but with positives: ὑπομένειν τε καὶ καρτερεῖν (A9), κινδυνεύουσίν τε καὶ καρτεροῦσιν (C10), τόλμα τε καὶ καρτέρησις (D1).

414 οὐδ' αὐτή (193A2), sc. ἀνδρεία ἄν εἴη. Now it is Laches who “answers the essence,” even though Socrates, by the parallel construction of his question (cf. E6-193A1 with 192E1-4), is again asking for the man!

415 ἄνδρα (A3) is again not otiose. The examples involving τὰ μικρότερα are dismissed by ἀλλά, implying that this third example involves τὰ μέγιστα (cf. n.408). It must be *the psychic participation in τὰ μέγιστα* – in the καλόν καὶ ἀγαθόν καὶ δίκαιον – that is at stake, and this for Laches will be measured by ἔργα that are καλά. Emlyn-Jones's division of the argument as first evaluating whether καρτερία is necessary and then whether it is sufficient for ἀνδρεία is perhaps correct but is not what Socrates and Laches think they are doing. It would be truer to say that τὸ μέγα is necessary, but that within the field of μεγάλα, καρτερία *per se* is not sufficient since καρτερία can describe opposite behaviors.

416 φρονίμως λογιζόμενον (A4): The former term is brought forward from 192C8-D2, where it connoted sober mindfulness in contrast with foolishness (ἄφροσύνη, D2), but now that notion is further specified in the direction of a

options – knowing<sup>417</sup> first that others will be fighting with him, second that he will be fighting against a group both smaller and weaker than the group he is among, and third that his location is tactically superior<sup>418</sup> – would you say this man, persisting in the choice to fight with<sup>419</sup> such thoughts and such provisions, is braver than a man in the opposing army that is willing to withstand attack<sup>420</sup> and to persist in holding his ground?”

La. “Him in the opposing army, I would say,<sup>421</sup> Socrates.”

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ratiocination that could enable even a coward to hold firm (for the derogatory shade of λογίζεσθαι, cf. *Phdrs.*231B4, *Rep.*339A3 and 366A6 [with my n. ad loc.], and for the idea cf. *Phdo.*69A6-C3). It may be that it is only because he has made the calculation that he is willing (ἐθέλοντα) – i.e., λογιζόμενον ends up being causal – but the modality of the Greek participle does not need to be made explicit as English feels it must be. Tr. must carefully managed to maintain the ambiguity.

- 417 μέν (A4): Plaistowe/Mills argue μέν is “displaced” and should be understood as if it followed βοηθήσουσιν, asserting without examples that such displacement is “not uncommon,” but the bell has already been rung and the force it already has had is that of μέν *solitarium*: it creates a berth for a preliminary clause (*silet* Denniston).
- 418 The three items in the hypothetical scenario (A4-6) match exactly the situation of the Boeotian soldier on the Boeotian right that Socrates and Laches were facing at Delium, as described by Thucydides (4.96): The Boeotian hoplites were 25 deep on that side against 8 on the Athenian side (whence πρὸς ἔλαττους) and included the especially skilled Thebans (whence πρὸς φαυλοτέρους); and they held the height of a ridge at the beginning of the battle (whence χωρία ... κρείττω). Just as Laches's characterization of the brave man might have been inspired by Socrates's behavior “that day,” so also Socrates's example describes the Boeotian prospect of beating them sooner or later – and according to Thucydides's account it was not much later (ὡσάμενοι κατὰ βραχὺ τὸ πρῶτον ἐπηκολούθουν, 4.96.4). Socrates has produced an actual incident (ἔργον) to test Laches's knowledge (λόγος) of bravery, just as Laches had produced the anecdote about Stesilaus's actual behavior on the ship to test his validity as a teacher. For Laches's reliance on specific cases and facts, and Socrates's willingness to cater to it, cf. 185E7-186A1 and nn.231, 232, and 236.
- 419 μετά (A7): The preposition imports the same unspecified relation between his will and supplementary “assets” as it had in the phrase ἀνδρεία μετὰ φρονήσεως above (192C8); and now in addition to the operation of intelligence there is added a more material asset, his superior geographical position.
- 420 ὑπομένειν τε καὶ καρτερεῖν (A9): ὑπό (with Rainey) crucially adds to μένειν the notion that in this case “persevering” will consist of nothing but waiting *defensively* for the other side to attack at a time of their choosing. As above (A1, cf. n.413), this “characterizing” term (i.e., ὑπομένειν) is placed before the notion being examined (namely καρτερεῖν), but since in this case they are both positive we have a sort of hysteron-proteron (Riddell §308), which can also be classed as a “reverse” use of καί (or τε καί). Effect may be placed before cause as at *Gorg.*474A1 (γέλωτα παρεῖχον καὶ οὐκ ἠπιστάμην ἐπιψηφίζειν), inference before premiss as at *Rep.*392D8 (γελοῖος ... διδάσκαλος ... καὶ ἀσαφής), and end before means as at *Apol.*19D2 (διδάσκειν καὶ φράζειν), etc. To call it hysteron-proteron is insufficient because while that term denotes the illogic it does not characterize the rhetorical effect: the order of the words represents the order in which the thoughts occur to the speaker, the new thought popping into his mind before he recognizes its logical dependency upon or relevance to the other which he then enunciates, a phenomenon that belongs to the language of live speech and is common in the *Dialogues*. The use of “straddling” τε καί is natural in this figure (as here and below at C10 and D1), for the way that the enclitic τε telegraphs the arrival of the second term before the first term has been digested. For other examples of the figure cf. *Rep.*359A (“laws, which are, after all, compacts”); *Crito* 47B1-2 (καὶ δόξα); *Euthyd.*281A2 (ἐργασία [new] τε καὶ χρήσει [old]); *Leg.*798A7-8 (καὶ φύσεις placed late); *Polit.*260D11-E2 (the late placement of κηρυκικῆ, which is the basic item). *Rep.*503C4, 524B4, 564C1, 579D10 (and my nn. ad locc.). Cf also *Gorg.*458B3; *Phdo.*80C7-8, 100B8; *Phdrs.*250B6-7, 254C8; *Rep.*343C6-7 (and my n. ad loc.), 359A3, 376C2, 378A3, 381A4 and 381A7-9, 409A2-3, 411A7-8, 411D3-4, 411D7, 431B7, 474D5, 590B3-4; *Symp.*191A1, 209C3; *Tht.*162B4-5; *Tim.*73E2.
- 421 ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ (B1): Laches has made a choice and it is very significant, not only because it will spoil his position (as the “strategizing” commentators foresee), but because it brings into the open his essential aversion or mistrust of calculation and thought, a distrust or envy or fear or insecurity that has underlain much of what he said before the dialectical section began and which even lurked in his paradigmatic image of bravery with which he began it, the hoplite standing still and silent, presumably on the defensive (190E5-6). Socrates makes it particularly easy for him to answer by

Soc. “But the persistence of your man is more mindless than that of his counterpart?”

La “True.”

Soc. “And would you say the man with a knowledge of cavalry<sup>422</sup> who persists in a cavalry battle is less brave than the one who does so without knowledge of cavalry?”

La. “So I, at least,<sup>423</sup> would.”

Soc. “And also braver than the man with a knowledge of slinging or archery or some other skill<sup>424</sup> who persists?”

La. “Quite so.”

Soc. “And people willing to climb down into a well and dive,<sup>425</sup> and who persist in this behavior, assuming they are not clever at it, or in some other such activity, will you say they are braver than the people who are clever at such activities?”

La. “What else could a person say, Socrates?”

Soc. “Nothing else, if that is what he believes.”

envisioning exactly the scenario he and Laches had undergone in the left flank of the Athenian army that day at Delium (on which cf. Thuc.4.96 and my n.84). His answer is therefore honest and verisimilar. Once Socrates has drawn this assertion from him, the ensuing questions commit Laches to the underlying anti-rational principle in less and less heroic settings. That underlying principle is hard to articulate, but it is enough to notice that whereas Laches has nothing against φρόνησις (192C8) – and certainly has no soft-spot for ἀφροσύνη (D1) – he does have something against τέχνη and λογισμός. Just where he might classify ἐπιστήμη is yet to be seen. The verbal contradiction to which he here exposes himself is not a fault in his ability to argue but a contradiction within his soul that Socrates has now brought to conscious articulation. This is an instance of the περιαγωγή that Nicias referred to above (187E7ff).

422 ἵππικῆς (B5): This re-use of exemplary material (for ἵππικὴ cf. 191B4-7) in a new context of argument is a ubiquitous feature in the persuasive economy and succinctness of Socratic ἐπαγωγή. Cf. *Charm.* 161D3-7 (vs. 159CE), *Leg.* 906C4-6 (vs. 905Eeff), *Phdrs.* 270B1-10 (vs. 268A8-9D8), *Symp.* 199D, *Tht.* 185A4ff (with 184D7).

423 ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ (B8): Newhall asserts, presenting neither warrant nor *similia*, that this response evinces reluctant agreement by Laches, but the γε only indicates he is conscious that it might be his opinion only, a different thing.

424 μετὰ σφενδονητικῆς ἢ τοξικῆς ἢ ἄλλης τινὸς τέχνης (B9-10): Note the *spacing* of the examples, another feature of Socrates's epagogic method. As the general principle becomes clearer, the single familiar case ἵππικὴ can be followed by two new but related cases (both military) and a quick generalization all in a single question. Cf. my n. *ad Rep.* 333C1 ff.

425 εἰς φρέαρ καταβαίνοντες καὶ κολυμβῶντες (C2-3): This is the place where most would draw the line (cf. *Prot.* 349Eeff). The choice and pacing of the examples brings Laches to the point of accepting the principle and finally a most controversial example is added. For this “argument form” cf. *Alc.* I, 111B11-E; *Charm.* 173D-174A; *Crat.* 429E1-430A5; *Gorg.* 494B7-E5, 511C4-D6; *Phdo.* 65D4-E1; *Phlb.* 36C6ff; *Tht.* 157A7-D5, 178B2-179A8. We may say Socrates learned the technique from Parmenides (who uses it on him at *Parm.* 130A8-E1).

La. “But I do so believe.”<sup>426</sup>

Soc. “And yet it is more mindlessly, Laches, that men like this are taking risks and persisting in the activity,<sup>427</sup> than the men who are skilled and do these same things.”

La. “So they appear.”<sup>428</sup>

Soc. “But wasn't it also apparent<sup>429</sup> a moment ago that mindless daring and persisting<sup>430</sup> is ugly and harmful?”<sup>431</sup>

La. “Quite so.”

426 οἴμαι γε (C8): In a dialectical chain of agreements Socrates is careful to ensure the strength of each link and keeps a tight rein, disallowing for instance an answer in the form of a rhetorical question like “Who wouldn't?” or “What else?” as here (Waterfield's tr. of C6 with “there is no alternative” is completely wrong and makes a hash of the passage; Hardy omits to translate Laches's affirmation at C8 as if it were unimportant). We may compare Socrates's strong reaction a few moments ago to the commonplace assumption, buried in Lysimachus's request for him to join in, that he will participate *by voting*, at I84D5. It is Laches's positive avowal of the inference just drawn that the conversation needs in order that it should proceed surefootedly, and Socrates interrupts the flow of inferences in order to secure it (*pace* Rainey who interprets his intervention as an expression that he himself doubts it, which is quite irrelevant to the dialectical order; moreover, there is no question here of Laches's sincerity, *pace* Emlyn-Jones). The problem Socrates is trying to avoid is exacerbated when an ill-willed interlocutor like Thrasymachus uses casual idioms to derail the conversation or to deceive. Cf. *Charm.* I65B5-C2; *Gorg.* 448C, 449B7, 454C1-3, 459B5-7, 466B1 and C3-5, 466C7ff (δύο ἄμα), 482E2-5 495A5-C2; *H. Min.* 369A3; *Leg.* 633A1-4, 891B8ff; *Phlb.* 42D9-E9; *Polit.* 258C9-D3, 260B6-11; *Prot.* 331C4-D1 (εἰ βούλει), 333C5-9; *Rep.* 350D8-E9, 389A8-B1; *Thet.* I54C10-I55A2, I61A7-B6.

427 κινδυνεύουσιν τε καὶ καρτεροῦσιν (C10). Again the interpretation precedes the targetted concept, which is added with τε καί.

428 φαίνονται (C11): Since the verb is given no complement (whether infinitival or participial) Tatham Plaistowe/Mills Sprague and Dorion have no warrant for taking the verb to mean “clearly they do,” as they do – nor to they attempt to give one. Lamb translates, ambiguously, “evidently;” and Hardy less ambiguously “So *scheint* es;” but both miss (with “we found before” and “*haben erwiesen*”) the etymological retort in Socrates's reply (ἐφάνη): see next note.

429 ἐφάνη ... οὐσα (D2) is “dialectical” φαίνεσθαι, with the proper participial construction (of something that comes into view in the course of the dialogue: cf. my n. to *Rep.* 344A10), a retort to Laches's more ambiguous φαίνονται just before, once again evincing Socrates's scrupulous sensitivity to his interlocutor's conversational gestures. Jowett gets it backwards by tr. φαίνονται “that is true” and ἐφάνη “appeared to be” -- also subsequent εἰκόκαμεν “very true;” Dorion also treats the first as manifest and the second as seeming. Croiset more accurately tr. φαίνονται with “*c'est probable*” and ἐφάνη with “*nous avons dit*”; Sprague's “was found” for the latter is truer but like Lamb and Hardy misses the retort. For the more or less teasing re-use of a word from the interlocutor's answer in the next question, cf. *Charm.* I74B7-8; *Euthyphr.* I2A3FF; *Gorg.* 449C7, 497A6-7, 498D1-2, 520A1-3; *Leg.* 658A3-4, 673B5-8, 820A2-3, 896B9-10, 961D11-E1; *Phdo.* 90B3-4; *Phlb.* 24B9; *Rep.* 394B2-3, 449C6-7, 470B10-C1, 500A8-B1, 514B7-8, 517C6-7, 519B6-7, 527B12-C1; *Symp.* I99BC. Related of course is the gentle mockery of isocolia in answer, e.g., *Gorg.* 497A6-7.

430 τόλμα τε καὶ καρτέρησις (D1): Another hysteron-proteron continues what was set up above (cf. n.427). The verbal noun (καρτέρησις) now replaces the adjectival abstract (καρτερία), under the influence of the verb καρτερεῖν used over and over in the intervening examples (B5, B10, C3, C10), so as to shade the noun toward describing a behavior detached from knowledge or competence, and thereby detached from *psychic* intention (n.b. initially it was καρτερία ... τῆς ψυχῆς, I92B9).

431 αἰσχρὰ ... καὶ βλαβερὰ (D1-2) refers back to βλαβερὰ καὶ κακοῦργος (I92D2) in a chiasm “of before and after.”

Soc. “Whereas<sup>432</sup> just then we were agreeing that bravery is something admirable?”

La. “Yes we were.”

Soc. “But now we are going back on ourselves and saying that what was the<sup>433</sup> shameful thing, the mindless persisting, is bravery.

La. “We look that way.”

Soc. “So do you think we are arguing in an admirable<sup>434</sup> way?”

La. “By Zeus Socrates, I at least do not think so.”<sup>435</sup>

Soc. “And so to use your metaphor,<sup>436</sup> Laches, we might say we are not properly harmonized in the Dorian mode, you and I, in the sense that it has turned out that our actions do not jibe with our words.<sup>437</sup> For in our acts, I would guess, one might say that we do possess bravery, but in our talk, as I see it,<sup>438</sup> he would deny we have it, if he should hear the discussion we just carried out.”

La. “What you say could not be truer!”<sup>439</sup>

Soc. “And do you think it admirable<sup>440</sup> that we should be in such a state?”

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432 δέ γε (D4) introducing the minor premiss, with γε asserting it is something that stands on its own.

433 ἐκεῖνο (D6) is not “ironic” or “contemptuous,” *pace* Emlyn-Jones, but merely points back to the attitude “we” had held at 192D1-2 before the present argument intervened.

434 καλῶς (D9) echoes καλόν at D4.

435 μὰ τὸν Δί’ (D10): By the same oath with which he so confidently presented his belief (190E4) he now acknowledges he was wrong.

436 κατὰ τὸν σὸν λόγον (D11) refers not to the argument Laches has just made (*pace* Jowett Lamb Emlyn-Jones Allen) but to his motto about Doric values (“in your own language,” Burges; “the Dorian mode you talked of,” Tatham; “*pour reprendre ton expression*,” Croiset; “to use your words,” Lane; “*im Sinne deiner Worte*,” Hardy).

437 τὰ ἔργα οὐ συμφωνεῖ (E1): Laches had expressed an aversion to people talking “better” than they act but surely did not have in mind that a person could talk worse than he acts, for such would no longer be a failure in the untalkative Dorian harmony!

