

Ἔξις Before Plato

David Conan Wolfsdorf

Introduction

The Greek noun ἔξις is central to Aristotle's ethics. At *EE* 2.1 Aristotle suggests that ἀρετή is a ἔξις, and at *EN* 2.5 he identifies ἔξις as the genus of ἀρετή. Aristotle's theory of the way ἔξις and ἀρετή are related is a development of Plato's conception of the relation between ἔξις and ἀρετή. In *Gorgias*, Plato first speaks of the soul as having a ἔξις; and in *Cratylus* he first characterizes the ἀρετή of the soul as a ἔξις. Plato's treatment is in turn a development of the medical use of ἔξις, first instanced in the Hippocratic corpus of the later fifth century. The following discussion examines the pre-Platonic history of ἔξις, with special focus on instances in the early Hippocratic corpus.

Morphology

Ἔξις is a deverbal nominalization. The verb in question is ἔχειν. The verbal root is in fact σέχ-, which derives from PIE **seǵʰ-*.¹ The noun ἔξις is composed of the verbal stem σέχ- concatenated with the nominalizing affix -σι-. Conjunction of the consonants χ and σ yields ξ.² The initial sibilant (σ) of the verbal stem is lost in the verbal form ἔχειν because the syllable of the verbal stem ends with a χ.³ But with the loss of χ in the nominal form, the initial sibilant reemerges as an aspirant; hence ἔξι- rather than ἔξι-. The final sigma (-ς) is the nominative case ending for ι-stem nouns. In sum, the morphological derivation of ἔξις from the verbal stem σέχ- may be represented as follows:

σέχ- > ἔχ- > ἔχ-σι- > ἔξι- > ἔξι-ς.

Preliminary Semantic Remarks

The PIE verbal root **seǵʰ-* means "have, hold." This is one of two basic meanings of the Greek verb ἔχειν. More precisely, this is called the transitive meaning of ἔχειν, i.e. "have, hold (something)." In addition, ἔχειν has a so-called intransitive meaning. Construal of this may be conveyed by the reflexive "have, hold oneself." Seemingly from this, the sense of "be in a condition, state" develops. For example, the verb ἔχειν is commonly used this latter way with a modifying adverb, e.g. ἔχειν καλῶς ("to be well").

The deverbal nominalizing morpheme -σι- derives from -τι-, which derives from PIE **-ti-*.⁴ Regarding -σι-ς, Boas et al. remark:

¹ R. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Brill, 2010, 490.

² Cp. H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, Harvard University Press, 1926, §97.

³ Smyth §125e.

⁴ Cp. G. R. Vowles, "Studies in Greek Noun-Formation: Dental Terminations V: Words in -σις and -τις," *Classical Philology* 23 (1928) 34-59; P. Chantraine, *La formation des noms en grec*

"-σις ... [is] the most productive action noun suffix: it could be added to virtually any verbal root, especially in the formation of technical or scientific vocabulary."⁵

Compare Smyth's earlier remark on -σι-, which he discusses under the rubric "Names of Actions and Abstract Substantives":

"Substantives denoting actions often express abstract ideas and name of actions, and verbals abstracts are often used concretely."⁶

The terms "name of action" and "action noun" render the Latin *nomen actionis*, which has been commonly used in historical linguistics since the early nineteenth century. But, as Williams rightly remarks:

"Deverbal nominals are a complicated class, as they have a large variety of meanings. Although Indo-Europeanists and other philologists have used terms such as *nomina actionis* 'action nouns' for a long time, it is not until relatively recently that deverbal nominals have been subject to real semantic analysis. Deverbal nominalizations have been said to denote results, manners, actions, processes, events, states, ordinary objects, facts, and propositions."⁷

Accordingly, I suggest that we dispense with the term "action" in this context. The affix -σι- composes with a verbal stem to create a noun, but one whose meaning -σι- contributes to in numerous ways.

The Distribution of Ἔξις in the Early Classical Period

Ἔξις is a prosaic term, which first occurs in the fifth century.⁸ More precisely, it appears to be a technical term, derived from the Hippocratic medical tradition. Recall Boas et al.'s remark on -σις in the formation of technical or scientific vocabulary.

ancien, Paris, 1933, 275-92. On, PIE *-ti-, cp. H. Williams, Williams, *An historical study of the Proto-Indo-European nominal derivational morpheme *-ti-*, University of Canterbury, MA Thesis in Classics, 2019, with a succinct review of past scholarship at 10-21.

