THE CITY OF DYME PUNISHES MONETARY FRAUD

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An inscription which gives some information about monetary offences committed in Dyme in Hellenistic times was published first by J. Martha in 1878¹ and some years later by R. Weil². It has been included by W. Dittenberger in Syll.³ (530), by O. Hoffmann in SGDI (1613), by C. Michel in his Recueil (1339) and by H. W. Pleket in his Epigraphica I (11)⁴. Some remarks about the text are also found in J. Bingen, “Inscriptions d’Achaïe”, BCH 78, 1954, 87. I first give the text as it has been edited by Pleket:

\[ \text{[Ep} \theta\text{o}]\nu\text{o}λον \text{Φιλοκλέως, | [γραμ]ματιστά Δαμοκρί[τον,} \\
5 \text{βουλάρχου Κλέωνος, | [τούδε] ἄ τολις κατέκριν||[τε θανά]τον,} \\
\text{διὶ εἰροφόρουν | [καὶ νό]μισμα ᾐκοπτον χάλ[ικον].} \\
\text{Ο[ρακ[ίωνα} \\
\text{εῖτε Αντ[ί]οχος] δόνου μια κτής,i, | [Κράτε[ιν τὸν χρυσαρχόν.] ||} \\
10 \text{[Κυλ]λή}νιον ή εἰ Πανταλέ[ων] ἢ εἰ τι ἄλλο δόνωμα, | [Μο]σχό-[λαχον} \\
\text{Μοσχολάου.} \\
\text{[ἐπὶ Ἑβ]φάνερος βουλάρχου | [Ἀσκλη]πιάδας Δρόμα. ||} \\
15 \text{[ἐπὶ βο]υλάρχου [Φ]ιλέα] | ... ἰας 'Ολυμπίχου.}

The inscription comes from Dyme, the westernmost Achaean city, which had taken part in the (new)foundation of the Achaean League in 280 B.C., and is written in the Peloponnesian Doric κοινῆ of Hellenistic times. It was found inserted in the staircase of a modern private house and when it was reexamined by Bingen in the early fifties most of the text had become illegible.

In the preamble are mentioned the eponym magistrate of Dyme, the θεοκόλος⁵, the γραμματιστής and the βοιλάρχος, the president of the

¹ "Inscriptions d’Achaïe (1)", BCH 2, 1878, 98 v.
⁴ This magistrate, who was especially in charge of the cult of the gods, occurs in several Greek cities, sometimes as eponym. See Dittenberger, Syll.³ on nr 529; G. Busolt, Griechische Staatskunde I, München 1920, 500; L. Ziehen, REV A(1934), 1998 f.
city council\(^5\); these magistrates are also mentioned in the preamble of \textit{Syll.}\(^3\), 529 of 219 B.C. In ll. 14 f. two other boularchs are mentioned; probably theokolos and grammatistes were yet the same persons as in ll. 1 ff., and the boularchs changed several times during the civic year\(^6\).

The city of Dyme thought the matter at issue important enough to record the death sentences on stone\(^7\). But it is not quite clear what exactly the crime was which the condemned had committed. The text speaks of temple robbery and of the coining of bronze money. It has been suggested that, because according to Polybius\(^8\) the Achaean League had reserved to itself the right of coinage, the condemned had struck coins in Dyme in contravention of the regulations of the League\(^9\). However, one should not press too much the idealizing image of Achaean unity offered by Polybius\(^10\). Moreover, just as the members of the League retained their own magistrates, they also struck the federal coins in their own mints. On the coins of the Achaean League of the third and earlier second centuries B.C., small silver coins and bronze coins, the unitarian devices of the League are accompanied by the name of the city where the coin had been struck and/or by its badge, e.g. the wolf

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\(^5\) See Busolt, \textit{op. cit.}, 478.
\(^6\) Dittenberger \textit{ad l.}

\(^7\) If publication on stone merely took place because the condemned had managed to escape execution (cp. Weil, \textit{Zeitschr. f. Numism.} 9, 238), it is hardly conceivable that the publication was postponed till the names of the persons who were convicted later in the year could be added; moreover, it would be remarkable that all condemned persons had escaped the execution of the sentence.