438 With almost too many mitigating qualifications (ὡς ἔοικε - E2, ὡς ἐγὼμαί - E3) and including himself as dialogue-partner in the failure (ἐγὼ τε καὶ σύ - E1), Socrates draws the refutation gently, but words the outcome in a way most devastating to Laches, pointing out that he appears to have failed by his own standard. Laches's criterion for hating λόγοι was simple but he failed at it nevertheless; and along the way we saw in him a trace of misogyny *per se* (cf. n.421).

439 ἀληθέστατα λέγεις (E5) is a step up from ἀληθῆ λέγεις, the formula Laches prefers for expressing agreement (180B1, 186A2, 190B2, 191C6 [cf.n.379], 192D9, 193B4). He takes the lesson on the chin (cf. n.435) and is truly humbled.

440 καλόν (E6) again.

La. “No way!”

Soc. “And so would you like to accept our assertion<sup>441</sup> at least this much?”

La. “What<sup>442</sup> 'this much' and to what 'what?'” (194)

Soc. “The argument that tells us to persist! If then you would like to, let's the two of us also now hold our ground<sup>443</sup> and persist – in our investigation, that is – or else Bravery herself will laugh us down for failing to search for her bravely<sup>444</sup> – in case she does somehow<sup>445</sup> turn out to be simple<sup>446</sup> persistence after all!”

La. “Well, I am ready<sup>447</sup> and willing not to quit before the battle is over.<sup>448</sup> But at the same time I am rather unused to this sort of arguing,<sup>449</sup> and I confess that I feel a tug of contentiousness<sup>450</sup> against

441 ὃ λέγομεν πειθόμεθα (E8) = πειθόμεθα τῷ λόγῳ ὃν λέγομεν. The λόγος is that ἀνδρεία is καρτερία *simpliciter* (αὐτὴ ἢ ἀνδρεία), and therefore *μα* ἀνδρεία admirable, as Socrates clarifies at the end of the sentence (εἰ ἄρα πολλάκις ..., A4-5), so that they should persist in the search, no matter what. τοσοῦτον limits the asseveration he suggests, not to mark some notion of his (let alone “Plato's”) that courage as perseverance is not entirely rejected (Dorion's n.146 *ad loc.* and others), but to make congenial the suggestion that they persevere in their discussion despite its difficulty. Instead, we have an example of self-instantiation (cf. n.444, *infra*).

442 Though qualitative in sense, ποῖον (E9) is modifying a quantity (τοσοῦτον) and therefore bears its idiomatic force as an expression of surprise. Cf. *Rep.*396C4 and my n. *ad loc.*

443 καὶ ἐπιμεινόμεν τε καὶ καρτερήσωεν (194A1-2): ἐπιμεινόμεν τε καὶ καρτερήσωεν brings forward the perseverance of the disadvantaged soldier from above (ὑπομένειν καὶ καρτερεῖν, 193A9) a behavior Socrates here suggests they also adopt (the aorists are inceptive). καί had already associated themselves with him, as if in solidarity.

444 αὐτὴ ἢ ἀνδρεία καταγελάσῃ (A3-4): For this sort of personification of the λόγος or a concept within it, cf. *Gorg.*475D; *Leg.*870B; *Phdo.*76E, 88E, 89B-C; *Phlb.*53E; *Phdrs.*260E-261A, 276A1 and my n. *ad loc.*; *Polit.*277C, 284B; *Prot.*361A; *Rep.*503AB, 538D (and Shorey *ad loc.*); *Tht.*200C, 203D. For the playful notion that the conduct of the interlocutors instantiates or fails to instantiate the topic they are investigating (ὅτι οὐκ ἀνδρείως αὐτὴν ζητοῦμεν) see my n. to *Rep.*335E7. We may view such techniques as part of Plato's “Art of Transition,” (with Shorey and his student Grace Billings), but at the same time they exemplify Socrates's art of turning the inquiry back upon the interlocutor and this behavior that was mentioned by Nicias above (187E7-188A2). The very last thing Laches would want to undergo is ridicule. This is the reason he is so good at dishing it out, as he so gratuitously did in his anecdote about Stesilaus.

445 εἰ ἄρα πολλάκις (A4): As elsewhere in Attic, πολλάκις with conditional particle and esp. with ἄρα refers to an eventuality unpredicted (“*si fortasse*” since Ast, followed by Cron, Jowett, Lamb, Sprague: cf. Waterfield's “if it turns out after all”). Croiset and Dorion (“*puisque la force d'âme se confond souvent avec le courage*”) and Nichols and Allen (“is often courage”) miss the idiom, which is common in Plato (cf. 179B2-3; *Phdo.*60E3 [and Geddes *ad loc.*], 61A6; *Phdr.*238D [and Stallb. *ad loc.*]; *Polit.*283B7; *Prot.*361C7; *Rep.*424C1, 602E4; cf. LSJ s.v. III and Ast s.v.). Cron hazards and explanation of the idiom *ad* 179B2-3.

446 Reading αὐτή (A4) with T and edd. (αὐτή W : αὐτή B), in the sense of *simpliciter*.

447 ἔτοιμος (A6) again omitting ἐστί: cf. n.59.

448 ἔτοιμος μὴ προαφίστασθαι (A6): With this phrase Laches brings forward his expression from above, ἐθέλων ὑπομένειν (193A9), describing the attitude of the soldier whose bravery he preferred, namely, leaving before the battle is over, and therefore constitutes his acquiescence in Socrates's counsel of καρτέρησις, though the expression does not imply that he is eager to continue. On the sense of φιλονικία see below.

449 ἀηθής (A7). The earlier remarks of Nicias and of Laches himself (188B5, 188E5 and n.) give some berth for this excuse.

450 φιλονικία (A8): The aggressiveness is explained by what follows. Laches feels anxious and embarrassed for being unable to articulate his thought, but his reaction to the anxiety as we shall see in the sequel is not retreat, clemency, humility, philosophical conversion or self-recrimination (*pace* Dorion and Croiset), nor “a desire to fight it out” (Lane),

what has been said, and<sup>451</sup> in truth I am bothered by the fact that I am unable to express right off what I know in my mind. For I do believe I know about bravery and see<sup>452</sup> what it is, but it has eluded me just now – I know not how – so that I cannot put together the words for it and say what it is.”

Soc. The capable hunter, my friend,<sup>453</sup> has to keep on the scent<sup>454</sup> and not let up in his pursuit.”

La. “You can be quite sure of that.”

Soc. “So would you want us to call Nicias along on our hunt, in case he might prove a little more successful than we?”

La. “I do want that – why not?”

“a love of victory” (? Sprague), “a desire to succeed” (Waterfield) – the spectrum of reactions to Socratic elenchus described at *Meno* 79E, *Soph.* 230B8-D4 and *Th.* 168A2-7 wrongly cited as parallels by commentators – but, as he admits with some reluctance evinced by *καί* (A7), an emulous desire to outdo someone (“*quidam me adversus superiora contendendi instigat ardor*” [Ficinus], “*contentionis quodam studium ... invasit*” [Ast], a “spirit of controversy” [Jowett], “*Ehrgeiz*” [Hardy], as described at *Ar.Rhet.* 1389A), though what or whom he desires to outdo he does not say. It will be Nicias, once he adopts the role of answerer (for *φιλονικία* stimulated by a rival holding the floor cf. *Prot.* 360E3, *Rep.* 338A6-8, and *Rep.* 548D8-9 with my n. ad 548D9). *φιλονικία* is always negative in Plato when used in connection with participating in joint search (*Gorg.* 457D4-5; *Phdo.* 91A2-6; *Phlb.* 14B5-7; *Rep.* 499E1-500A2; *Gorg.* 505E4 is not an exception). It is therefore by no means “clear” that “a favorable connotation is intended here” (Emlyn-Jones). Though such a meaning is just barely possible (the term is allowed a positive sense when contrasted with a personal aggression *κατ’ἀναλογία*, as at *Gorg.* 457D4-5 and *Phdo.* 91A2-6), his behavior in the sequel proves that his meaning is the usual one. Nor does he need to “be a Thrasymachus or a Kallikles” to act this way (*pace* Emlyn-Jones). A characterological or psychological explanation of *φιλονικία* in general is presented in Book Eight of the *Republic* where *φιλόνομος* is a virtual synonym for *φιλότιμος* (545A2-3, 548C6-7, 551A7, 582E4-5), and describes the man who like Laches worries about honor to the extent of ignoring the true Muse of philosophy (548B8-C1), fears wisdom in his rulers (547E1-548A3; cf. *Lach.* 197D6-8), and thinks of philosophy as so much hot air (581D6-8). Laches's reaction to his *aporia* is exactly *anti-philosophical*, as Nicias notices along the way (195A8-B1) and it results in his Solonic ever-need to learn, as Nicias explains at the end (200A4-C1, an analysis close to *Phdo.* 91A). That he allows this emotion to dominate his behavior in the next section of the dialogue in itself vitiates the attempt by Nichols (273-4) to portray him as closer than Nicias to Socrates in his disposition, and refutes the claim of Sprague (7-8) that the dialogue has been named after him because he has become as amenable to the dialectical method as the slave was in the *Meno* (this is rather a reason to rename that dialogue *Δοῦλος*) and because he emulates Socrates in his attempt to refute Nicias (which as we shall see is nothing but contentious eristic, and something that Socrates needs continually to harness lest the conversation fail).

451 Laches's *καί* (A8), as well as his *μέν* *solitarium* (A6) and the other “sublogical” connectives with which he links his several remarks (*καίτοι ... γε*, and *ἄλλά*), suggest that he does not understand how the feelings he reports are interrelated. The translation should reflect his confusion, not resolve it (Dorion's notion for instance that he is *en colère contre lui-même* seems to combine *φιλονικία* and *ἀγανακτεῖν* and thereby loses both [see prev. n.]). Laches is *groping* for what to say, as he himself finally says. Though his self-description in words is confused we can expect his feelings soon enough to become clear in his deeds.

452 *νοεῖν* (B1): Lane is right to stress that this is almost an empirical claim, that he “sees” bravery – stressing his criterion of sight once again; and may also be right that Laches is continuing Socrates's personification of Bravery from above.

453 *ὦ φιλέ* (B5) expresses sympathy and fellow feeling for what has happened to Laches in the discussion. Cf. n.357 ad 190C8.

454 *κυνηέτην* (B5): The hunting metaphor is suggested by Laches's *διέφυγεν*, but specifically adds the notion of following a scent, which neatly formulates Laches's feeling that he knows but cannot say exactly, just as one often cannot see what he is smelling.

Soc. “So come, Nicias. Your goodly allies<sup>455</sup> have met with heavy weather in their discussion<sup>456</sup> and are totally at a stop.<sup>457</sup> Come to our rescue if you are able. Alone, we are at a standstill, as you see, so tell us what *you* take bravery to be and get us underway,<sup>458</sup> while for yourself you secure your grip<sup>459</sup> on what you know by telling it.”<sup>460</sup>

Nic. “Well frankly, Socrates, I think you two got off the track some ways back in your attempt to demarcate bravery. That formula I've heard you share with me<sup>461</sup> before has gone neglected here.”

Soc. “Just what would that formula be?”

455 ἀνδράσι φιλοῖς (C2): φιλοῖς in “attributive apposition” as often with ἀνήρ (Smyth §986) denoting allies in opposition to enemies and bearing its “sympathetic” tone (for which cf. *Rep.*361B6 and my n. *ad loc.*).

456 χειμαζόμενοις ἐν λόγῳ καὶ ἀποροῦσιν (C2-3): For connection of the metaphors cf. *Phlb.*29B: χειμαζόμεθα ὄντως ὑπ’ ἀπορίας ἐν τοῖς νῦν λόγοις. Newhall’s true remark that Plato might follow a metaphor (χειμαζόμενοις) with an interpretation of it (ἀποροῦσιν) does not work here because ἐν λόγοις precedes the καὶ and goes with the metaphor. Ast’s *sermone tanquam fluctibus iactantur* leaves out ἀποροῦσιν. Jowett’s “tossed in waves of argument and in the last gasp” and Burges’s “tossed in a storm of words and doubt” both misconstrue ἀποροῦσιν. The metaphor is nautical and may depict a sailboat unable to get underway because of (καὶ being illative) countervailing winds, the ancient boats having no second sail and being less able therefore to achieve a tack; or more likely a boat under oar that cannot achieve traction against a stronger wind. More than anything else the metaphor describes the inner turmoil Laches is feeling as expressed in his confused sentence above (A6-B1).

457 The aporia stops the discussion. To call upon Nicias seems the only possible recourse. Laches still has a conviction about bravery but cannot articulate what bravery is in words. He answered Socrates’s original request to characterize the brave man (τίν’ ἀνδρεῖον, the reading of the *Ars.* at I90E3) with a paradigmatic case of the stalwart hoplite holding his ground in war, in the same way that Helen might be said to be “the very essence of beauty;” but Socrates wanted to ask for a characterization of the bravery present in all kinds of cases beyond just military ones, and Laches agrees bravery is not only military. It is the single thing that operates in all brave behavior that Socrates wants Laches to characterize and Laches does so by saying it is the operation of a sort of perseverance of soul. Surely this is correct but since bravery, whatever it is, is admirable, the sort of perseverance that bravery is must be admirable, as for instance a perseverance that is mindful rather than foolish. Even among mindful perseverances however there are mindful perseverances that are less admirable than the perseverance of bravery, as in cases where the stakes are merely money or health: the investor and the doctor are not brave for sticking by their guns. Rather, the perseverance that is bravery is seen in the case where the stakes are the highest – honor in the life-or-death contest of war. Socrates compares the soldier who perseveres on the basis of calculating that his chances are good over against his counterpart on the opposite side, who if he thought about it would see that his chances were bad. It is no coincidence that the scenario Socrates describes corresponds exactly to the disadvantaged situation in which Socrates and Laches found themselves at Delium. There, and now here, it is under exactly these circumstances that Laches thinks that bravery shows its glorious colors. Just as he suggested the stalwart silent hoplite at the beginning of this section, now he must, and he will, stalwartly choose that disadvantaged man as the braver than the man whose thinking makes it easy for him to fight.

458 ἔκλυσαι (C5): The shift to the middle (contrast βοήθησον, C3) transfers the focus of Nicias’s freeing them from his intention to do so to the effect of his doing so, which makes way for pairing the benefit to themselves with the benefit to himself (βεβαίωσαι).

459 ἃ νοεῖς τῷ λόγῳ βεβαίωσαι (C5-6): With νοεῖς Socrates looks back to Laches’s remark that he νοεῖ but cannot συλλαβεῖν τῷ λόγῳ (B2-3); this suggests we should give a sense to the metaphor of βεβαίωσις that blends with the metaphor of σύλληψις (which there meant capture).

460 This remark is the sort of thing that underlies Aristotle’s maxim, αἱ γὰρ τῶν ἐναντίων ἀποδείξει ἀπορία τῶν ἐναντίων εἰσίν (*de Caelo* 279B6-7).

461 ἐγὼ σοῦ (C8): The juxtaposition of the pronouns bespeaks Nicias’s familiarity with Socrates and his manner of conversation, which Nicias had mentioned before (I87D6-I88C2), in rather sharp contrast with Laches’s recent apology that he is unused to such conversation; and it lays the groundwork for us to realize that whereas Laches (appears to) know Socrates ἐργῶ, Nicias (appears to) know him λόγῳ.

Nic. “Often I have heard you say we are good at the things we are sophisticated at,<sup>462</sup> in our various ways, but where we are untaught,<sup>463</sup> there<sup>464</sup> we are bad.”

Soc. “May Zeus be my witness, Nicias, I *have* said that.”<sup>465</sup>

Nic. “Therefore, if the brave man is good, as you say, then clearly he is wise.”<sup>466</sup>

Soc. “Did you hear that, Laches?”

Lach. “Yes I heard and it is not overwhelmingly clear to me what he means.”<sup>467</sup>

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462 σοφός (D2): Nicias is surely quoting Socrates's use of the word and thereby imports its semantic ambiguity (cf. Croiset *ad loc.*), which ranges from the virtue of wisdom (*Lys.*207D1-2, *Meno* 74A4-6, *Phdrs.*246D8-E1), to polish and sophistication (*H.Maj.*281A1, *Leg.*677C5-6, *Lys.*212D5-8), to cleverness, whether banalistic (*Leg.*644A2-3) or nefarious (*Apol.*21C, *Rep.*409C5). I have tried to capture the semantic range with “sophistication” which in fact only recently has secured a generally laudatory connotation in English (Tatham and Lane's “cleverness” is too narrow for Nicias but not for Laches). Socrates's suggestion, in a moment, that Nicias might or might not have fluteplaying in mind (E4) neither broadens nor narrows the range of σοφία in the citation of the ἔνδοξον (*pace* Emlyn-Jones *ad loc.*). Since the proposition Nicias borrows from Socrates is not a thesis but an ἔνδοξον (like Socrates's assertion that ἀνδρεία, whatever it is, is a καλόν τι: 193D4), the interlocutor accepts it, yes or no; and as long as the answer is yes, there is no need to corroborate agreement as with some investigation into the sense of the predicate (though sooner or later, What is τὸ καλόν? and What is τὸ σοφόν? can of course become an issue).