⁵ E. Boas et al., *The Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*, Cambridge University Press, 2019, §23.27. E.g. Chantraine (1933, 282) records well over five thousand -σις nouns.

⁶ Smyth, §840a.2.

⁷ Williams (2019) 35. Williams here refers to J. Grimshaw, *Deverbal Nominalizations*, in K. Heusinger, C. Maienborn, P. Portner, eds., *Semantics: An International Handbook of Natural Language Meaning*, vol. 2, Mouton de Gruyter, 2001, 1292-1313.

⁸ Cp. LSJ *s.v.* who make this point at the end of their entry. Also notable is the fact that the single instance that they cite of ἔξις in a poetic work, namely the Orphic *Argonautica*, is of late antiquity.

There are 12 instances of ἔξις in early, i.e. fifth to early fourth century,⁹ works of the Hippocratic corpus.¹⁰ Notably, ἔξις does not occur in Herodotus or Thucydides. Nor does ἔξις occur in any forensic or oratorical work until the second half of the fourth century.¹¹ Ἐξις occurs twice in Xenophon, both instances in Socratic works and in contexts continuous with what appears to be the medical pedigree of the term.¹²

Outside of the Hippocratic corpus and prior to Aristotle, the only other instances of ἔξις are once in Democritus¹³ and 56 times in Plato. With the exception of one instance in Plato's *Gorgias*, those in Plato are confined to middle and, predominantly, late dialogues.¹⁴

LSJ's Entry for Ἐξις

I will examine the semantics of the earliest instances of ἔξις through critical engagement with the entries for ἔξις in various editions of Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* (LS). For convenience, here are the dates of the eight editions as well as Liddell, Scott, and Jones' ninth edition (LSJ):

EDITION	DATE
1	1843
2	1845
3	1849
4	1855
5	1861
6	1869
7	1882
8	1897
9	1940. ¹⁵

Observe that LSJ's 1940 entry for ἔξις basically has the following form:

⁹ My dating of the Hippocratic treatises is based on appendix 3 in J. Jouanna, *Hippocrates*, Johns Hopkins, 1999, 373-416.

¹⁰ *Hp. Acut.* 35 Jones (= 9.59 Littré), 43 Jones (= 11.69 Littré); *Epid.* 1.9 Jones (= 1.2.4.108 Littré); *Off.* 3.33, 15.10; *Art.* 12.16; *Moch.* 40.37; *Vict.* 32.2, 81.22, 82.19, 89.4; *Mul.* 230.68. In addition, there are four instances from later Hippocratic treatises: *Aph.* 2.34.2; *Coac.* 435.2; *Alim.* 34.3; *Praec.* 2.5.

¹¹ *Isoc.* 1.90.1 (355 BCE); *Aeschin.* 1.189.8 (345 BCE); *Isoc.* 12.32.8 (342 BCE).

¹² *X. Mem.* 1.2.4.4, *Oec.* 7.2.7.

¹³ *Democr.* B184

¹⁴ It is also worth noting that in the short post-Platonic *Definitions*, transmitted in the Platonic corpus, ἔξις occurs 35 times.

¹⁵ Cp. C. Stray, "Liddell and Scott in Historical Context: Victorian Beginnings, Twentieth-Century Developments," in C. Stray, M. Clarke, J. Katz, eds., *Liddell and Scott: The History, Methodology, and Languages of the World's Leading Lexicon of Ancient Greek*, Oxford University Press, 2019, 3-24, at 13.

I. General transitive sense: *having, being in possession of*
subsense. *posture*

II. General intransitive sense: *being in a certain state*¹⁶

subsense 1. *state or habit of body*
subsense 2. *state or habit of mind*
subsense 3. *trained habit, skill.*

So, LSJ distinguish two broad senses of ἔξις. These correspond to what I described above as the transitive and intransitive senses of the verb ἔχειν;¹⁷ that is, to a sense of ἔχειν as having something (transitive) and a sense of ἔχειν as being in a certain state (intransitive). Furthermore, LSJ distinguish one subsense of the so-called transitive sense and three subsenses of the so-called intransitive sense.¹⁸ I say that LSJ's entry "basically" has this form. I have simplified their descriptions in various ways, some of which I will discuss below.

Regarding the general transitive sense of ἔξις, LSJ cite, among examples, Socrates' description of knowing (τὸ ἐπίστασθαι) in Plato's *Theaetetus* as "possession of knowledge" (ἐπιστήμης ἔξις).¹⁹ They claim that the posture subsense of the transitive sense occurs in the context of surgery.²⁰ Below, I will argue that LSJ misconstrue the instance of ἔξις in question and that there is no posture sense of ἔξις. Assuming so, there is a general transitive sense of ἔξις, but no subsenses thereof.

