Apuleius, Florida IX,34f
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APULEIUS, FLORIDA IX,34F.

In the middle part of ›Florida‹ 9, Apuleius glorifies his literary talents, extolling the variety of genres he practices, as well as his originality of style and language, in Greek as well as in Latin.

This self-glorification is preceded by an extensive description of the ancient Greek sophist Hippias, which serves both as comparison and contrast. Hippias is said to have been famous for having made with his own hand all the things he wore: his clothes, his belt, his shoes and even a ring. Moreover, Apuleius adds, Hippias felt no shame in publicly declaring to have manufactured his own oil flask and strigil.

Both objects are described in a painstakingly detailed manner. I give the text of HELM[1] and a tentative translation:

> ›...*qui magno in coetu praedicauit, fabricatum semet sibi ampullam quoque olearium, quam gestabat, lenticulari forma, tereti ambitu, pressula rutunditate, iuxtaque honestam strigileculam, recta fastigatione cymulae, flexa tubulatione ligulae, ut et ipsa in manu capulo moraretur et sudor ex ea riuulo laberetur.*‹
> ›...who in a large assembly declared that he had also made the oil flask he wore, in the form of a lentil, with smooth outlines and of somewhat flattened roundness; furthermore a fine little strigil, with straight tapering of the ›small sprout‹ and curved grooving of the blade; (made) in such a way that it could be kept in hand by its handle and that the sweat could pour out from it through the channel.‹

The description contains a number of rare words (i.a. *lenticularis*, *pressulus*, *strigilecula*, *fastigatio*, *tubulatio*) and exquisite combinations (i.a. *flexa tubulatione ligulae*), underlining the novelty and specialty of the objects themselves. But whereas we get a good impression of the oil flask, there is a problem with the strigil.

The text in the main MS (F) reads as follows: *recta fastigatione cylaulae* (or *cylaule* in ϕ). *Cylaulae* is a hapax and does not seem to make much sense. Accordingly, editors

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[1] Apulei Madaurensis Opera quae supersunt, vol.II,fasc.2 Florida, recensuit RUDOLF HELM, Leipzig 1959, p.12,20ff.

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have had recourse to various emendations. HILDEBRANDT was at a loss[2]: after briefly mentioning the variant *clausulae*, found in less important MSS, and OUDENDORP'S emendation *syllabam*, he hesitatingly suggests *labridae*. The word is formed from a hypothetical accusative *labrida*, by analogy of forms like *craterae* and *Salaminae*. However, it is not made at all clear what *labridae* should mean[3].

HELM has proposed *cymulae*. This emendation is printed in modern editions[4], but remains highly unsatisfactory, as already appears from the rather misleading translations of the phrase given by VALLETTE (›à tige droite d'un bout à l'autre‹) and AUGELLO (›a stelo dritto da una parte all'altra‹). *Cymula* cannot simply be taken as ›handle‹. The OLD s.v. explains it as an architectural term for a ›small moulding‹. On an object such as a strigil this might be taken as referring to the junction of blade and handle, but there is no parallel for this usage[5]. In addition, it would leave *recta* unexplained, and would break the balance between the elements *recta fastigatione c.* and *flexa tubulatione ligulae*, which seem to refer to the two main parts of the instrument.

Elsewhere, *cymula* is explained as botanical term for a ›tender sprout‹ (cf. TLL IV,1590,1–2 and 1587,3ff). But in the present context this hardly makes sense.

To solve the problem we should first examine the nature of the object referred to by Apuleius. Hippias' strigil is apparently a very special instrument. This may already be seen in the structure of the text as a whole: it is the last item in his list of the clever sophist's objects, which are all noteworthy in that they are ›handmade‹. The strigil is given further prominence by the elaborate and linguistically striking description: its two parts are indicated in a twofold periphrasis of three words each. In addition, the uncommon nature of the strigil seems to be explicitly referred to in the final detail: its feature of draining off the sweat through a small channel[6].

It might just be possible to retain *cylaulae* of F and take it as ›of a groove-like pipe‹, of Gr. κύλον (normally denoting a groove above the upper eyelid; cf. LSJ s.v. κύλα) and αὐλός. Admittedly, this remains rather awkward, but it seems hardly worse than the editors' emendations up to now.

There may be yet a better solution. If we read *coelaulae*, the picture becomes clear and complete, the meaning then being: ›of a hollow pipe‹. This reading is already hesitantly given as a separate lemma in TLL III,1410,29ff[7], but seems to have remained unnoticed up to now. As a compound, it is not attested elsewhere, no more than *cylaulae*. But its derivation from the fairly common Greek words κοῖλος and αὐλός would be much simpler.

[2] ›Quid ex hac voce emendandum sit, frustra adhuc quaero.‹

[3] Should we suppose a derivation from Lat. *labrum* (brim, lip or edge)? I could not find any Greek or Latin word **labris*. Or is the rare *labrus* (=πέλεκυς) meant here?

[4] In addition to HELM'S own edition, these are the texts of P. VALLETTE (Budé) and G. AUGELLO (UTET). However, AUGELLO remains doubtful: ›Ma *cymulae* è parola così rara che fa dubitare della sua corretta presenza‹.

[5] The OLD seems to have reconstructed this sense of *cymula* on the basis of the Apuleian passage exclusively. There is some evidence for another word, *cymatium*, used as an architectural term in this sense; cf. TLL IV,1587,40. But here too, no examples are given of its usage in relation to instruments.

[6] I interpret *riuulus* as ›small channel‹ rather than ›small stream‹; cfr OLD s.v.. However, the latter sense is equally attested for Apuleius and might also be appropriate here: ›...that the sweat could pour out from it in a small stream.‹

[7] It is added: ›si recte conicitur‹, but no further source for the suggestion is given.

In addition, some paleographical arguments might be adduced: in Greek texts, forms on κυλ– and κοιλ- are sometimes confused[8]. Greek words, whether transliterated or not (Apuleius has a taste for both), are often messed up in our Latin MSS. Since this goes even for the most common Greek words or derivations[9], it comes as no surprise if a rare compound such as this has led to mistakes. Finally, emending *y* in *oe* in a foreign word would require only a minimal change in the text of the MS[10].

With *coelaulae* the text would make perfect sense. The special nature of Hippias' strigil, already apparent in the construction of the section and the choice of vocabulary, comes out at once: the ›hollow pipe‹ provides a perfect channel to lead off the sweat from the body. Although its form cannot be determined exactly[11], it may surely be considered to have been a real improvement on the more common strigils with plain, solid shaft.

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[8] Cf. especially LSJ s.v. κύλα 2, referring to κοῖλα as a frequent V.L. of κύλα.

[9] In the passage discussed here, the common *ampullam* (an old Latin deminutive of *amphora*) is wrongly spelled as *ampollam* in both F and ϕ. Even the common *in coetu*, is wrongly given by F and ϕ as *inceptu*. In MSS which do read *in coetu*, such as v, the combination *coe-* here may have contributed to wrong readings for *coelaulae*.

[10] Perhaps the spelling *cylaule* of ϕ bears a trace of the reading proposed here.

[11] To mention a few details: it may have contained a small *receptaculum* at the bottom, or it may have been left open. The *rivulus* mentioned in the text may have stretched all along the shaft, or just along its upper part. The difference in breadth between the upper and lower part of the shaft, indicated by *fastigatio*, may have been great or small. For some archaeological evidence on the various forms of ancient strigils, see: Ch. Daremberg, Edm. Saglio, Dictionnaire des antiquités Grecques et Romaines, IV, 1532–4; further RE s.v. *strigilis*.