463 ἀμαθής (D2): The sense Nicias has given to σοφός is specified to some degree by his choice of the contrary, which Ast wrongly tr. *inscius*.

464 ταῦτα δὲ κακός (D2): δέ (*pace* Denniston, 183) is *both* duplicative (continuing with previous δέ the extramural contrast with the previous antithetical clause) *and* apodotic (indicating the intramural transition from protasis to apodosis), according to his type (iii) on p.185. Its double-duty justifies its proximity to the other δέ.

465 By adducing a Socratic maxim (D1-2) Nicias has moved Socrates into the role of answerer! Socrates emphatically agrees with Nicias's remark not because he thinks his formula is extremely true (*pace* Emlyn-Jones) but because he recognizes the trusty principle and begins to imagine that the new tack it will provide might get them out of aporia.

466 οὐκοῦν and εἴπερ (D4): Nicias carefully couches the inference, in the Socratic manner, to encourage a “yes” answer, which according to that method will allow and enable the discussion to proceed. Emlyn-Jones thinks the inference “invalid” because “goodness has a wider extension than wisdom” – i.e., there might be some goodness a man can have that is not the result of teaching or sophistication (to use my terms) – and moreover thinks that Plato insulates Socrates from the pécadillo of accepting the invalid inference by having him “pass the ball to Laches” rather than answer Nicias's question. But Plato's Socrates does not care about the logic when it doesn't matter. The formula or ἔνδοξον is adduced only to advance the conversation, which had become stuck in ἀπορία, and the invalidity of the inference is irrelevant to that purpose. The discussion will now search for the true nature of bravery by searching for a knowledge or competence that underlies it. If such should be found, the invalidity becomes moot; if not, the logic of the inference might come into focus.

467 οὐ σφόδρα γε μανθάνω (D7): Emlyn-Jones believes that these words indicate that Laches is “perplexed” and then explains his perplexity as due to his belief that “defining bravery in terms of wisdom” was abandoned at 193E9-10. But οὐ σφόδρα γε, especially with καί instead of ἀλλά, indicates truculent resistance not perplexity; and as for the putative “abandonment,” it was not really “wisdom” but “mindfulness” that was divorced from bravery in his argument with Socrates, and in any case the dissatisfaction he voiced at 193E9-10 was directed not to the proposition that bravery involves it, but that they had argued both this and its contrary. Moreover, even granting Laches had there abandoned defining bravery “in terms of wisdom,” Nicias now makes a simple argument to renew the idea. Laches might (and indeed will) disagree with it but how can he be “perplexed” by it?

Soc. “But I get it: I think our man<sup>468</sup> is saying that it's a kind of *sophistication*<sup>469</sup> that bravery is.”

Lach. “Please, Socrates... *Sophistication?*”<sup>470</sup>

Soc. “Are you asking this fellow here?”<sup>471</sup>

Lach. “Yes I am.”

Soc. “Come then, Nicias. Tell him what sort of sophistication bravery might be according to your argument. For I don't imagine you mean it is flutely<sup>472</sup> sophistication.”

Nic. “No way!”

Soc. “Nor sophistication at the cithara...”

Nic. “Certainly not!”

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468 ἀνὴρ (D8) is again not otiose, especially in Laches's hearing, since for him an ἀνὴρ deserves to be heard *eo ipso* (188C6-D1, 189A1). Socrates acts as if he is “helping” Laches understand what he feigns not to. The *καί* goes toe-to-toe with Laches's *καί* at D7.

469 σοφίαν (D9): Socrates telescopes, or syllogizes, the two propositions (D1-2, D4-5) for the benefit of Laches, so as to bring up this sorest of points. It was exactly *λογισμός* that Laches was willing to give up (at 193B1) in order to have his stolid and unconfused hoplite persevere as the paradigm of bravery, but it is unclear whether σοφία, in his eyes, is or can be any better a thing (cf. n.421).

470 ποίαν (D10) *irrisiois* (on which cf. my n. *ad Rep.*396C4). By his vocative Laches is not requesting Socrates to specify the sophistication but expressing indignation or feigning surprise to him, but Socrates again moves to protect the discussion from failure by treating it as a request, anyway, which as such should be addressed to the person promulgating the theory. Laches's aversion to Nicias's position is due (*pace* Emlyn-Jones) to a general prejudice against sophistication that he has shown all along (cf. n.421), not to the failure of his own argument with Socrates just above.

471 τόνδε τοῦτο (E1): Note the care Socrates takes with the “person” of his demonstratives to maintain the relations of the persons involved in the dialectical encounter.

472 ἀύλητική (E4): English has inherited its store of nominal and verbal adjectives through the several languages from which it grew (e.g., *-ish*, and *-dom* from German; *-ity*, from French) and so its employment of the suffix *-ic* is not nearly as universal as it is in Greek, which forms adjectives in *-ικός* at will (even their comparatives and superlatives: cf. *γεωργικώτατος* at *Rep.*412C7, with my n. *ad loc.*; and cf. the argumentation at *Rep.*374B1-D7 and my n. *ad loc.*). Greek moreover can indicate that the adjective refers to a science or art merely by putting it into the feminine singular (sc. *τέχνη* or, as here, *σοφία*; and soon [A8] *ἐπιστήμη*). It is therefore difficult to bring across into English the plasticity of the Greek, and at the same time it is crucial to recognize that the ease with which such formulaic adjectives are formed can facilitate errors deriving for instance from the difference between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*.

Soc. “Alright then, which<sup>473</sup> sophistication is it, or the science<sup>474</sup> of what, that you have in mind?”

Lach. “That's just the right way to put the question to him, Socrates. Let's just let him describe the one he claims it is.”<sup>475</sup>

Nic. “Here's what I say, Laches:<sup>476</sup> It is the knowledge of what should be feared and what should be dared, (195) in war and in each and every other department of life.”

Lach. “”How strangely he talks, Socrates!”<sup>477</sup>

Soc. “What are you referring to, Laches?”

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473 τίς (E8), the proper expression for the discrete case or type (cf. *Gorg.*447D1 [with Dodds *ad loc.*], *Phdrs.*278E9; *Rep.*438C8, 596B12), replaces Socrates's ποία of E3, which itself was a re-use of Laches's derogatory expression (D10) though purged of its disapprobatory tone.

474 ἐπιστήμη (E8), Socrates now says, who has full warrant to substitute this synonym since it was *his* use of σοφός that Nicias had quoted above; and now the idea about which we wondered what Laches would think (n.421, *sub fin.*) has arrived!

475 Laches's interjection (E9-10) is short on substance but long on rude affect. Once again he addresses Socrates rather than Nicias (cf. D10-E1) as though Socrates were his only partner to the discussion, while at the same time his rudely impersonal reference to Nicias with αὐτόν (contrast Socrates's more deferential expression ἀνὴρ at D8, and his friendly and inclusive expression, τόνδε τοῦτο: cf. n.471), his third-person imperative, and his standoffish tone exclude Nicias from that partnership. ὀρθῶς (rather than καλῶς) suggests that Socrates's questions will prove a corrective to Nicias. His eagerness to hear the answer bespeaks his hope or expectation that any answer Nicias gives will seem to him absurd on its face. At the same time, with τίνα he has acquiesced in Socrates's purgation of his derogatory ποία.

476 ταύτην ἔγωγε ὦ Λάχης (E11): Nicias immediately dispenses with byplay and indirection by calmly addressing his answer to *Laches*, whom Socrates is pushing into the role of questioner, and referring to himself with the (inherently emphatic) first person pronoun. The answer echoes the “universalism” Socrates required from Laches, almost with a vengeance (note ὅπασιν, 195A1).

477 ὡς ἄτοπα λέγει, ὦ Σώκρατες (195A2): There is again nothing to justify Laches's derisive reaction to what Nicias has said, and instead of giving a reason he again turns to Socrates, acting as if he were the only interlocutor that matters. He bluffs that his mere disapproval is sufficient to disqualify not only Nicias's thesis but also Nicias as an interlocutor. It is not “irritation” that he feels (nor “perplexity”), nor is it some general sense of “hostility” showing through from 180C1 and 188C1-2, as Emlyn-Jones says, but only a desire to defeat Nicias, or to appear to defeat him, a desire he confessed that he felt just above (194A7-8).

Lach. “What?<sup>478</sup> Sophistication<sup>479</sup> has nothing<sup>480</sup> to do with bravery!”

Soc. “But Nicias for his part denies that.”

Lach. “He certainly does, by Zeus – and for this<sup>481</sup> I say he is blabbering.”

Soc. “Then shall we teach him<sup>482</sup> rather than abuse him?”

Nic. “Nay, Socrates. I think Laches desires that I be shown to be speaking nonsense, as he was shown to be doing<sup>483</sup> a moment ago.”

Lach. “You bet I do, Nicias, and I am going try to make it happen. As I say,<sup>484</sup> you are speaking nonsense. In diseases, for instance,<sup>485</sup> isn't it really the doctors who know what is fearsome? Or do you think it is brave men that know that? Or<sup>486</sup> maybe you'll say the doctors are brave.”

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478 Reading πρὸς τί (A4) with BTW and Ast, as the better attested and more flabbergasted and abrupt expression, over the ὅτι of the Parisinus 1813 first read by Bekker, then defended puristically by Stallb. and subsequently accepted by edd. as being the more common construction (cf. Smyth §2664). Laches had broken Stallbaum's rule just above (τίνα for ἦντινα, 194E10), and responds with similar abruptness in the next exchange also, answering οὐκοῦν with the retort οὐ μέντοι μὰ Δία. In fact Laches's method throughout this passage consists of variegated belligerent retort with a heavy reliance on particles to indicate the trend of his assertion-gestures (καί ... γε, 194D7 and E10; δήπου, 195A4; μέντοι and τοι and καί, A6; γε, B2; ἦ, B5 [cf. n. *ad loc.*]; γε and καίτοι ... γε, B7; δήπου, B8; γε, E1; καίτοι, E3; and finally ἄλλά, 196A4, with which he abruptly exits the conversation with Nicias). Cf. Croiset 113, n.1.

479 σοφία (A4): Laches slightly misrepresents Nicias's position by reverting to the term he had used before (194D2), though Nicias himself had since (194E1) adopted Socrates's substitution of ἐπιστήμη for σοφία. This is noteworthy because σοφία is term about which he has displayed a special sensitivity (188C7, 183D7). Lane preserves the detail by translating “cleverness.” Vicaire disregards the shift (p.48, n. *ad* 194E) and Croiset Dorion Waterfield Hardy translate it out.

480 χωρίς δήπου (A4) is dialectical hyperbole. Cf. the eristic use of κερωρισμένον in overstatement by the imaginary interlocutor at *Rep.*453C5.

481 ταῦτά τοι καὶ ληρεῖ (A6): For καί following the demonstrative cf. Denniston 307-8, though against his interpretation I take ταῦτα to be an adverbial accusative rather than the object of ληρεῖ.

482 With διδάσκωμεν (A7), Socrates with his usual swiftness feigns to agree that Laches is correct in claiming Nicias's notion is wrong, so as to suggest that if it is, he deserves instruction rather than abuse. On the interrogative tone of οὐκοῦν in Plato, cf. Denniston 436-7.

483 Read τις (B1) as the *lectio difficilior* with TW, accepted by Ast Bekker Burnet Vicaire Emllyn-Jones (*omm.* B Stallbaum Hermann Schanz Tatham Newhall Plaistowe/Mills Lamb; unreported by Croiset). This diffident and mollifying use of τις is a stylistic idiosyncrasy of Nicias (cf. 182A8 and n. 113, and compare που at 187E1). He is hardly “getting his knife in” as Emllyn-Jones says, but finally redressing Laches's corrosive and anti-dialogical belligerence by calmly calling a spade a spade.

484 γάρ (B3) is programmatic, announcing he is beginning to perform his showing (ἀποφῆναι). Therefore rather than a period after λέγεις (with Burnet Emllyn-Jones Dorion Waterfield) place a period, with all other editors.

485 ἀντίκα (B3) = *statim*, on which cf. *Rep.*340D2 and my n. *ad loc.* The expression is characteristic of Laches's direct and presumptuous manner: he presumes that he is citing a fact. Cf. similar ἀυτόθεν 183C2-3, C8, and n. 155.

486 By repetition of ἦ (B5) Laches taunts Nicias with three questions rather than letting him answer any of them. The first is a matter of fact, absurd to deny (so Laches thinks); if Nicias denies the second (that it is the brave, *qua* brave, who know what to fear in disease) then he denies the first, the putative fact; but if he affirms the first instead of the second, then the doctors *qua* doctors will be brave, which is absurd.

Nic. “None of that at all.”

Lach. “Nor,<sup>487</sup> I would guess, do you call the farmers brave, and yet it is your farmers that know what is to be feared in the area of farming, just as each and every other man of competence<sup>488</sup> knows what is to be feared and what is to be dared in their respective fields; and yet this knowledge makes them none the braver.”<sup>489</sup>

Soc. “What do you make of what Laches is saying, Nicias? He does seem to be saying something.”<sup>490</sup>

Nic. “Yes indeed he is saying something, but not something true!”<sup>491</sup>

Soc. “How is that?”

Nic. “Because he has the notion that the doctors know more about their patients than what enables them to declare<sup>492</sup> what would be healthy or unhealthy for them. In truth it is only this much<sup>493</sup> that they know. But whether it is fearsome or not, this sickness or health of the patient that you bring

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487 οὐδέ γε (B7): With captious γε in retort Laches shows that he gruffly ignores the emphasis in Nicias's denial (οὐδ' ὀπωσιτοῦν). It is not only the last alternative that Nicias disowns but Laches's entire formulation of the problem, as we shall soon see.

488 Emphatic ἅπαντες (B9) adds to δημιουργοί exactly what ἕκαστος (essentially a superlative) had added to ἀγαθός at 194D1-2, namely, generalization across all specific competencies.

489 οὐδὲν ... μᾶλλον (C1): For the οὐδὲν μᾶλλον argument form, which became a skeptical trope, cf. *Rep.* 340B4 and my n. *ad loc.* A given proposition cannot be embraced as true if it is no more true than false. In the present case, being an expert makes a person no more brave than not being an expert does.

490 λέγειν τι (C3) here comments on οὐδὲν λέγει above. Socrates must intervene in order to allow Nicias to answer in the true or dialectical sense, i.e., to explain his position rather than be the victim of Laches's belligerence.

491 οὐ μέντοι ἀληθές γε (C5): Nicias's remarks (194E11-195A1, 195A8-B1), in sharp contrast to those of Laches, are responsive, pertinent and justified, including this one. Nicias does not merely “play with” (*pace* Emlyn-Jones) but repairs Laches's bluffing charges of “saying nothing” (B3) or “saying nonsense” (A2, A6), with the controlled and pertinent criticism that while Laches is of course saying “something,” the something is not true – which is all that matters. The only thing that *could* be false among Laches's remarks was that doctors know τὰ δεινὰ regarding disease, which he presumed to be true so unquestioningly that he presented it as a question whose answer must be yes. Nicias's conduct as an interlocutor is Dorian. Laches on the other hand is Phrygian in the sense that his emotions are driving his aggressive and counterproductive blather. The remarks of Dorian (nn. 170, 185) that Laches belittles Nicias's arguments because he has a low estimation of Nicias's works at war fails to recognize this.

492 Reading ἢ τὸ ὑγιεινὸν εἰπεῖν οἷόν τε (C8), with the mss. and Ast Bekker Stallbaum Hermann Cron Tatham Plaistowe/Mills Lamb Rainey Hardy against the conjectures of edd. With οἷόν τε sc. εἶναι. I cannot imagine that it should be construed as if it followed ὑγιεινόν (*pace* Plaistowe/Mills).

493 Reading δὴ τι τοσοῦτον δήπου (C9) with the mss., another instance (cf. n. 483) of Nicias's gratuitous use of the enclitic τι (*versus* δὴ τοι τοσοῦτον Marc. 184 *legunt* Ast Bekker Badham Tatham δὴ τὸ τοσοῦτον *ci.* Madvig [*Advers.* I. 405] δήπου τοσοῦτον *ci.* Hermann *leguntque* Cron Schanz Plaistowe/Mills Newhall Lamb Burnet Croiset Vicaire Nichols).

up,<sup>494</sup> are you going to go out on a limb and<sup>495</sup> hold that the doctors know *that*,<sup>496</sup> Laches? Perhaps you have the notion that for many patients it is better not to recover from their sickness than to recover. We'll know if you answer this question: Do you assert that for all persons it is better to be alive? Do you deny that for many the better course<sup>497</sup> is to be dead?"

Lach. "With that much I do agree."

Nic. "And for those who are better off dead, do you think the same things are fearsome as for those who are better off alive?"

Lach. "I do not."