¹⁶ I note two further points about this description. First, strictly, the description begins with the indefinite article: "a being in a certain state." A natural interpretation of this phrase is "some entity that is in a certain state." However, I presume that this is not the intended meaning and that the word "being" has the sense of the gerund (e.g. "being asleep/awake") rather than that of an extant individual (e.g. "a human being"). Cp. the description of the transitive sense in the fifth edition of LS: "a having possession." Second, there is a continuation of the description, which I have here suppressed for expository reasons. I return to it below.

¹⁷ In the first edition of LS (1843), only what would subsequently be called the "intransitive" sense of ἔξις occurs. This is introduced by the general description "*a being in a certain state, a permanent condition, esp. as produced by practice (πρᾶξις), a habit.*" Two subsenses are distinguished: "*a habit of body*" and "*a habit of mind.*" A second sense is then distinguished: "*skill as a result of experience, practice.*" The distinction between the transitive and intransitive senses of ἔξις first occurs in the fourth edition of LS (1855), albeit not with this terminology. In the fifth edition (1861), three general senses of ἔξις are distinguished: the transitive sense, the intransitive sense, and the sense of skill as the result of experience. In the eighth edition (1897), the sense of skill as a result of experience is subsumed as a third subsense under the general intransitive sense of ἔξις.

¹⁸ Confusingly, LSJ number the general transitive sense with a Roman numeral I and the subsense with an Arabic numeral 2. In contrast, they number the general intransitive sense with a Roman numeral II, but then the three sub-senses with Arabic numerals 1, 2, 3.

¹⁹ Pl. *Tht.* 197b1. Socrates also describes this as ἐπιστήμης κτήσις (197b4).

²⁰ This subsense of the transitive sense of ἔξις does not occur in any of the editions of LS.

I turn to the intransitive sense of ἔξις. Here, in contrast to their handling of the general transitive sense of ἔξις, LSJ do not cite examples of the general sense "being in a certain state." Their supporting examples are confined to the three subsenses.²¹ Below, I will consider whether there is a general intransitive sense of ἔξις.

Consider now the first subsense of the intransitive sense of ἔξις, again: "state or habit of body." To begin, I want to comment on the term "habit." Bear in mind that the phrase "habit of body" (as well as the phrase "habit of mind" in the second subsense) is preserved from the first edition of LS (1843). To appreciate the meaning of this phrase, it is helpful to consider the entry for "habit" in the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* – first published in 1897. This begins with the following description:

"The sense development, as seen in Latin and the modern languages, taken together is thus: *orig.* holding, having, 'haviour': hence the way in which one holds or has oneself, i.e. the mode or condition in which one is, exists, or exhibits oneself, *a*) externally; hence demeanor, outward appearance, fashion of body, mode of clothing oneself, dress, habitation; *b*) in mind, character, or life; hence mental constitution, character, disposition, way of acting, comporting oneself, or dealing with things, habitual or customary way (of acting, etc.), personal custom, accustomedness."²²

Accordingly, under a subsense that the *OED* describes as "bodily condition or constitution," the following example from 1844 occurs:

"Originally ... of a spare habit, but now a little inclined to corpulency."

And under a subsense described as "the way in which a person is mentally or morally constituted; the sum of mental and moral qualities; mental constitution, disposition, character," the following example from 1895 occurs:

"The lecture plan and the lecturer's habit of mind are visible throughout."

These facts are significant in considering LSJ's proposed first two subsenses of the intransitive sense of ἔξις, again: "state or habit of body" and "state or habit of mind." We should understand "habit" here as a kind of "condition" rather than – as we now understand "habit" – as "customary pattern of action."

Granted this, as I will now explain, the antiquated condition sense of "habit" is not wholly unrelated to the contemporary sense of "habit" as "customary pattern of action." As I will explain below, LSJ understand states and habits to be perduring, as opposed to temporary,

²¹ Confusingly, however, they do cite a general sense of "conditon" in the context of their treatment of the first subsense. I discuss this below.