Nic. "But do you attribute the knowledge of this to doctors or to any practitioner other than to the master<sup>498</sup> of what is fearsome and what is not – the man, that is, whom I am calling brave?<sup>499</sup>

Soc. "Do you grasp<sup>500</sup> what he is saying, Laches?"

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494 τοῦτο (C9), the "second person" demonstrative, is addressed to Laches (as the vocative ὦ Λάχης later corroborates) and is derogatory. Nicias indicates that he is introducing a higher order of value in the choice between fearing and daring than Laches so far has in mind. Laches, conversely, failed to grasp the true and full import of what Nicias is saying but instead he lowers the stakes involved in daring and fear to the level of mere health and mere wealth so as to refute Nicias – even though he himself rejected these values as belonging to a lower register than bravery (192E1-193A2).

495 σύ (C10) is emphatic, animated, and confrontational (as again at D1).

496 τουτί (C10), with deictic iota, to distinguish this question from the question of health and sickness to which he had just referred with the other τοῦτο. Nicias accompanies his assertion with a hand gesture, showing a little impatience of his own. It is not his "key move against Laches" (Emlyn-Jones) but just his first opportunity to get his own point across and emphasize the level on which he is thinking, which Laches's several pre-emptive interruptions since 194E11-195A1 have prevented him from doing.

497 κρείττον (D1) replaces ἄμεινον and has the special sense that κράτιστον has in a passage like *Phdrs.*228C6 (cf. my n. *ad loc.*), of "cutting to the chase:" i.e., reaching resolution in a dubious situation. It has the effect of making this last question, which is the question Nicias will end up requiring Laches to answer, easier to answer than the first one (ἄμεινον on the other hand is very general).

498 ἐπιστήμονι (D9): In order to adjust his definition of bravery to Laches's presumption it must be some kind of person or other Nicias turns the ἐπιστήμη (195A1) into an ἐπιστήμων.

499 ἀνδρείον (D9): The expression shows how easily the essence can be referred to as a characteristic of the man who embodies it (cf. 191D1 and 190E3 with notes).

500 κατανοεῖς (D10): Socrates registers the paradoxical and recondite character of what Nicias has calmly argued, by admonishing Laches to ask himself if he "really sees" what it means. Laches claims he does understand, but the captious and derisive interpretation he then attaches to Nicias's argument reveals that he did not understand it or at least that he preferred to act as if he did not. We cannot tell which it is, but for Laches it doesn't matter since only victory matters. Meanwhile, although he is supposed to be playing questioner to Nicias the answerer, what has actually happened is that Nicias has become questioner of Laches to show that Laches's own presupposition about what sort of δεινά he has in mind, i.e., that they are the areas over which distinct professional abilities such as medicine holds knowledge, is wrong.

Lach. “I do – It is the soothsayers he is saying are the brave. Who else,<sup>501</sup> after all, will know<sup>502</sup> for whom it is better to be alive than dead? But yourself, Nicias, which way will you have it? Will you allow you<sup>503</sup> are a soothsayer? Or, if not a soothsayer, that you are not brave, either?”

Nic. “What?<sup>504</sup> Now<sup>505</sup> you imagine the soothsayer is suited to know what is fearsome and what is to be dared?”<sup>506</sup>

Lach. “I do. Who else?”

Nic. “Much more he who I am talking about, my best of men! After all (196) a soothsayer only needs to know the signs of what is coming – whether a given person is to die or to get sick or to lose his fortune, whether he will win or lose a war or some other contest.<sup>507</sup> But as for judging which of these will be better for the given person to undergo or not to undergo, is the soothsayer any more suited to make that judgment than any other practitioner?”<sup>508</sup>

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- 501 τίς (E2): With τίς Laches reverts to the presumption that Nicias's answer must specify a profession though exactly this is what Nicias sought in his previous answer to exclude. He does not recognize that Nicias is offering the ἐπιστήμων as a type of person, but interprets the noun as if it were identical to ὁ ἐπιστάμενος, and with τίς ἄλλος he understands himself to be solving Nicias's riddle about “what professional other than the one who knows τὰ δεινά,” and now tells which one that is – i.e. τίς ὁ ἐπιστάμενος τὰ δεινά.
- 502 εἴσεται (E2): Laches's future is often translated out as if it were potential, but it is an instance of “illogical idiom” (cf. P.Shorey TAPA 47 [1916] 205-234): “he will know if it is better” means “he knows if it will be better” – corrected below by Nicias (τὰ σημεῖα ... γινώσκειν τῶν ἐσομένων). Laches mistakes (or contrives to mistake) Nicias's meaning, as if the question of the goodness or badness of being alive is something that would be settled by a future outcome, but this only postpones the question Nicias is raising, for a putatively good or bad outcome would itself need to be evaluated for its true worth – as Nicias will point out below (196A2).
- 503 μάντις (E3): Note the nominative, set up by καίτοι σύ. Laches with inconsequential derision mocks the theory he imposes upon Nicias (that his brave man must be a soothsayer) by requiring it to apply, *ad hominem*, to Nicias himself, so as to force him either to make the absurd claim he is a soothsayer or else embarrass himself by disavowing that he is brave. To make this joke is the purpose of Laches's remark. Commentators' suggestion that he is satirizing Nicias's over-reliance on soothsayers at Syracuse by calling him one (Tatham Newhall Emlyn-Jones Dorion) is not only anachronistic but requires a tin ear, as does the suggestion that we as Plato's readers will be thinking of Syracuse at all (Sprague Rainey Waterfield): Laches already has made a very different use of the soothsayer. Dorion at least gives Plato a reason to derogate soothsayers, though it is at the expense of the verisimilitude of his own story, namely that he does not respect them (n.167). The example of the soothsayer returns at 198E4-199A3, on which cf. n.503.
- 504 Read τί δαί (E5) with Ast Bekker Stallbaum Badham Hermann Cron Tatham Plaistowe/Mills Lamb over Schanz's modern sanitization, τί δέ, adopted by Newhall Burnet Croiset Vicaire Emlyn-Jones (cf. n.195).
- 505 With αὖ (E5) Nicias associates what Laches just now has said with what he said above (D7-9, varying the language from δίδως to οἶε προσήκει) and ignores the personal slur within Laches's question so as to focus on its logical gravamen, whether a soothsayer is any more competent to make value judgments than a doctor. “It is now, think you, a seer that has the gift of judging ...” (tr.Lamb) is just right. So also Lane, Nichols. Sprague however is wrong to translate “What of it? Don't you *for your part*...”
- 506 For προσήκει (E5) in this sense cf. 187B5.
- 507 Note that the list, disease / loss of money / war (E10-196A1), re-uses the three categories of good and evil used above to exemplify the spectrum of concerns from small to large (192E-193B).
- 508 τί μάλλον (196A2): Nicias now reverses Laches's οὐδὲν μάλλον argument against him (cf.195C1). Being an expert (δημιουργός was the term Laches used at 195B9) makes a man no more brave, but neither does the knowledge that is bravery belong to any one expert (ἄλλω ὁτιοῦν, A3 [sc. δημιουργῶ from 195D8]) more than to another.

Lach. “Here's the place where<sup>509</sup> I don't get what he is trying to say, Socrates.<sup>510</sup> Neither a soothsayer, nor what other kind of person is he revealing he calls the brave man,<sup>511</sup> unless he means it's some god.<sup>512</sup> To me Nicias seems unwilling to have the decency to admit he is saying nothing.<sup>513</sup> Instead he twists his argument every which way<sup>514</sup> so as to cover up<sup>515</sup> the fact that he, too, has come to a standstill.<sup>516</sup> And yet you and I could have twisted things around this way a few moments ago if we had wished to avoid the appearance of contradicting ourselves. If the discussion were taking place in the courtroom it would make some sense to act that way, but why would somebody in a meeting like this<sup>517</sup> thwart the argument with empty distinctions<sup>518</sup> merely to keep himself looking good?”

Soc. “For no good reason<sup>519</sup> – I would agree, Laches. But let's see whether Nicias thinks<sup>520</sup> he is

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- 509 Reading τοῦτο (A4) with the mss. (and Croiset) over the unnecessary emendations of Bekker (τοῦτον, accepted by Stallb. Badham Hermann Cron Tatham Plaistowe/Mills Vicaire) and of Schanz (τούτου, accepted by Newhall Burnet Lamb). Laches is referring back to Socrates's intervention at 195D10, when he admonished Laches to be sure he understood the purport of Nicias's remark before answering him. Here as there Nicias is on the brink of refuting Laches's counter-ploy.
- 510 ὦ Σώκρατες (A4): Once again when Laches's attacks fail to materialize he turns away from his interlocutor to talk about him with Socrates. It is not “a rising tide of frustration” that his remarks represent (Emlyn-Jones), but merely a longer expression (Dorion) of less justified revilement.
- 511 ὄντινα λέγει τὸν ἀνδρείον (A6): Though the context calls for this formula we might again note how easily “Who the brave man is” can be a way of saying “What bravery is.” Cf. n.368 *ad* 190E3 and n.499 *ad* 195D9.
- 512 θεόν τινα (A6): Truly, with Sprague and Dorion, the sort of knowledge Nicias has in mind is of a higher order than the skills of the δημιουργοί.
- 513 οὐδὲν λέγει (B1) has been the metaphoric expression for speaking nonsense (195A9 and B3, versus λέγειν τι, 195C4-5), but Laches now threatens to bring the metaphor back to life. Nicias keeps finding ways to tell us that the ἀνδρείος is nobody (οὐδένα δηλοῖ ὄντινα λέγει τὸν ἀνδρείον, A5-6)!
- 514 ἄνω καὶ κάτω (B1-2): For the expression with active (and transitive) στρέφειν cf. *Phdrs.*272B8 with my n. *ad loc.* The middle here alleges the subjective motive, whence αὐτοῦ, which is emphatic after the (possessive) article.
- 515 ἐπικρυπτόμενος (B2): The prefix, with ἄνω καὶ κάτω, invokes a picture of Nicias moving from place to place to block the argument so as to cover up his lack of an answer. Try saying it's a doctor and he starts asking whether life is good; suggest it's a soothsayer and he tries to draw some distinction about whether a good outcome is better than a bad one.
- 516 τὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπορίαν (B2): Laches uses ἀπορία only in order to refer back to Socrates's description of the fix that Socrates and he had gotten themselves into (194C2-6) for purposes of comparison, even though ἀπορία is not the right word for what he is alleging Nicias's problem to be.
- 517 ἐν συνουσίᾳ τοιᾶδε (B6): For Laches the high stakes of the law court would justify saying whatever would “win,” but here in this private συνουσία candor is to be expected (γενναίως ὁμολογεῖν, B1). Hence Nicias's only motive is vanity (κοσμεῖν): but this is too broad. Winning and losing might be empty (Laches is the least justified in claiming this) but words are not (see next note). To interpret or to translate τοιᾶδε as “friendly” (Jowett, Lane) is hardly something to put into Laches's mouth at this point (as Emlyn-Jones says but then ignores *ad* B6), nor does his use of the term warrant the statement (Emlyn-Jones *ad* B4) that he is making “the Socratic point that they are seeking the truth.” There is no evidence at all that Laches is participating in the discussion for the sake of finding the truth. The very vagueness of τοιᾶδε, a vagueness that is characteristic of Laches's way of talking (cf. n.319) betokens little more than his insouciance about the possibilities of dialogue and the value of λόγος. Cf. nn.311 and 312 on λόγων καλῶν καὶ πάσης παρρησίας, 189A1.
- 518 κενοῖς (B7), the “emptiness” of tilting at mere concepts, a charge brought against “philosophy” according to Socrates in Book Ten of the *Republic* (607B7-C, with my n. *ad loc.*). μάτην means that Nicias's responses are simply keeping the argument from getting anywhere.
- 519 οὐδέν (C1), “adverbial accusative” answering accusative τὶ (B6).
- 520 Reading οἶεταί (C2) with T (οἴηται Wb οἴοιταί B), the indicative (with ὀρωμεν μή) being used for an event that is taking or has already taken place, rather than the subjunctive for an event in prospect: *Lys.*218D3, *Phdo.*84E3, *Tht.*145C1 (cit. Cron).

saying something<sup>521</sup> and is not just mouthing words.<sup>522</sup> Let's inquire of him more exactly what he has in mind.<sup>523</sup> Then, if it becomes clear he is really saying something,<sup>524</sup> we will agree with him; and if not we will instruct him.”

Lach. “Go ahead and try to inquire<sup>525</sup> if you wish, Socrates. I'm fairly<sup>526</sup> inquired out.”

Soc. “It won't hurt if I do, since I will be doing the inquiring on behalf of both of us.”<sup>527</sup>

Lach. “Quite so.”

Soc. “Then tell me, Nicias – or better, tell us,<sup>528</sup> since Laches and I are making this argument together. You are saying that bravery is the knowledge of what is to be feared and what is to be dared?”<sup>529</sup>

Nic. “I am.”

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521 λέγειν τι (C2), in contrast with κενοῖς λόγοις (B7) and now with λόγου ἔνεκα (C2), contradicting Laches's accusation that Nicias's whole strategy is οὐδένα λέγειν, i.e., to avoid specifying whose wisdom makes him brave (cf. n.513).

522 λόγου ἔνεκα ... λέγειν (C2) echoes the connotation of futile redundancy Laches got with αὐτὸς αὐτὸν κοσμοῖ (B7) but more accurately characterizes Laches's underlying skepticism about λόγος in general.

523 νοεῖ (C3), in contrast with λέγειν, reminds Laches of the distinction between what one knows and what one can articulate, that he had drawn in defense of himself above (194B1-4), so as to invoke his patience with what Nicias might be trying to do.

524 ἔάν τι ... λέγων (C3-4): τι goes with λέγων, repeating the idiom λέγειν τι, is an “enclitic in prolepsis,” which is something of a contradiction in terms. Its placement before the only term it is meant to modify, even to the point of breaking up the idiomatic phrase, is an index of how strong is the tendency for an enclitic to come early in its clause regardless of its semantics (cf. εἶχεν ἄν τινα ... λόγον, B4, above, and \*\*\*).

525 πυνθάνεσθαι (C5): Note the play of tenses. Laches replaces Socrates's horatory subjunctive aorist (πυθώμεθα, C3) with a conative present and then dismisses the whole idea with his perfect, πέπυσμαι (C6). There is no evidence he “simply wishes to drop out” here (Emlyn-Jones) – it's just that his quiver is empty. As soon as Socrates develops and presents a substantial challenge (196C10-E9) he interrupts before Nicias can answer, not because he “cannot restrain himself” (Emlyn-Jones *ad* C5-6, again with no warrant) but because he sees an opening to strengthen Socrates's challenge with the exaggerated (πᾶσιν, 197A4), strictly irrelevant (since 184D5-6 has vetoed voting: Emlyn-Jones's easy allusion to “counter-intuitivity” *ad* 197A2-5 overstates of the case), and ultimately self-defeating (cf. n.546 on τολμᾶς) admonition that if Nicias perseveres in his position he will be defying the opinion of “everybody.”

526 ἕως (C6) *irrisiois* (Stallb., comparing *Gorg.*473B3, *Rep.*339B1).

527 κοινῇ (C7): Socrates gently reminds Laches that the line of questions he will now be pursuing was begun by Laches himself, and Laches in his reply agrees. This is another instance of Socrates's scrupulous and prudential management of the discussion, since Nicias's reply would otherwise be addressed to Socrates only and would therefore be in vain: Lysimachus needs a consensus (189D2-3).

528 μᾶλλον δ' ἡμῖν (C10): Yes, Socrates nails down for a *second* time that Laches is still involved. Cf. 194D10-E4, where he first gets Laches's consent that what he has said (D10) is essentially a question for Nicias (E1-2), and then goes on to ask Nicias himself to make sure the question actually gets asked (E3-4).

529 Socrates begins at the beginning (194E11-195A1).

Soc. “And that<sup>530</sup> it belongs not to mankind at large<sup>531</sup> to know this, given that<sup>532</sup> neither a doctor nor a soothsayer will know it and thereby<sup>533</sup> be brave, unless he should acquire this knowledge in addition as a supplement – isn't this what you were arguing?”

Nic. “That it was.”

Soc. “So, truly,<sup>534</sup> as the proverb says, it's not something any pig would know,<sup>535</sup> so as thus to become a brave one.”

Nic. “I'd say, No.”

Soc. “Clearly, Nicias, you do not believe the Crommyonian sow was really brave, either.<sup>536</sup> I say this not as a joke<sup>537</sup> but because I imagine that a person who argues as you do cannot accept bravery as a characteristic of any beast,<sup>538</sup> or else<sup>539</sup> he must grant that some animal is sophisticated enough that such things as only some few men know, due to the difficulty of knowing them, are known to a lion or a leopard or perhaps to some boar.<sup>540</sup> Instead, the man that posits bravery to be what you posit it to

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530 δέ (D4) continues his question and the construction in φής.

531 παντός ... ἀνδρός (D4): The “genitive of characteristic” makes ἀνὴρ a term for a class that can be characterized (i.e., every *kind* of man), next to be instantiated with classes of men (which had been referred to above with τις: cf. n.501). It is an essentialist or qualitative argument, not quantitative, concerning every individual man.

532 ὅποτε (D4) is here causal rather than temporal (cf. *Euthyd.*297D3, *Leg.*895C1), and leans toward conditional so that it takes μή (cf. *Phdo.*84E2 and Smyth §2240).

533 μηδέ (D5), with δέ illative, as again οὐδέ below (D10). Cf. *Rep.*341D1, 411D5, 475C4, 520A6, etc.; *Phdrs.*245B3, 247D7; *Stallb.ad Parm.*152E.

534 τῷ ὄντι (D9), typical with citation of a proverb as explained by Cron *ad loc.*: “bezeichnet gegenüber der idealen Wahrheit des Sprichworts die Bewährung in der Wirklichkeit.” It emphasizes not the “validity” of the proverb (*pace* Rainey) but its application in the world of fact.

535 The Scholiast cites the proverb as κἂν κύων κἂν ὕς γνοίη – of an item that even a most unteachable (ἀμαθέστατα) animal could learn. The proverb is absent from Leutsch-Schneidewin.

536 Plutarch describes the Crommyonian Sow as a paradigmatically fierce animal that Theseus slew out of his own initiative: ταύτην ὁδοῦ πάρεργον, ὡς μὴ δοκοίη πάντα πρὸς ἀνάγκην πονεῖν, ὑποστάς ἀνεΐλε καὶ ἅμα τῶν μὲν ἀνθρώπων τοῖς πονηροῖς ἀμυνόμενον οἴομενος δεῖν τὸν ἀγαθὸν προσφέρεσθαι, τῶν δὲ θηρίων καὶ προεπιχειροῦντα τοῖς γενναίοις μάχεσθαι καὶ διακινδυνεύειν (*Vit.Thes.*9.1) – unless, as Plutarch goes on to say, this was a nickname for a certain female robber named Phaea.

537 οὐ παίζων (E2-3): It is not pigs that Socrates is talking about, (that would be silly) but the dependency of bravery upon sophistication. He finds *prima facie* evidence for their independence from the proverbial presence of one but the absence of the other in one and the same animal, which happens to be a pig.

538 μηδενὸς θηρίου ἀποδέχεσθαι ἀνδρείαν (E3-4), not μηδὲν θήριον ἀποδέχεσθαι ἀνδρείον (sc. εἶναι), echoes the genitive of characteristic used above for the “kinds of mankind” (D5) and therefore likewise invokes the notion of types (in fact, species) of beast rather than individual beasts.

539 ἢ (E4) = “or else:” cf. *Rep.*342B1 with my n.

540 ἢ τινα κάπρον (E6): τις in this case is infixed with the last item of the list to effect closure, with its semantically casual back-reference to the ὕς (above, E1) under a different name. Cf. *Phdrs.*255C4 and my n. *ad loc.*

be must say that lion and deer and bull and ape<sup>541</sup> are by nature equally brave.”<sup>542</sup> (197)

Lach. “My god, Socrates! How well<sup>543</sup> you put the matter! And so, Nicias, give us a real answer to this question<sup>544</sup>– Do you claim these beasts are more sophisticated than we are – the ones, that is, that all of us<sup>545</sup> would agree are brave – or do you dare<sup>546</sup> to oppose the world and not even call them brave?”

Nic. “Nay, Laches, neither<sup>547</sup> beasts nor anything else do I call<sup>548</sup> brave that fails to fear what is dangerous out of a lack of intelligence<sup>549</sup> but is<sup>550</sup> unfearing only<sup>551</sup> and witless. Or do you imagine I call all children brave since they fear nothing because of their mindlessness? No – I take the unfearing and the brave to be different things. My position is that bravery and forethought is something in which some small few<sup>552</sup> have a share, whereas boldness and audacity and this element of “un-fearing” accompanied by un-forethoughtfulness,<sup>553</sup> is shared by very many – men, women, children and beasts.

541 λέοντα καὶ ἔλαφον καὶ ταῦρον καὶ πίθηκον (E7-8): The list presents a pair of opposite or complementary pairs (brave and timid) linked uniformly with καί, so that our cognizance of its logical structure depends upon the semantics only, as often: *Crito* 47C9-10; *Gorg.* 459D1-2; *H.Maj.* 292D1-3; *Leg.* 671C6-7, 696A6, 863E6-8; *Phdo.* 81B5-6; *Phlb.* 14D2, 25C5-11; *Polit.* 295E4-5; *Prot.* 356A3-5, 357A7-B1; *Rep.* 344A7-8, 461C1-2; *Tht.* 172A1-2, 172B3. Likewise with uniform ἢ (*Crat.* 389B8-9; *Rep.* 463C5-7) and uniform τε (*Rep.* 552A9-10). Note that τε or τις may be infixed in the last pair to effect closure: *Leg.* 665C2-3f; *Phdo.* 65C5-7; *Phlb.* 42C10-D1; *Tht.* 175A3-5; *Tim.* 87D1-2, like ἢ τινα κάπρον above. Contrast the addition of τε for sub-sectioning: (A1 τε καί A2 καί B1 τε καί B2): *Rep.* 343C1-2; *Tim.* 80A3. For the cowardice of the ape in comparison to the high spirit of the lion cf. *Rep.* 590B6-9; *Luc. Philopseud.* 5; for lion and deer cf. *Leg.* 707A3-4.

542 That is, since bravery (as wisdom) would come by nurture rather than by nature, the lion and boar would be no braver by nature than ape and deer.

543 The two καί 's (197A1) express Laches's impatient excitement. Compare his interruption at 194E9-10, where again he had eagerly imagined that a well-focussed question would stump Nicias.

544 With ἡμῖν (A2) Laches inserts himself back into the conversation since he has victory in view. ὡς ἀληθῶς announces with premature eagerness his hope that Nicias will be compelled actually to embrace (“do you actually think...?”) this paradoxical implication, which for Laches is impossible of truth.

545 πάντες ὁμολογοῦσιν (A3): His assertion that there is an ὁμολογία proves that Laches's first plural represents not only the parties to the conversation but all of mankind, intensifying the challenge (*n.b.*, A4 is *omnibus adversans*, not *nobis*, *pace* Ast, who repeats the error below with *fatemur* for ὁμολογοῦσιν at C3).

546 τολμᾶς (A4): Unbeknownst to himself, Laches is accusing Nicias of being brave, according to his own definition!

547 οὐ γάρ τι (A6): Another gratuitous τι from Nicias. Cf. n.493. He responds to the challenge with aplomb, as before.

548 καλῶ (A6) is not an “ironic” repetition of Laches's καλεῖν at A5 (Emlyn-Jones) but a retort, toe-to-toe. Continually Nicias, in his decency, is satisfied to portray himself as the equal, not the superior, of Laches.

549 Reading ἀνοίας (A7) with BTW and Hermann Cron Plaistowe/Mills Burnet Lamb against the ἀγνοίας of the Basileensis accepted by Ast Bekker Stallb. Badham Jowett Schanz Burges Newhall Croiset Vicaire, leading them also to read ἄγνοϊαν at B1 below on even slimmer evidence. Stallb. argues (*ad loc.*) for changing both as providing the appropriate contrary to προμηθία at B3, but the proper contrary to ἄγνοια is knowledge not forethought, whereas forethought here denotes being mindful rather than informed (noted by Newhall) so that its true contrary is foolish ἀνοια. Ficinus has *ob inscitiam* in both passages (*pace* Burges who reports *propter ignorantiam*).

550 ἀλλ' (A8): Newhall astutely notices, against all commentators and all translations I have seen except for Allen, that ἀλλά continues the attributive construction after τό rather than presenting the alternative to ἀνδρεία ... καλῶ (*i.e.*, it goes with μή not οὐ). Thus the singular is kept (ἄφοβον καὶ μῶρον, A8): the plural would have been preferable for the other sense. It is at the end of the paragraph that he will characterize such animals, with the plural, by calling them θρασέα (B6-C1). Delete therefore the comma placed by edd. after φοβούμενον.

551 ἄφοβον (A8) does not mean intrepid (as elsewhere) but *timoris experts* (Ast). It is a purely logical formulation to express the contradictory of φοβούμενον and functions merely as a “passing note” leading to the characterization of the μὴ φοβούμενον as witless (καὶ μῶρον, with καὶ illative).

552 τισὶν (B3): Again (cf. n.547) Nicias's mitigating expression (contrast its absence in Socrates's parallel sentence above, 196E5); and note again the early placement (cf. n.524).

553 ἀπρομηθίας (B4): Another verbal invention to denote the logical contradictory of προμηθία, by all indications coined

The cases that you and the majority of men<sup>554</sup> call brave, I call rash; what I call brave are cases that are mindful in the matters I mentioned.”<sup>555</sup>

Lach. “Behold, Socrates how well this fellow again plumes *himself*<sup>556</sup> with talk, while those whom everybody else<sup>557</sup> counts as brave he seeks to strip of that honor.

Nic. “But not you,<sup>558</sup> Laches: never fear! For I declare you to be *sophisticated*, you and Lamachus<sup>559</sup> too, if in fact<sup>560</sup> you are brave, and other Athenians, too, a good lot of them.”

Lach. “I have nothing to say to that – not because I am at a loss but because if I did, you would say it is no accident that I am an Aexonian.”<sup>561</sup>

Soc. “Please don't say it, Laches. And I do not think it is lost on you<sup>562</sup> that the sophistication you

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by Nicias (not “Plato,” *pace* Rainey!) for the occasion.

554 σύ (B6) taunts Laches as being one of of οἱ πολλοί (whom he is ready to despise: cf. e.g. 190D6, where it was his own values that were at stake) rather than one of πάντες as he had claimed to be above merely in order to isolate Nicias. Laches distinguishes himself from οἱ πολλοί in order portray himself as superior but distinguishes Nicias from πάντες (A3,A4) in order to isolate him as idiotic.

555 τὰ φρόνιμα περὶ ὧν λέγω (C1) is a virtual restatement of the *definiens* of ἀνδρεία, i.e. ἐπιστημὴ (~ τὰ φρόνιμα) τῶν δεινῶν καὶ θαρραλέων (~ περὶ ὧν λέγω), modified *mutatis mutandis* to serve as the *definiens* of τὰ ἀνδρεία.

556 ἑαυτὸν δὴ ... κοσμεῖ (C2): With δὴ he reminds us that he had used the metaphor at 196B7 (otherwise he would have said ἑαυτὸν μὲν and the contrast with οὐδὲ ... would have been clearer), now pressing it into service as foil for what Nicias's talk is meant to do to others (C3-4). Laches is not only reasserting his criticism that the all men would disagree with Nicias (cf. A3-5) but also characterizing Nicias's λόγος as of the “unworthy” sort he had described as hateful to himself because the speaker speaks well of himself at the expense of persons more worthy than he. His use of κοσμεῖ for self-decorative speech recalls his quasi-cynical use of καλῶν at 189A1 (cf. nn.311 and 312).

557 πάντες ὁμολογοῦμεν (C3): Laches simply misses Nicias's distinction between οἱ πολλοί and πάντες, just as he has missed most of Nicias's other quietly asserted but telling distinctions.

558 Reading σέ γε (C5) from Ox.Pap. 2.228 (a reading unreported by Croiset and Vicaire) over ἔγωγε (BTW) as fitting better with the joke ἀλλὰ θάρρει.

559 Lamachus was a general associated with Nicias in the Sicilian campaign. Cf. Plut. *Vit. Alcib.* 18.

560 εἶπερ (C6): With περ Nicias does not churlishly call into question the bravery of Laches and Lamachus (as Emlyn-Jones worries) but merely insists upon his thesis, that if they are brave they must also, as a prerequisite according to that thesis, be wise (σοφόν, C6) in what they are brave about – this in reply to the inference that Laches has tried to force upon him twice above, including once *ad hominem* as here (195B5, ἀνδρείους καλεῖς; E4, οὔτε ἀνδρεῖος): one can be sure that Nicias knows it will offend Laches to be called σοφός (whence I translate “sophisticated”) at least as much as Laches imagined it would offend Nicias to be called unbrave (cf. n.503). περ asks the auditor to re-consider the hypothesis, not only because it might be false but also, as in this case, because the inference depends upon his recognition that it is true.

561 Αἰξωνέα (C9): The Scholiast tells us that in comedy persons from the deme of Aexone are taken to be blasphemers; Stallb. and Cron infer from ὡς ἀληθῶς (cf. n.534, *supra*) that Laches actually comes from this deme.

562 Reading οὐδὲ μὴ ἡσθησθαι (D1-2) with BTW and Ast Bekker Stallb., with μὴ adherescent (G.Hermann, Stallb., Zimmermann) rather reading than οὐδέ (only) with the Par.1811 (cit. Bekker) and Ox.Pap. (accepted by Tatham Burnet Lamb Vicaire Hardy), and despite Ficino's *haud enim advertisse videris*; and against C.F.Hermann's emendation of οὐδέ into τόνδε (1893) accepted by Plaistowe/Mills, or Keck's into τοῦδε accepted by Schanz Newhall Croiset Nichols. That Socrates should cite Nicias's sophisticated learning as something Laches might envy would explain the prejudice against him that Socrates here admonishes him to suppress; that Laches should not be aware of Nicias's source (according to the emendators) removes the reason Socrates should bring it up at all.

see in him<sup>563</sup> is something he got from our associate Damon.<sup>564</sup> As for Damon, he consults with Prodicus a good deal, the man judged to be the most adept of all the sophists at such fine verbal distinctions.”

Lach. “Yes and that is just what suits a sophist – this sort of subtle use of language – as opposed to<sup>565</sup> what suits a man whose city deems him worthy<sup>566</sup> to be put in charge of herself.”

Soc. “In any case, my blessed fellow, what *suits*<sup>567</sup> the man who is put in charge of the greatest things is that he have the greatest share of mindfulness. But as to what Nicias deserves,<sup>568</sup> I think it is a closer

563 ταύτην τὴν σοφίαν (D2): Socrates now calls σοφία what Laches has described as Nicias's κοσμεῖν τῷ λόγῳ (C3: cf. also 196B7) – his use of what Laches claimed were empty and self-serving semantic evasions (στρέφεται, 196B1-7). With ταύτην (“second person”) Socrates acknowledges Laches's characterization but avoids endorsing it. In fact it was Laches's own captious presumptions and pre-emptive tactics that required Nicias to draw the distinctions if he was ever to articulate his own meaning at all, and in the event the distinctions proved justified and relevant (which is more than we can say about Prodicus's practices, which if we can believe the depiction of them in *Prot.* seemed more an end in themselves). With σοφία Socrates means to bring κοσμεῖν up a notch, but this will be lost on Laches, and his explanation that Nicias got his ability from the *sophist* Prodicus can be expected only to provoke again Laches's general distrust of reason and talking in all its forms (on which cf. n.297), as his reply reveals.

564 τοῦ ἡμετέρου (D2-3): The “we” here consists of Socrates and Nicias. Socrates refers Laches back to Nicias's remark at 180C8-D3, according to which Socrates had introduced him to Damon as a teacher for his son.

565 Laches's remark (D6-7) reveals not “a traditional view of the seriousness of sophistic discussion” (Emlyn-Jones) but a traditional view of its frivolousness. He is continuing with his cherished distinction between verbal self-decoration (λόγος) and the real worth of the man (ἔργον: *n.b.*, ἀνδρί, D7 and cf. n.158). With the second clause he is not referring to Nicias but to his position (see next note), suggesting that it is unseemly for an important office-holder to waste his time on subtle verbiage.

566 ἀξιοῖ (D7-8): Whether we read προῖστάναι with the mss. or προεστάναι with Ox.Pap. 228 (corroborated by Venetus 184), the tense of the infinitive after ἀξιοῖ (present) is aspectual and the phrase means “the *man* (as opposed to the sophist) a city sees fit to choose as its leader” (pointing back to Laches's honorific men of C3-4), not “a man the city has chosen as its leader” (Waterfield), as if containing a pointed reference to Nicias (*pace* Dorion, n.185; Hardy, p.120).

567 Reading μέν που with Stob. (μέντοι BTW). Ox.Pap. has a lacuna that could fit μέν or μέντοι followed by που or μέντοι. Earlier edd. of course read μέντοι. Schanz (1883) was first to notice the Stob. *testimonium* but did not yet have the papyrus and kept μέντοι, whereas Burnet and Lamb, subsequent to its publication, read μέν που. The *app.critt.* of Croiset and Vicaire are empty (!) and they read μέντοι. Socrates is making a transition away from the squabble, and μέν που is preferable as being more conciliatory. The previous section had ended in an *aporia* of Socrates and Laches that needed the fresh ideas of Nicias; this section ends in another kind of *aporia* – a standoff between Nicias and Laches – and Socrates herewith reverts from personalities back to the question.