²² It is worth adding here the following continuation: "This development was largely completed in ancient Latin and had received some extension in Old French, before the word became English; in our language senses were taken, from time to time, from French or Latin, without reference to their original order of development."

conditions. A habit is a state, i.e. a perduring condition, that is "produced by practice (πρᾶξις)."²³ So, a state may, but need not be so produced. Accordingly, we should understand "habit" in the antiquated condition sense more precisely as denoting a state resulting from habitual action. Accordingly, I am suggesting that – and I will defend this further below – that LSJ understand the semantic relations between "condition," "state," and "habit" as follows:

- Conditions may be transient or perduring.
- States are perduring conditions.
- Habits are states derived from practice, i.e. habitual action.

I will have more to say about the term "habit" in its contemporary sense of "customary pattern of action" below. Presently, I turn to remark on the prepositional phrase "of body" in the description of the first subsense of the intransitive sense of ἔξις: "state or habit of body." The phrase "state of body" could be interpreted in at least two ways. According to one, the subsense is "state of the body as a whole." According to another, the subsense is "bodily state," which is to say, "state of the body as a whole or of some bodily part." There is good reason to think that LS originally intended the phrase "of body" to refer to the body as a whole, for in the first edition they add: "i.e. of bodily health." In contrast, in the fourth edition (1855) they add to the preceding addition: "even of a particular part of the body." Note that this latter phrase is retained through the eighth edition. But it is removed in the ninth edition of LSJ. Consequently, I will assume that in the ninth edition, "state of body" should be understood as "state of the body as a whole or of some bodily part."

I turn now to consider whether LSJ's first two proposed subsenses – "state or habit of body" and "state or habit of mind" – are in fact distinct senses of ἔξις. For example, compare the following English phrases:

bodily state
mental state.

Here, "state" is univocal. Given this, it might be maintained that, as with the English phrases just cited, ἔξις may be used, with or without an explicit modifier, to refer to a state of body or a state of mind. If so, then LSJ are conflating meaning and use.

But perhaps this conclusion is too hasty. It might be a historical-linguistic fact that Hippocratic physicians first employed ἔξις to mean "bodily state" and that the meaning of the term subsequently broadened to "state," thereby including non-bodily states in its extension. In fact, among the Hippocratic instances where the meaning of ἔξις might be rendered as "state" (or more broadly as "condition"), ἔξις always refers to a bodily state (or condition).

Now, this could be due simply to the corporeal and physiological focus of the medical texts. On the other hand, if ἔξις merely meant "state," we might expect at least one instance where a modifier occurred denoting the body or the property of being bodily. But in fact ἔξις is never so modified in the Hippocratic corpus. Note, in particular, the following example from the *Diseases of Women*:

²³ This is LS's description in the first edition (1843).

Πειρῶ δὲ φυσικὸς εἶναι, πρὸς τῆς ἀνθρώπου τὴν ἕξις καὶ τὴν ἰσχὺν ὀρέων
τούτων γὰρ οὐδεὶς σταθμὸς ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἐξ αὐτέων τουτέων τεκμαιρόμενος
πειρῶ, ὅλου τοῦ σώματος, κεφαλῆς καθάρσσει, φαρμακείησι, καὶ πυρήησι
τῆς ὑστέρης καὶ προσθέτοισι χρῆσθαι.²⁴

Try to be a physician, for there is no way of measuring the *hexis* and strength
of the woman; but try by paying attention to these things and use purges and
drugs for the whole body and the head and fumigations and suppositories for
the womb.

Here τῆς ἀνθρώπου τὴν ἕξις (the *hexis* of the woman) seems to mean "the bodily state of the
woman."

So, there is some reason to think that ἕξις did originally mean "bodily state," not merely
"state." If so, then LSJ's account of the first subsense of the intransitive meaning of ἕξις is
correct.

Observe now that within their discussion of the first subsense of the intransitive sense of
ἕξις as "state or habit of body," LSJ write: "generally, *condition*." Prima facie, the natural
interpretation of this seems to be: a condition of any kind, whether or not of body. However, that
would not make sense insofar as this description occurs within the subsense of the intransitive
sense of ἕξις as "state or habit of body." An alternative interpretation is that "generally,
condition" is intended to mean that a state, including a habit in the antiquated condition sense, is
a type of (bodily) condition. Precisely, as I mentioned above, conditions may be short-lived or
perduring, whereas states are perduring conditions. Support for understanding LSJ's view of the
relation between state and condition in this way comes from the continuation of the general
description of the intransitive sense: "being in a certain state, a permanent condition, diff. from
σχέσις (which is alterable)."²⁵ Furthermore, the examples they cite to support this description are
all of bodily conditions. For example, the one example they cite from the late fifth to early fourth
century is from the Hippocratic treatise *On Joints*:

οἷσι δ' ἂν ἤδη ἀνδράσιν ἐοῦσιν ἐκπέση ὁ ὤμος, καὶ μὴ ἐμβληθῆ, ἢ ἐπωμὶς
ἀσαρκότερη γίνεται καὶ ἡ ἕξις λεπτή ἢ κατὰ τοῦτο τὸ μέρος.²⁶

In adult men, when the shoulder is dislocated and not reduced [i.e. not restored
to its normal position], its point is less fleshy than usual, and the condition (*hexis*)
of this part is lean.²⁷

In short, ἕξις does not entail a relatively stable, let alone permanent condition. But, given
this and the fact that the general bodily condition sense of ἕξις occurs among the earliest

²⁴ Hp. *Mul.* 230.68-71.

²⁵ This distinction is first introduced into the entry on ἕξις in the fifth edition. I discuss the
relevant passage below.

²⁶ Hp. *Art.* 12.

²⁷ It is also noteworthy that in earlier editions of LS, this example was cited for a different
reason, namely to illustrate an instance of the first subsense of the intransitive sense, i.e. "state or
habit of body" used for a part of the body.

instances of ἕξις, there is no reason to maintain, as LS and LSJ do, that the general intransitive sense of ἕξις is "a certain state," let alone "a permanent condition." Rather, the general intransitive sense of ἕξις must be "a condition." And while ἕξις is sometimes used to refer to perduring conditions and sometimes more specifically to habituated conditions, it may be used to refer to temporary conditions. I will return to this point below. For now, given my preceding conclusion that a sense of ἕξις as "bodily condition" preceded a general sense of "condition," I will assume that ἕξις originally meant "bodily condition."

Granted this, at some point in the fourth century ἕξις acquired the general sense of "condition." Evidence for this comes from the following passage in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, composed c. 365. Socrates is speaking to Isomachus:

ἐγὼ γάρ τοι πάνυ βούλομαί σου πυθέσθαι τί ποτε πράττων καλὸς κάγαθὸς
κέκλησαι, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔνδον γε διατρίβεις οὐδὲ τοιαύτη σου ἡ ἕξις τοῦ σώματος
καταφαίνεται.²⁸

I want very much to learn how you came to be called a gentleman since you do not pass your times indoors and the *hexis* of your body does not suggest that you do.

Given its modification by τοῦ σώματος, i.e. "of your body," ἕξις cannot mean "bodily condition." It must simply mean "condition." Compare the following instance of ἕξις from Aeschines' *Against Timarchus*, whose date is 345:

ὁ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῶν μέγιστων τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὴν σωφροσύνην ὑπεριδὼν,
ἔχει τινὰ ἕξιν τῆς ψυχῆς, ἢ διάδηλος ἐκ τῆς ἀκοσμίας τοῦ τρόπου γίγνεται.²⁹

For he who despises the laws and sound-mindedness in matters of supreme importance comes to be in a certain *hexis* of the soul that is plainly revealed by his way of life.

So, certainly by the first third of the fourth century, ἕξις had acquired a general condition sense. I will consider the evidence from Plato bearing on this sense later.

I turn now to the alleged second subsense of the intransitive meaning of ἕξις, i.e. the psychological sense of ἕξις as "state or habit [i.e. habituated state] of mind." Given my preceding conclusion regarding "condition" versus "state," the alleged psychological sense would in fact have to be "condition of mind." Granted this, I see no evidence for such a sense. The first example that LSJ cite in support of a psychological sense of ἕξις is a fragment of Democritus. In this case, ἕξις does not refer to a bodily condition. However, as I will discuss below, ἕξις does not refer to a mental condition either. Assuming this possibility and setting aside the Democritus fragment for now, LSJ's examples all derive from Plato. However, in most cases, ἕξις is explicitly modified by an expression denoting the soul; for example: τὰς ἕξεις τῶν ψυχῶν and ἡ

²⁸ Xen. *Oec.* 7.2.

²⁹ Aeschin. 1.189.

ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ ἔξις.³⁰ As previously explained, such examples show that ἔξις has the general condition sense. So, here again LSJ are conflating meaning and use.