What has happened within this section is that Nicias has put forth a new notion of what bravery might be, aspects of which could become evident only in stages because of the continual harassment of Laches's captious and pre-emptive attacks (194D8-9; 194E11-195A1; 195C9-10; 195E8-196A3). The causes of Laches's resistance are two – on the one hand φιλονικία (as he confesses, 194A8), and on the other his prejudice against sophistication and even rational behavior in any form including even rational discourse. This prejudice and suspicion of his is brought to an irreversible level of generality in the final exchange where Socrates facilitates his identification of Nicias's rationality with mere sophistry, and Laches draws an irreducible contrast between that pursuit and the honor and eminence of leading the city, including not only command in the military but leadership in peacetime also. Laches's reference brings us back to the opening theme and dilemma of the dialogue, that fathers like Nicias and Laches find themselves too busy with public affairs both in war and in peace to tend properly to the upbringing of their sons (179C7-D2, 180B4-7), and by dint of the reach of that back-reference there is a slackening of pace and a sense of closure. We may say of the section that Nicias wins the battle on the rebound with his persevering and substantial argumentation (his λόγοι qualify as ἔργα), whereas Laches loses it with showy and bluffing incursions into the discussion that continually fall short (his ἔργα are mere λόγοι: all he is doing is talking).

568 With πρέπει and ἀξιοῖ (E1, E3), responding to Laches's ἀξιοῖ (D7) and πρέπει (D6), Socrates produces a *double* retort

investigation<sup>569</sup> as to what he has in mind when he applies this term, bravery.”

Lach. “Go ahead and investigate him yourself, Socrates.”

Soc. “That's what I will do, by noble friend, but don't think I am excusing you from the joint endeavor of our discussion. Pay attention to what is said and think along with us.”

Lach. “Let it be so if that seems right.”<sup>570</sup>

Soc. “But it does seem right.<sup>571</sup> Now Nicias,<sup>572</sup> answer a new set of questions.<sup>573</sup> (198) You recognize, don't you, that at the start Laches and I<sup>574</sup> were investigating bravery as being a part of virtue.”

Nic. “Quite so.”

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and thereby cancels the continuing exchange of retorts between himself and Laches -- i.e., μηδέ γε εἶπης (Soc.) answering Laches's οὐδὲν ἐρῶ, and subsequently Laches's καὶ γάρ (D6) answering Socrates's καὶ γάρ (D1).

569 ἐπισκέψεως (E3): Socrates often uses this compound for the serious investigation of a provocative perception (Rep.523B, 524A), or of a thesis once it has been clearly enough formulated that it is amenable to isolated scrutiny (Crat.428D2, Gorg.461A5, 515A3; Phdo.107B6; Prot.349E1; Rep.598D7; Tht.199E8). The paradigmatic metaphor for the process denoted is that of the doctor who requires the patient to take off his shirt for closer examination (Prot.352A).

570 εἰ δοκεῖ χρῆναι (E9): Laches sticks by his agreement to do as Socrates instructs (189A1-2, B1-3).

571 ἀλλὰ δοκεῖ (E10): ἀλλά plus the repetition dismisses any doubt. Again (cf. n.527) Socrates scrupulously maintains Laches's participation in the discussion even at the expense of redundancy (cf. εἰ δοκεῖ, E9), not merely as a “matter of form” (Emlyn-Jones *ad* 198B9-10) but in order to preserve a chance that the inquiry will end in unanimity so that Lysimachus will have a consensus to follow (189D2-3).

572 σὺ δέ, Νικία (E10): Omission of ὦ with vocative may be passionate (Gildersleeve §20) or peremptory (K-G. I.43), as when Aristodemus admonishes Apollodorus to skip the name-calling (Symp.173E4) and when Socrates accosts a nameless interlocutor (Gorg.518C2), but in many cases it is not. It is regularly omitted in addressing a command to a slave (παῖ: Symp.175A3, Tht.173C7), where the vocative is used not to name the addressee but to get his attention. Thus Alcibiades omits ὦ when he tries to waken Socrates (Σώκρατες, καθεύδεις; Symp.218C3), as does Socrates when he begins the *Philebus* by calling to Protarchus. Moreover, when the speaker has been speaking to A and suddenly with his same voice turns to address B he might call for B's attention by going directly to the vocative of his name without ὦ (Symp.213C6, 213E1) or he might say σὺ δέ and then omit ὦ, adding the proper name only to tell who the pronoun refers to, as Prot.358A2, Symp.175A4, and as here (compare οὗτος plus omission at Symp.172A5). For more on the pragmatics of the vocative cf. n.85.

573 πάλιν ἐξ ἀρχῆς (197E10-198A1) means not “going back to the beginning” (*pace* Lamb, who identifies the ἀρχή here with the reference of κατ'ἀρχάς in the next line), but “starting anew” (Jowett) as at *Charm.*163D7 (ἀρχομένου at D1 notwithstanding), *Euthyph.*11B2, *H.Maj.*303D11, *Leg.*7238-E3 (with schol. *ad loc.*), *Phdo.*105B5, *Prot.*333D3, *Rep.*348B8-9. This is why Socrates uses the plural διαλόγοις at 200E3 (see next n.): there have been two “rounds” in the conversation with the roles of questioner/answerer filled by different persons.

574 With κατ'ἀρχάς τοῦ λόγου (198A1) Socrates indubitably refers to 190C8-D1, the beginning of the current investigation, when he and Laches were playing questioner and answerer (the first plural ἐσκοποῦμεν designates only the two of them). Excision by the older edd. is unnecessary. Cf. n.640, *infra*.

Soc. “And did you, too, give your answer about it<sup>575</sup> viewing it as a distinct part,<sup>576</sup> one among other parts which all together are called virtue?”

Nic. “How not?”

Soc. “And as to the other parts, do you say the same about them as I do? Besides bravery I speak of temperance and justice and other such things.<sup>577</sup> How about you?”

Nic. “Yes to that ... .”<sup>578</sup>

Soc. “Then let's continue.<sup>579</sup> Since we agree about this much, let's have a closer look<sup>580</sup> at the things that are to be feared and dared,<sup>581</sup> in case you think one thing about them but Laches and I<sup>582</sup> think another. We will say how we take the terms, and if you take them otherwise, you will explain to us why

575 ἀπεκρίνω (A4) refers to the thesis Nicias advanced as ἀποκρινόμενος, at 194E11-195A1 (pace Emlyn-Jones), which Socrates here treats (with τοῦτο) as an answer to the question Laches and he had decided to ask themselves (ἐσκοποῦμεν, A1), namely, “What is bravery, as part of virtue, since the question what is virtue as a whole is too large for us to expect to answer?” That he and Laches had in passing agreed to treat bravery as a part (at 190C8-D6) makes it “theirs” relative only to Nicias's not having agreed to it as of yet, since he was not a party to that “dialogue” – i.e. that “round” of the conversation. Emlyn-Jones's notion that the tr. by Lane here “implicates” Socrates in believing virtue has parts (“our answer” for τοῦτο) mistakes all this merely for the sake of keeping tabs on who will have been to blame for the failure of the entire conversation. But Socrates's notion of dialogue is not a blame-game: it will not be Laches or Nicias but the conversation that fails, if the answerer and questioner are not able to reach an ὁμολογία. This is why these persons are allowed, as answerers, to change their answer in the middle of the “dialogue.”

576 μόριον (A4) replaces μέρος with a slightly stronger connotation of distinctness from the other μόρια.

577 πρὸς ἀνδρεία σωφροσύνην καὶ δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἄλλ' ἅττα τοιαῦτα (A8-9): The commonest list of virtues comprises temperance, justice, bravery, and wisdom. The argument of *Rep.* Bk.4 fairly depends upon this usual list of four being exhaustive (cf. 426E6-11), though sometimes a fifth and sixth virtue might be named (cf. my n. to *Rep.* 331A4). By deftly generalizing after mentioning only the second and third, Socrates sidesteps mentioning the fourth one, which is already involved in (and perhaps even conflated with) ἀνδρεία according to Nicias's argument. Again Socrates has been dialectically scrupulous in his manner of presenting the list (as he had been with Laches: cf. n.362), and again the question whether Socrates or Plato himself “believes in” this commonsensical partition and this set of virtues is irrelevant to the process of the question and answer, so that Emlyn-Jones's exegesis of καλῶ as merely nominalistic and therefore merely conventional, is unneeded.

578 πάνυ μὲν οὖν (B1), after πάνυ γε above, voices agreement, but with μὲν Nicias shows he is aware that something else is coming, which Socrates acknowledges in his ensuing μὲν / δέ construction.

579 ἔχε δὴ (B2): The locution is idiomatic and means *agedum* (with Viger 207 [1813]) – i.e., “come then” or “let's continue” – and goes with what follows (*sic* Ast, *Lex.* I.874, s.v. ἔχω), as at *Crat.* 435E6, *Gorg.* 460A4 (pace Dodds), *Ion* 535B1, *Rep.* 353B14, *Th.* 186B2 (pace edd.). Cf. also ἔχε alone at *Alc.* I 109B3 and ἔχε οὖν at *Alc.* I 129B5. It can also mean “hold it,” if αὐτοῦ is added (i.e., “continue there, as φλυαρεῖς ἔχων at E4 means “you speak nonsense continuously”), as at *Gorg.* 490B1, and can mean “keep still” if ἡρέμα *vel sim.* is added (*Crat.* 399E4; *H.Maj.* 296A8, 298C5).

580 σκεπώμεθα (B3) announces the focus of the ἐπίσκεψις he desiderated above (197E3), the prefix being dropped according to the usual Indo-European rule.

581 τῶν δεινῶν καὶ θαρραλέων (B2-3): Ficinus's and Ast's *rebus formidolosis et contrariisque (vel sim.)*, here and *passim* (cf. also Croiset) is logically correct in preserving the distinction between contrary and contradictory, and even to be favored when a single article is used for the polar doublet, but also loses something of the emotional flavors of daring and of shrinking. Tatham's gloss “things not terrible” and Hardy's tr. “was keine Furcht bereitet” for θαρραλέα (B6) forgo to capture the eagerness of θάρσος, and denote the contradictory rather than the contrary.

582 ἡμεῖς (B4) is of course not a royal or editorial we.

you do.<sup>583</sup> We take it that things are fearsome if they do indeed<sup>584</sup> provoke fear, and dareable if<sup>585</sup> they do not provoke fear; and also that what provokes fear is not things in the past that are evil, nor present evils either, but evils we anticipate in the future, since fear is the anticipation of an evil to come. Or do you not also take it so, Laches?”<sup>586</sup>

Lach. “Very much so, Socrates.”

Soc. “So now you have heard what we<sup>587</sup> think, Nicias – that what is fearsome are evils to come, whereas what is dareable are things to come that are not evil or are good.<sup>588</sup> Do you see it this way or another way?”

Nic. “This way, myself.”

Soc. “And meanwhile<sup>589</sup> it is the knowledge of these things that you call bravery.”

Nic. “Clearly yes.”

Soc. But still let us see if you agree with Laches and me about the third thing”

Nic. “And what<sup>590</sup> third thing is that?”

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583 διδάξεις (B5): More Socratic dialogical prophylaxis. For the problem of keeping discrepant presumptions under control lest worse problems occur later, compare *Gorg.*453A8-C4, 454C1-3, 457C5-7, 505E2-506A7, 517C4-7 and *Thg.*122B8-C4. For διδάσκειν used of the role of the answerer in the context of dialogue (where English would sooner associate “teaching” with lecturing) cf. 181D6 and n.101 *ad loc.*

584 καί (B6) here *infers* δέος from δεινά (Stallb.), on the basis of their common etymon.

585 μή (B6) makes the naming of them *conditional* upon the criterion of whether they provoke fear or no, unless it means to generalize (so Cron, who cites *Euthyd.*276B and D, and Newhall). Immediately we notice that the names (δεινά / θαρραλέα) are contraries but the criteria (παρέχει / οὐ παρέχει) are merely contradictory.

586 Both καὶ σοὶ δοκεῖ (B9) with B<sup>2</sup> (read by Ast Bekker Hermann Badham Cron Tatham Plaistowe/Mills) and δοκεῖ καὶ σοί (t) are poorly attested (BW reads καὶ σὺ δοκεῖ and T reads δοκεῖ καὶ σὺ), but are more correct in sense than Burnet’s paleographically ingenious emendation, συνδοκεῖ (read also by Lamb and Vicaire), suggested to him perhaps by συνδοκεῖ at C9 (though that form fairly needs a dative complement, as there), for the separate pronoun more scrupulously portrays Socrates’s management of the two interlocutors (again below, 199A3-5). Schanz’s unnecessarily radical removal of δοκεῖ (adopted by Croiset) does at least preserve the proper emphasis. It is noteworthy that Socrates has no advance warrant to believe Laches will agree with what he has said, as also with what he will assert at 198D1-199A3 below, but instead manages to ensure his agreement in both cases with self-interruptions.

587 ἡμέτερα (C2): Jowett slips, thinking this represents Socrates only (“That is my view...”), though Socrates has been scrupulous to bring Laches along.

588 τὰ μὴ κακὰ ἢ ἀγαθὰ μέλλοντα (C3-4): Here the difference between the contrary and the contradictory – i.e. the *tertium* – comes to the surface (Ficinus alters the word order to make this more explicit: *futura bona, vel certe non mala*). Nothing is made of it in the argument, however, since if a person knows what falls under the contraries then he also knows that a given *tertium quid* does not (*pace* Dorion, n.194 [p.167]).

589 δέ γε (D6), of the minor premiss – which Socrates brings forward from the previous discussion (196D1-2).

590 τὸ ποῖον (C11): It is only in the absence of the article that ποῖον has its derisive or indignant affect, and therefore it

Soc. “I will tell you. This fellow and I think that for any things of which there is knowledge, the knowledge of these things as they once were in the past is not different from the knowledge of such things as they now are, nor of such things as they might best be or as they shall be<sup>591</sup> in the future, but is the same knowledge. For instance on the subject of health, medical science is not different for each of the different times, since it is one, but presides over present, past and future things, how they are, and were, and shall be. And likewise the science of farming presides over the things that are grown on farms<sup>592</sup> no matter when; and when it comes to war the two of you will<sup>593</sup> doubtless testify that the science of strategy provides the finest mindful supervision<sup>594</sup> in all cases, especially as to what is to be done in the future, and fancies not at all that it should be subservient to soothsaying<sup>595</sup> but rather should rule it, knowing better as it does about matters of war whether in the present or the future. (199) Just so, our law forbids the soothsayer to govern the general but rather enjoins the general to govern the soothsayer. Isn't that what we declare, Laches?”<sup>596</sup>

does not have it here (*pace* Plaistowe/Mills).

- 591 ὅπῃ ἂν κάλλιστα γένοιτο καὶ γενήσεται (D4), reading καὶ γενήσεται against its excision by Schanz. The order optative / future indicative is surprising to the modern ear (Jowett Lane Dorion Waterfield reverse the order) but this hardly justifies Schanz's athetization of the latter (which Croiset prints but, with Sprague, does not translate). Knowledge may be prescriptive or critical and may sometimes combine both (though κάλλιστα goes only with γένοιτο, *pace* Plaistowe/Mills Burges Allen; Waterfield's “will turn out or may turn out for the best” is at best ambiguous). To draw the distinction is the essence of Nicias's argument that Laches battled against in the previous section. It is natural that Socrates should introduce the distinction only at the end of the list, when he comes to future things. A general is qualified to say how a battle should best have been fought, but that “advice” will be moot. The prescriptive kind of knowledge is then instantiated in the two examples of medicine and farming (re-used from above, 195B3-C2: cf. n.422) which justifies the expressions ἐφορᾷ (D7) and προμηθεῖται (E3, where note that κάλλιστα is brought forward from D4, though it is applied to the knowing rather than the known, harmlessly); but the logic of the formulation requires all times to be exhausted.
- 592 τὰ ἐκ τῆς γῆς φυόμενα (E1) needs an English tr. that connects it etymologically with the science that rules it (i.e., γεωργία).
- 593 Reading μαρτυρήσετε (E3) with BTW over the *scribitur* μαρτυρήσαίτε, accepted by edd. The theory that the future indicative cannot appear with ἂν is refuted by the facts too many times to be tenable. Cf. *Apol.*29C4-5, *Euthyd.*275A1 and 287D2, *Leg.*719E3, *Phdrs.*227B9-10, *Rep.*615D3, *Symp.*222A1-3; Isaeus 1.32; and *Rep.*492C4 and my n. *ad loc.*
- 594 προμηθεῖται (E3) varies ἐφορᾷ which itself was drawn out of the prescriptive kind of knowledge embodied in the two examples, slanting the knowledge of warfare toward planning for the future, which of course is its primary purpose, but also recalling Nicias's introduction of the term in exegesis of the mindfulness of brave fearlessness as opposed to the mindless rashness of an animal (197A6-C1).
- 595 μαντικῆ (E4): The third example, again used before (195E1-196A3), keeping intact the distinction between predictive and prescriptive knowledge in relevant part. It is the whole burden of Nicias's position to require a distinction to be observed between what will be and what will or would be best.
- 596 φήσομεν (199A3): Again Socrates checks with Laches before having Nicias answer – but this time there is real drama since Laches's intransigence, whether feigned or real, to a version at least of the distinction Socrates has just drawn enabled him to sandbag Nicias in the previous section. In fact it is not Nicias but Laches who ridiculed Nicias's thesis by identifying the brave man with the soothsayer, whom Socrates is reminding of the law. The notion that Socrates is being “sarcastic” about Nicias's future conduct (Tatham) is, again, unverisimilar and pointless (cf. n.503), but also an *ignoratio elenchi*, for even if we accept Thucydides's judgment that Nicias was a bit too superstitious (ἦν γὰρ τι καὶ ἄγαν θειασμῶ τε καὶ τῷ τοιούτῳ προσκείμενος, 7.50.4), by Nicias's very act of consulting the soothsayer he was *ruling* him. The merely tendentious allusion to soothsayers by Laches is now brought forward to serious purpose, to illustrate a distinction between a knowledge of the future and a knowledge of a class of things in the future; as to Nicias's future behavior at Syracuse (itself as well as Thucydides's account of it chronologically prior to the writing of this dialogue), the moral to be drawn, if any is meant by Plato to be drawn, is that Nicias's decision there to wait (7.50), which Thucydides and commentators may criticize as a losing tactic, is no less a losing tactic than Laches's preference for *καρτερία* in the losing effort at Delium (193A3-B1), equally senseless on any tactical analysis. For both of these men the *correct* decisions are based on their senses of virtue. In all his examples above, Nicias has posited, against the

Lach. “Declare it we do.”