There is more to say about the general condition sense of ἔξις. But presently I turn to LSJ's alleged third subsense of the intransitive sense, namely "trained habit, skill." As above, I assume that "habit" occurs here in the antiquated condition sense and so here means "habituated condition." In this case, the habituation derives from training. But given this and since "skill" is provided as an alternative gloss, it is questionable whether the subsense is in fact the second subsense, in other words, a sense in whose extension is a psychological condition that derives from training and of which skill is a salient kind. The earliest example that LSJ provide for this alleged subsense is the following passage from Plato's *Phaedrus*:

ἀνάγκη μὲν καὶ ταῦτ' ἐπίστασθαι τὸν μέλλοντα ἀρμονικὸν ἔσεσθαι, οὐδὲν μὴν κωλύει μηδὲ σμικρὸν ἀρμονίας ἐπαίειν τὸν τὴν σὴν ἔξιν ἔχοντα.³¹

He who is going to have knowledge of harmony [lit. be harmonic] must know these things; but one in your condition (*hexin*) hardly has any knowledge of harmony.

I see no reason to think that ἔξις here means "habituated condition derived from training" or "skill." Rather, I take it simply to mean "condition" and to be used to refer to the meager epistemic condition of the addressee. In fact, I see no evidence for LSJ's third subsense at all.

In sum, to this point, my critical response to LSJ's entry for ἔξις may be represented using strikethrough for deletion and ⟨⟩ for insertion as follows:

I. General transitive sense: *having, being in possession of*

~~subsense. posture~~

II. General intransitive sense: *being in a certain state* ⟨condition⟩

subsense 1. ~~state or habit~~ ⟨condition⟩ of body

subsense 2. ~~state or habit of mind~~ ⟨condition⟩

~~subsense 3. trained habit, skill.~~

In light of this, observe further that also that LSJ's mention of a general intransitive sense is odd: the lexicographical function of such a sense differs from that of the subsenses. The subsenses are senses of ἔξις that actually occur. LSJ's general intransitive sense is, on their interpretation, not a sense of ἔξις that actually occurs. Rather, it is an abstraction from their three subsenses; it provides a common property that they each share. Accordingly, this too should be struckthrough. Assuming so, the upshot is the following:

³⁰ Pl. *Lg.* 650b7, *Th.* 153b9.

³¹ Pl. *Phdr.* 268e3-5.

I. Transitive sense

having, being in possession of

II. Intransitive senses

1. *condition of body*

2. *condition.*

So much for a preliminary summary of the critical discussion.

Ἔξις as "Habit"

I turn now to a different sense of ἔξις, about which LSJ – oddly – have nothing to say. This sense occurs in the Hippocratic corpus, and it means "habit" in the contemporary sense of "customary pattern of action." For example, compare the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary's* (COED) core sense: "a person's settled or regular tendency or practice."

Consider the following instance of ἔξις, in this case in the plural, from the Hippocratic *Regimen in Acute Diseases*:

Ἰκανὸν μὲν οὖν καὶ τοῦτο σημεῖον ὅτι αἱ μέγιστα μεταβολαὶ τῶν
περὶ τὰς φύσιας ἡμῶν καὶ τὰς ἔξιας ζυμβαινόντων μάλιστα νοσοποιέουσιν·
οὐ δὴ οἷόν τε παρὰ καιρὸν οὔτε σφοδρὰς τὰς κενεαγγίας ποιεῖν οὔτε
ἀκμαζόντων τῶν νοσμάτων καὶ φλεγμασίῃ ἐόντων προσφέρειν οὔτε
ἐξαπίνης οἷόν τε ὅλω τῷ πρήγματι μεταβάλλειν οὔτε ἐπὶ τὰ οὔτε ἐπὶ τὰ.³²

Now this too is adequate proof that the chief causes of disease are the most violent changes relating to our constitutions (*phusias*) and habits (*hexias*). So, it is not possible, when it is not the right time (*para kairon*), to produce extreme starvation or to provide nourishment when diseases are at their peak and inflammation exists; nor is it possible suddenly to make a complete change in action of one form or another.

I have included the line following phrase περὶ τὰς φύσιας ... ἔξιας to provide some context to support my reading of ἔξιας here as "habits." But the immediately preceding sections of the text amply demonstrate that this is the sense of *hexias* in our passage. Beginning in section 28, the author discusses the dangers of sudden changes in regimen, and he makes the following series of claims:

There are many who, if accustomed to it (οἱ ἂν οὕτως ἐθισθῶσιν), can easily bear three full meals a day.³³ ... But there are also those who have acquired the habit (οἱ μεμαθηκότες) of eating two meals a day.³⁴ ... Since then men in health

³² Hp. *Acut.* 9.59 Littré (= section 35 Jones).

³³ Hp. *Acut.* 29 Jones.

³⁴ Hp. *Acut.* 30 Jones.