Soc. “Alright, then, Nicias, do you declare along with us that a science about the same set of things, as one and the same science, knows what's what<sup>597</sup> about the things whether they be future or present or past?”<sup>598</sup>

Nic. “I do, for to me it seems to be as you say.”

Soc. “And you do declare, my best of men, that bravery is the knowledge of fearsome and dareable things, don't you?”

Nic. “Yes.”

Soc. “But we have agreed that the fearsome and the dareable consist on the one hand of future goods and on the other of future evils?”<sup>599</sup>

Nic. “Quite so.”

Soc. “And yet that<sup>600</sup> a science of a class of things is one and the same, whether they be in the future or whatever state they are in?”

Nic. “That, too, we have agreed.”

Soc. “Therefore it is not only of the fearsome and of the dareable that bravery is the knowledge. For it is competent not only about goods and evils<sup>601</sup> in the future but also those that are present or

presumptions of Laches, a higher value than life and higher things to be feared than death – as also he did at Syracuse (e.g. Thuc. 7.48.4). It is for this reason that Thucydides (if we countenance his opinion in all things rather than only one) bids farewell to Nicias as a man least deservant of his unlucky end διὰ τὴν πᾶσαν ἐξ ἀρετὴν νενομισμένην ἐπιτήδευσιν (7.85.4), since “he lived in practice of every virtue” (tr. Jowett: on the sense and significance of the phrase cf. n. 610, *infra*).

597 ἐπαίειν (A8) of “savvy” or “competence.” We encountered the word at 186E1 (cf. n. 257). The sense is, “showing commanding knowledge of what's what, regardless of when.”

598 καὶ ἐσομένων καὶ γιγνομένων καὶ γεγονότων (A7-8): Note reversal of order, in a chiasm of before and after, securing the agreement to the τρίτον τι (C9).

599 Chiasm (B3-4) is common where parallelism would feel slavish.

600 δέ γε (B6), of a minor premiss to be considered in tandem. Bring forward ὡμολόγηται, therefore, which (as in B4) requires εἶναι (B7).

601 Print περὶ (B10) rather than πέρι in anastrophe: μελλόντων is predicative and would require the article to be nominal.

past or in any state<sup>602</sup> – just like the other kinds of knowledge.”

Nic. “It does appear so.”

Soc. “And so your original answer gave only a part of bravery, something like a third of it, whereas we were asking<sup>603</sup> what bravery is as a whole; and the way it looks now, according to your argument, bravery is not the science of fearsome and dareable things only. Instead, a knowledge of virtually all goods and evils no matter what their state is what bravery would be! Has the argument switched positions in this way<sup>604</sup> – or what would you say?”

Nic. “I deem that it has!”<sup>605</sup>

Soc. “And do you deem that a man of the sort you have in mind,<sup>606</sup> my stunning friend,<sup>607</sup> would be

602 καὶ πάντως ἐχόντων (C1): The sense is given by Ficinus: *et omnia simpliciter*. The phrase adds not a fourth category (Stallb.'s reason for deleting the phrase as dittography from above) but the general principle, which includes all three temporal modes. Commentators' qualms (cit. Dorion *ad loc.*) about whether Socrates and Nicias are right to agree that courage is not about the past, are quite irrelevant to the argument: at the present it is only Socrates and Nicias that need to agree. The purpose of the present discussion is not to define courage but to see whether they know what it is (cf. εἰς ταῦτόν φέρει, I89E2). Dorion moreover is disconcerted to find Socrates failing to distinguish between one kind of knowledge and another when he says ὡςπερ αἱ ἄλλαι ἐπιστήμαι (n. I96 *ad loc.*) but it is Nicias, as the answerer, that fails to do so; yet nobody would be “disconcerted” to see Nicias makes such an error, if error it be.

603 ἠρωτῶμεν (C4), an imperfect of citation (citing a point within the time of the conversation) for which cf. I93D4 and *Rep.*332A4 and 350C7 with my nn. *ad locc.* In truth they never had agreed they were looking for ἀνδρεία ὅλη, but only ἀνδρεία as a part, instead of ἀρετὴ ὅλη (I90C8-10).

604 Reading μετατίθεσθαι (D1) with all mss. (Ast *coni. μετατίθεσθαι*). Stallbaum Zimmerman Cron Schanz take the inf. with understood λέγεις (*an quomodo dicis sententiam te tuam mutare*) but the word order tells against this interpretation. Moreover, if λέγεις is taking inf. because it means κελεύειν (Cron), then μετατίθεσθαι, the deed Nicias would be enjoining someone to do, should be in the active (μετατιθέναι). Emlyn-Jones's “Do you admit that you have changed in this way?” gives the wrong meaning to λέγω and the wrong tense to μετατίθεσθαι. I would supply δοκεῖ, which is what Nicias supplied as we can see from his answer at D3 (so does Ficinus, *sicne modo an aliter iudicas*). The unwarranted overtranslations of Croiset, “*faut-il modifier ...*”, and of Lane, “Does that reflect your change of mind?” pre-empt Nicias from now having to choose, which choice is the dramatic climax of the dialogue. These problems are solved by taking the unexpressed subject of the infinitive to be not Nicias but what Socrates has just been talking about, namely Nicias's λόγος. Asked for A (a part) he provided B but the B he provided has in turn (αἰ) become A' (the whole). Cf. n.613, *infra*.

605 ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ (D3): Nicias accepts the implication rather than disowning the argument – and so this is his new position or “answer.” His decision plays the same crucial role in his argument as Laches's decision at I93B1 had in his, in the sense that both lead to the downfall of the proponent's original answer. Nicias and Socrates subsequently treat the discussion as a failure but actually it is a great success at the cost of a small failure since they have discovered what virtue is at large, and this was what they truly needed to know all along. Delimiting their search to the part was only a *pis aller* but now it has turned out to be an ἔρμαιον (for which cf. *Charm.*157C7 and *Rep.*368D6 with my n. *ad loc.*). Nicias's decision to accept his error will leave him with more than bravery; Laches's decision against conscious thought at I93B1, on the other hand (cf. n.421), barred him from reaching a καρτέρησις ψυχῆς that was good, and therefore left him with less.

606 τοιοῦτος (D4) turns out to be “second person” and points to Nicias's man, the one his argument has brought into view. With οὖν and the continuation of the potential optative in ἄν, further inferences are being drawn: the argument, that is, is still moving forward. The demonstrative designation is repeated in approbatory anaphora below by καὶ τοῦτον (D7): thus Ficinus's *eumque virum*.

607 ὦ δαμόνιε (D4) suggests not blame (Newhall, citing *Iliad* 2.190 and 200 only), as if Socrates has found Nicias inconstant in his opinion or bothersome to refute, but expresses his admiration for the turn the argument has taken

lacking<sup>608</sup> in virtue in any way, if he did know all the goods and know fully how they are and how they shall be and how they have been, as well as all the evils? Do you think your man would be deficient<sup>609</sup> in temperance, or in justice and piety,<sup>610</sup> when in truth he alone is qualified to manage, with due caution and in relations both divine and human, the things that are to be feared and shunned and those that are not, and conversely to garner all the things that are good, knowing as he would the right way to commune with both gods and men?”<sup>611</sup>

Nic. “What I deem is that you are really saying something, Socrates!”<sup>612</sup>

Soc. “So what is now being described would not be merely a portion of virtue for you,<sup>613</sup> but the whole<sup>614</sup> of it.”

Nic. ““So it seems.”

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(cf. δαίμονιε at Rep.522B3 and my n. *ad loc.*), which as often Socrates credits to his interlocutor (cf.n.357)

608 The excess of his *definiens* becomes a deficiency of defect in the man!

609 ἐνδεᾶ (D7) is stronger than ἀπολείπειν. To deny the man is ἐνδεής is to imply he is perfect, as if to imply he lacks human limitations. The praise, in shifting the burden to the interlocutor to find a deficiency, recalls the language of praise at Rep.485A10-487A6, which was so lavish that Momos interrupts (in the person of Adeimantus).

610 σωφροσύνης ἢ δικαιοσύνης τε καὶ ὁσιότητος (D7-8): The list re-formulates the partial list above (198A8), on which cf. n.577. Again he avoids including σοφία, the fourth cardinal virtue besides bravery, temperance and justice (since it will virtually be included within, if not identical to, bravery itself), but now he adds ὁσιότης, which is the virtue most commonly listed beyond those four (cf. Gorg.505B2-3, Meno 78D8-E1; Prot.324E5-325A2, 329C4-5, 330B5-6, 349B1-2; Rep.395C4-5, 479A5-8, 610B6; Tht.172A1-2, 172B2-3), not without indicating, by varying ἢ with τε καί, that ὁσιότης is to be seen as the twin of justice (another commonplace among the configurations of the virtues: cf. Euthyph.11E; Meno 78D4; Rep.331A4, 609B11-C1). This new idea then orders the subsequent elaboration, which unfolds justice into maintaining the proper relation between oneself and his fellow men and oneself and the gods. Socrates's spelling out of the implications of the argument, though fatal for its attempt to define bravery, gives way by degrees to praise, and even a paean, of the man who possesses this knowledge of all good and evil, and of what it can do for his life. The broad praise resembles if anything the encomium with which Thucydides closes his own account of this very Nicias (7.86.5) where he concludes, on the basis of the words he gave to Nicias above (πολλὰ μὲν ἐς θεοὺς νόμιμα δεδιήτημαι πολλὰ δ' ἐς ἀνθρώπους δίκαια καὶ ἀνεπίφθονα, 7.77.2), that Nicias exhibited a life devoted to *all virtue* (πᾶσαν ἐς ἀρετήν: cf. the exegesis of Classen [1884] *ad loc.* and his App.176-7) and not just some part of it. It seems impossible that Plato does not have this passage in mind when he puts the words at D8-E1 into the mouth of Socrates.

611 The sudden access of praise now rounds itself out in a graceful and amplitudinous chiasm (ὦ / εὐλαβεῖσθαι / δεινά // ἀγαθά / πορίζεσθαι / ἐπισταμένω: D8-E1) that with ἐπισταμένω in a sense imports the fourth virtue of σοφία, after all. Ficinus brings across the force of the inner chiasm with *devitat haec apprehendat illa*. The relevance of ὀρθῶς προσομιλεῖν will be given special application below, in Nicias's remarks about Laches and himself (200A4-C1).

612 λέγειν τὶ ... μοι δοκεῖς (E2): The response reveals that Nicias takes Socrates's remarks as a rhetorical question. It means much more than *vera loqui videris* (Ficinus) or “*Je suis tenté de t'approuver*” (Croiset). Rather, his “response” praises what Socrates has “asked.” The expression moreover recalls the squabbling use of λέγειν τι in the fight between Laches and himself (195A8 and B3; 195C3 and C5) so as to trump all of that as paltry in comparison to what is now “happening” and being “said by” the logos. Jowett's tr., “I think that there is a great deal of truth in what you say” is therefore not an overtranslation. The late position and word order of μοι δοκεῖς closes the playful exchanges of ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ (D3) and Socrates's retort δοκεῖ οὖν δοῖ (D4).

613 σοι (E3) is not a dative of agency (appropriate only in the context of a perfect passive) but an ethical dative. “His” λεγόμενον has changed before his eyes. Cf. n.604, *supra*.

614 σύμπασα (E4): The laudatory tone is continued, as well as the allusion to Thucydides's account, with its similarly anarthrous expression, πᾶσαν ἐς ἀρετήν.

Soc. “But our position was that bravery is but one portion of virtue.”

Nic. “So it was.”

Soc. “But the thing we have just now reached in argument seems not to be so.”

Nic. “Seems it doesn't.”

Soc. “And so the result is, we have not discovered what bravery is.”

Nic. “It seems we haven't.”

Lach. “But I at least, dear Nicias, thought you would discover it, since<sup>615</sup> you scorned the way I answered Socrates. (200) I had only the highest hopes. Thought I, 'With the help of Damon's sophistication you will<sup>616</sup> turn it up!' ”

Nic. “How good for you, Laches, that you are no longer troubled<sup>617</sup> that a moment ago you were shown<sup>618</sup> to know not a whit about bravery – instead it is whether I will turn up<sup>619</sup> as equally futile that you look for. No longer does it make a difference to you, it seems, that you, right along with me, are entirely ignorant of the science of those things that are appropriate for a man to know who fancies

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615 ἐπειδὴ ἐμοῦ κατεφρόνησας (200A1) refers to 195A8-B1 (not 194C7-9, *pace* Emlyn-Jones), where Nicias said that Laches had been out of his depth in his conversation with Socrates. Laches's “reasoning” is the rationalization of invective, however: the fact that Nicias looked down upon his own attempt does not give Laches grounds to think Nicias would succeed, but rather places an incumbency upon Nicias to follow through with his critique by himself succeeding where Laches had failed, as though if he failed there, his prior criticism also would be vitiated. Thus the ἐπειδὴ that I translate with the illogical but emotionally satisfying “since,” is done with a dash by Lane. In Laches's way of looking at things the pot that calls the kettle black must not be black itself. It is exactly this that Nicias will next point out to him.

616 ἀνευρήσεις (A3): Laches uses the vivid indicative, feigning that he really expected it.

617 For οὐδὲν ... πρᾶγμα (A4) cf. *Crat.*393D2, *Euthyphr.*3C7, *Gorg.*447B1, *Leg.*794E6. Nicias does not here “break down” after presenting an even-tempered facade (Emlyn-Jones) but answers, for a second time, in his consecutive and even-handed way, the pointless and belligerent gloating of Laches over what was existentially a victory and a defeat only in form – and takes the trouble to place the both of them a world in which discussion and learning are ongoing. Nicias's “actual” view of Laches's performance does come into view only “here” (*pace* Emlyn-Jones *ad* A5): he simply reiterates what he had said at 195A8-B1.

618 ἐφάνης ... εἰδώς (A5): By adding the participle (and not an infinitive) Nicias makes completely explicit what he had left ambiguous when he said this before (τοιούτος τις ἐφάνη, 195A9-B1, with neither εἶναι nor ὄν).

619 ἀναφανήσομαι (A6) answers Laches's ἀνευρήσεις (just as his οὐδὲν οἶει [A4] answers Nicias's ὄμην [199E13], as Emlyn-Jones saw), replacing what he claimed to have hoped for with what he was truly hoping for.

himself a real<sup>620</sup> man. Instead yours is a behavior<sup>621</sup> all too human, in my opinion, casting<sup>622</sup> the eye of judgment not at all upon oneself<sup>623</sup> but upon others. For my part on the other hand I believe that I have acquitted myself decently and well<sup>624</sup> in this conversation of ours, and that if I have failed in some way, I will redeem my error at some later time, whether with the help of Damon – whom I suppose you deride, though you have never even seen<sup>625</sup> the man – and with the help of others. And once I have secured<sup>626</sup> some understanding I will come and teach you as well, and will not begrudge you. For you do seem to me very sorely<sup>627</sup> in need of learning.”

Lach. “How sophisticated you are,<sup>628</sup> Nicias! Yet still I will advise Lysimachus here and Melesias to drop both you and me as counselors about the education of their boys, and rather to keep this fellow

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- 620 ἀνδρὶ οἰομένῳ τι εἶναι (A8). Nicias refers to Laches's remark about the important man at 197D6-8 (Lane's “self-respecting,” though an easy and current formula, is not quite right for οἴεσθαι τι εἶναι, when the οἰόμενος lets the opinions of others determine his opinion of himself). His accusation that Laches is acting like an ἄνθρωπος rather than an ἄνθρωπος (noticed, of course, by Shorey, in his summary in WPS) is perhaps the most stinging thing he could say (ὡς ἀληθῶς [Laches's favorite term: cf. nn. 439, 379, 300, 298, 234, 185, and even 163] emphasizes the discrepancy between Laches's behavior in fact and his pretensions to manliness in all that he says), but at the same time it is perfectly accurate and ultimately sympathetic.
- 621 ἐργάζεσθαι (B1): The verb takes an internal (cognate) or an external accusative. In the absence of an external direct object the adjectival modifier of the internal accusative devolves into an adverb and the verb devolves into meaning “behave,” as in the expressions αἰσχρά τε καὶ κακὰ (sc. ἔργα) ἐργάζεσθαι, (Prot.345E2), ἀνόσια ἐργάζεσθαι (Rep.615D), ἄτοπον ἐ. (Gorg.519C4), δεινὰ ἐ. (Apol.28D10, Leg.887A1), δίκαιά τε καὶ ἀγαθὰ ἐ. (Rep.380B1), θαυμαστὰ ἐ. (Leg.686C9, Rep.474A3 [θαυμάσια], Symp.213D3), ὁμοιότατον ἐ. (Gorg.518E1-2).
- 622 Reading οὐδέν (B2) with BTW (and Ast Bekker Stallb. Badham Cron Schanz Tatham Plaistowe/Mills Newhall Lamb Croiset Vicaire) rather than Gitlbauer's possible but unwarranted emendation to οὐδέ, accepted by Burnet and Rainey. βλέπειν is not coordinate with ἐργάζεσθαι (and therefore does not need the coordinating connective δέ), but appositive to πράγματα (rather than expegetical, with Cron and with Stallb., who cites cf. Symp.180D1-2).
- 623 Reading αὐτὸν (B2) with BT and Ast Bekker Stallb. Zimmerman Badham Cron Tatham Plaistowe/Mills Newhall Lamb (αὐτὸν W : σαυτὸν corr. Coisl. cf. teipsum Ficinus). The impersonal construction describes the human tendency rather than the personal example of Laches. Nicias had described the effect of Socrates in generalized terms when he shifted to the first plural at 188A7-B4. For the impersonal construction cf. 184B4, and ἀγνοῦντα Phds.230A1 and my n. ad loc. Nicias recalls the effect of Socrates upon his interlocutor (περιεγόμενον, 187E9 with n. ad loc.), raising thereby the question whether Socrates has had this effect on Laches!
- 624 ἐπεικῶς (B3): Cron rightly compares Phlb.31A2, and Soph.249D6, and compares similar expressions of moderation – ἱκανῶς, μετρίως. Humility in failure is hardly “strange” or “unmoved” (Emlyn-Jones) but decent, especially when as here the “failure” was something Nicias willingly chose for the sake of a greater truth. Nor does Nicias's subsequent remark about Damon protest his importance to him (E.-J.) but only fills out the theme that open-handed conversation, whether with Damon or anybody else, will advance the ball to the point that he will some day achieve understanding, whereas Laches's use of language and reason merely for belligerent self-justification will leave him right where he is – until Nicias ungrudgingly might come to his aid. Nicias's concluding remark that Laches does after all need some teaching, though negative and critical, is by now entirely justified. Emlyn-Jones has entirely missed the measured nobility of this passage.
- 625 οὐδ' ἰδὼν πάποτε (B5-6): Nicias again couches his criticism of Laches in the most penetrating terms (cf. n.620), for he has continually championed first hand experience over mere prejudice or theory.
- 626 βεβαιώσομαι (B7) refers back to Socrates's invitation at 194C4-6 that he try to “firm his ideas up” by engaging in the conversation, as Tatham saw.
- 627 καὶ μάλα σφόδρα (C1): There is redundancy in the expression that indicates a little impatience on Nicias's part (as did ironic the εὖ γε with which he began, A4)
- 628 σοφός (C2): Though of course the term has a very different valences for Laches and for Nicias, Dorion hears this as Laches's “tit for tat” after Nicias's remark at 197C5-6, where he explained to Laches that he would “decorate” (κοσμεῖ, 197C3) him as well as himself with the attribute σοφός, since according to his definition being wise is prerequisite to being brave (εἴπερ...). Now we discover that even this has stuck in Laches's craw.

Socrates from getting away from them as I suggested at the very beginning.<sup>629</sup> And if my own children were at the that age I would be doing the same thing.”<sup>630</sup>

Nic. “I agree with what you say,<sup>631</sup> and if only Socrates is willing to take care of their boys, I advise them to seek no other.<sup>632</sup> In fact I would gladly turn my own boy Niceratus over to him if only he would take him. But he always recommends others<sup>633</sup> when I bring the matter up, and himself is unwilling.<sup>634</sup> Try and see, Lysimachus, if Socrates might pay a bit<sup>635</sup> more heed to a request from you.”

Lys. “Just<sup>636</sup> it would be, indeed, Nicias, since I in fact<sup>637</sup> would be ready to do a lot for this man, more than I would do for no great number of others. So what do you say, Socrates? Will you heed my request and join in encouraging these boys<sup>638</sup> to become as noble as possible?”

Soc. “Terrible<sup>639</sup> it would be, Lysimachus, to be unwilling to encourage someone to become as noble

629 ἐξ ἀρχῆς (C5): He is willing to throw himself along with Nicias overboard (as Nicias noted just above, A5-8) but then he seeks to take full credit for bringing Socrates into the conversation, which he did at 180C1 (though the expression ἀφιέναι came a bit later, 181A7).

630 ἐν ἡλικίᾳ ἦσαν (C5): Though we might wonder at the implication of Laches's (contrafactual) remark, namely that he thinks his children are not at an age that is appropriate for training, and though we recall Lysimachus's unopposed claim at the beginning that they were, in fact, we should also realize that in the interim it has become nearly impossible for us to imagine Laches asking anything from any educator, and now consider this remark of his as a blanket demurral to hire any educator.

631 The one thing Nicias and Laches can agree upon is the superiority of Socrates, but he has already demurred (186B8-C5).

632 μηδένα ἄλλον ζητεῖν (C8): Nicias, rather than vaunting his own contribution as Laches just has, remembers the language of the joint project set out by Socrates in the middle of the conversation (185A3, 186B5-6).

633 συνίστησιν (D2): Hesychius, s.v., includes ἐπαινεῖν as a gloss. Cf. *Charm.* 155B2; *X.Anab.* 3.1.8, 6, 1, 15; *Cyr.* 4.5.58, 7.3.12; and Socrates's remark at *X.Mem.* 1.6.14, where he says he teaches his friends whatever he might have chanced to learn but also ἄλλους συνίστημι παρ' ὧν ἂν ἠγῶμαι ὠφελήσεσθαι τι αὐτούς (cf. also *Th.* 151B). Nicias unbeknownst to himself gave us an example of Socrates fobbing him off at the beginning of the dialogue (there he said προϋξένησε: 180C9-D1, on which cf. n. *ad loc.*) and now we see why the referral, by the verisimilar logic of psychological association, counted for him as evidence that Socrates cared about the διατριβαί of the young. He remembers asking him first!

634 οὐκ ἐθέλει (D3): Nicias uses the verb three times in this short paragraph. Contrast Laches's casual but probably unimaginative expression of compelling Socrates to help (μη ἀφιέναι, C5)).

635 τί (D4), Nicias's touch of diffidence again (cf. n. 113), echoed this time by Lysimachus (D7).

636 δίκαιον (D5): Lysimachus reverts to his trusty admonition to Socrates that he engage in a “fair exchange” of favors, the admonition with which he addressed him at the beginning (cf. 181B8-C1, C2 and n.88). Socrates has now won over everyone present – having already started with the sons! We feel a turning toward closure.

637 ἐπεὶ καί (D5) means not “since I, too, would be willing to do much...” (*pace* Nichols), since nobody else has offered Socrates any recompense. Rather, καί emphasizes what is coming. Lysimachus hopes his protasis-less apodosis, as well as his litotes offering him no small compensation, will stimulate Socrates to hearken to him (μᾶλλον, D4).

638 ὡς βελτίστοις (D8): The dative makes them the object of συμπροθυμία before being the subject of γενέσθαι (a so-called personal construction: contrast αὐτόν, 200B2, with note), as Socrates's placement of τῷ before συμπροθυμεῖσθαι (E2) in his reply shows. Ironically, it would appear that Socrates and Lysimachus's sons already have evinced a joint eagerness for improvement, by the fact that he already talks with them at the gym (180E4-181A3).

639 δεινόν (E1): The term, something of an echoing retort of Lysimachus's δίκαιον (D5), is wonderful for its ambiguity. Idiomatically δεινὸν ἂν εἶη means it would be *perverse* for him to refuse, but within the context we cannot fail to sense the undermeaning that he would *fear* to refuse on the grounds that it would be a bad thing for him to do. For the briefest of moments we are given a peek into Socrates's subjectivity, a hint about his commitment to edifying dialogue which elsewhere he describes as enjoined upon him by a god.

as possible! I would say that if I had been shown in the present conversations<sup>640</sup> to be a person with knowledge and these two to be ignorant, then it would indeed be just<sup>641</sup> to call upon me in particular to perform this task. But as it is we all ended up confused. Why then should any of us prefer any of us?<sup>642</sup> By my own lights I would say (201) not a one. And if I am right, then ask yourselves whether the advice I have for you seems worthwhile: I say (mind you none of us here is going to pass this along<sup>643</sup>) we ought first of all join together and seek out the best teacher we can find for ourselves<sup>644</sup> – for clearly we need one<sup>645</sup> – and then a teacher for the lads, sparing neither expense nor anything else.<sup>646</sup> To let it go on the other hand and leave ourselves in the state we are in – this I counsel you not<sup>647</sup> to do. If someone should set about ridiculing<sup>648</sup> us for thinking we need to go back to school at our age,

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- 640 *διαλόγοις* (E3): Socrates's use of the plural is noteworthy for showing that the term refers to a conversation between two people, one playing questioner and the other answerer (compare the definition of thinking as the soul's "dialogue with itself" at *Soph.*263E-264A and *Th.*189E4-190A4) whereas *λόγος* is very general (cf. n.573). The roles of answerer and questioner have shifted since 190C (which for Socrates was the beginning of the dialogical section, as we learned at 198A1): first it was Socrates / Laches and then Socrates-Laches / Nicias. Each pairing constitutes for him a separate *διάλογος* but the dramatically connected sequence is a single *λόγος*.
- 641 *δίκαιον ἂν ἦν* (E4): Socrates (after interposing his remark about τὸ δεινόν) now returns to Lysimachus's admonition about proper behavior (τὸ δίκαιον) just as he had at the beginning (cf. 183D3 and n.), and once again he corrects him.
- 642 *τις ἡμῶν τίνα* (E6): The positioning of ἡμῶν forces us to take it with both the subject and the object.
- 643 Reading *λόγου* (201A3) against *λόγος* in the mss., the perceptive conjecture of Heusde (*Spec. Crit.*126, citing A. *Thesm.*472, *αὐτὰ γὰρ ἔσμεν κοῦδεμί' ἔκφορος λόγου*), accepted also by Hermann Zimmermann Badham Cron Schanz Plaistowe/Mills Newhall Croiset Vicaire. The (objective) genitive makes *ἔκφορος* a person, which justifies *οὐδεὶς*, which would otherwise, although it is not neuter, have to be taken adverbially with the verbal notion implicit in *ἔκφορος* (thus Ast, *haud enim pervulgatum est quod propono*). In fact this *οὐδεὶς* refers to the same nobody as *οὐδένα* had, just above, and presents the warrant for Socrates's claim. If anybody had done well he might report out how badly the others had done. Heusde's case is helped by the fact that Socrates's phrase is iambic: the phrase (as C.F.Hermann and others have suggested) may well be a proverb. To tr. it with a proverb from *Second Samuel*, however, does more for the translator (*pace* Lane) than for the text.
- 644 *ἂν τι δόξω συμβουλεύειν ὑμῖν* (A2): This advice (*pace* Emllyn-Jones) only reiterates the advice he gave before, by means of a dialogue (184C9-187B7), after the irreconcilable monologues of Nicias (181D8-182D5) and Laches (182D6-184C8), namely, to rely not on a third, tie-breaking monologue by himself but rather to find an expert (in the proper field). The presumption at that point was that Nicias and Laches were competent and so he counseled Lysimachus to get their credentials, but in the event (189D3-199E12), after Nicias and Laches each agreed to this counsel (187B8-189C2), that presumption proved false since they showed themselves unable to define bravery. So now Socrates admonishes Lysimachus and everyone else to look elsewhere than themselves for an expert (cf. already 185A3, 186B5-6), not only on behalf of their sons but, first and foremost, on behalf of themselves.
- 645 *δεόμεθα γάρ* (A4-5): Socrates defuses the last squabble between Nicias and Laches (200B7-C2, where *n.b.* *δεῖσθαι*, C1) by confessing that all of them, including even himself, need to learn.
- 646 *μήτε χρημάτων ... μήτε ἄλλου μηδένοσ* (A5-6): I take this to go with the *ἔπειτα* clause only. Socrates, again with the longer view of what has happened in the conversation, brings forward the cost of sophists he mentioned at 186C2-8 (cf. 187A3-4), but with *ἄλλο* he also alludes to the distracting preoccupations of the prominent citizen (187A2-6) to which Laches himself had confessed at the beginning (180B1-6) as causing him to neglect his family, in response to Lysimachus and Melesias's claim that because this had happened to themselves, at the hands of their prominent fathers (179C5-D2), they had now resolved to do better and find teachers for their sons. The net effect of the entire discussion has been to reveal to the five men that it is especially themselves (*μάλιστα μὲν*, A4) that need the *ἐπιμέλεια* or *θεραπεία* of the soul – that lavishing money on their sons is not enough – and, because so much is at stake, that they are not too old to go back to school with them (A7-B5).
- 647 *οὐ συμβουλεύω* (A7): The *οὐ* should be taken as adherescent. Socrates not only demurs to lead the group but also corrects Laches's self-deprecatory suggestion above that he and Nicias should be left out of account (*συμβουλεύω σέ ... καὶ ἐμὲ ... χαίρειν ἔάν*, 200C3-4).
- 648 With *καταγελάσεται* (A7), Socrates makes an oblique but telling reference to Nicias's remark about Laches's readiness to ridicule Damon as a teacher (*καταγελάω*, 200B5), but he also recalls the very opening of the dialogue where Lysimachus worries that some people scorn things like the study of *ὄπλομαχία* (*καταγελωσι*, 178A5), which also – in the event – included Laches. It is not philosophy *per se* that Socrates is advocating and so the impatience

we must fend him off with Homer's remark that there is “nothing good about acting shy when a man is in need.”<sup>649</sup> If we are to let go of something let's let go of worrying about what somebody might say, and instead join together to take care of ourselves and our lads.”

Lys. “For myself, I accept what you suggest, Socrates, and by whatever amount I am the oldest I am the most eager to try and learn right along with the lads.<sup>650</sup> But what you must do is this. Show up first thing tomorrow morning at my house<sup>651</sup> – I enjoin you to do it – so that we might counsel each other about these very topics. For now, let's call our meeting to an end.”

Soc. “Do it I will, Lysimachus. God willing, I will come to you tomorrow.”

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expressed by a Callicles at *Gorg.*485Aff, cited by several commentators in connection with this passage, is not relevant.

649 From *Od.*17.347, used again at *Charm.*161A. Roughly, “Beggars can't be choosers.” In essence it is the same advice as Solon's, to which Socrates actually refers by echoing Nicias's ἀξιοῦντα (188B3) with ἀξιοῦμεν (B1).

650 ὅσπερ γεραίτατος ... τοσοῦτω προθυμότετα μανθάνειν (B7): Lysimachus improvises his own variation upon the saw of Solon, which he takes to mean “It's never too late to learn,” rather than the less urgent sense Nicias gave it – that it is in no way beneath him to learn merely because he is old (188B2-4: he reiterates this mild sentiment just above, 200B2-6). We may imagine it is because Lysimachus raises the ante as he does that Socrates feels it incumbent upon himself to acquiesce in his request to visit him on the morrow. Old and doddering as he may be, Lysimachus seems more “pregnant” (*Tht.*150B-151D) to learn than any of the others, and so in the end he gets his way (cf. 181C4-5 and n.90).

651 αὔριον ἔωθεν ἀφίκου οἴκαδε (B8-C1): Lysimachus speaks as a κεχρημένος ἀνὴρ, with a request would not be put more directly, so very different from the roundabout manner of his opening speech. We may imagine at at this final moment he has done his boys proud!

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