\(^8\) 2, 37, 10/1 he says of the Achaean League:

\[10 \text{τοιούτην καὶ τηλικάτην ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς καὶ ὑπὸ τοῦ προκυπήν καὶ συντέλειαν τοῦτῳ τῷ μέρῳ, ὡστε μὴ μόνον σωματικώς καὶ φιλικήν κοινωνίαν γεγονέναι προγμάτων περὶ αὐτοῦς, ἀλλὰ καὶ νόμοις χαθοῦσα τοῖς αὐτοῖς καὶ σταθμοῖς καὶ τοιούτως καὶ νομισμασι, πρὸς δὲ τοῦτοι ἄρχοντες βουλευταίς δικασταίς τοῖς αὐτοῖς, 11 καθόλου δὲ τούτῳ μόνῳ δικαστάτευν τοῖς μὴ μέσως πόλεως διάθεσιν ἔχειν σχεδὸν τὴν σύμπασαν Πελοπόννησον, τῷ μὲ τὸν αὐτὸν περίβολον ὕπαρχειν τοῖς κατοικοδομεῖν αὐτήν, τάλλα δ' εἶναι καὶ κοινῇ καὶ κατὰ πόλεις ἐκαστοῖς ταύτῃ καὶ παραπλησίᾳ.\]

\(^9\) Dittenberger \textit{ad l.}: res ipsae foederis achaici leges indicant, quibus ius nummos cudendi foederi reservabatur (wrongly attributing this opinion to Weil).

of Argos, the Pegasus of Corinth, the pigeon of Sicyon, the fish of
Dyme. Besides, several members of the League also struck coins of
their own, and that has also been the case with Dyme, which issued its
own bronze coins. Thus, coining in itself cannot have been an illegal
act in Dyme, nor can this have been the case with the striking of bronze
coins, for there are preserved specimens of federal bronze coins from
Dyme as well as pieces of purely local bronze money closely resembling
the coins of the Achaean League.

Therefore the striking of bronze coins can have been a crime only if
it had taken place in an illegal way. The fraud can hardly have consisted
in debasement of the metal value of the coins, for then the text could
hardly have spoken of bronze coins in stead of coins which consisted
largely of e.g. iron or lead, and in stead of κόπτειν which is the normal
word for regular striking of money, one would have expected e.g.
παρακόπτειν or παραχαράττειν. Moreover, bronze money was small
change, was token money and was of a relatively small value. Counter-
feiting of it would hardly have been profitable unless it took place on
a very large scale or unless the forgers could avail themselves of very
cheap copper, or copper to be had free of charge.

The latter may be the case if we combine the two charges, temple
robbery and (illegal) coining. The condemned may have stolen copper
or bronze from temple deposits and have made their profit not by selling
it, but by striking bronze coins from it. Now because the case con-
cerned a temple deposit and thus constituted a case of sacrilege, the
government of Dyme took a stern view of the matter, even if the sums

11 See Weil, Zeitschr. f. Numism. 9, 207 ff.; 243 ff.; P. Gardner–R. Stuart Poole,
A Catalogue of the Greek Coins in the British Museum 10, Peloponnesus (1887, repr.
Bologna 1963), 3 f.; B. V. Head, Historia nummorum, Oxford 1911, 417; Aymard,
op. cit., 166 ff.; M. Thompson, “A Hoard of Greek Federal Silver”, Hesperia 1939,

12 See R. Weil, “Nordpeloponnesische Münzen”, Zeitschr. f. Numism. 7, 1880,
366; F. Imhoof Blumer, Monnaies grecques, Amsterdam 1883, 163, nr 32 f.; Gardner–
Stuart Poole, op. cit., XXVI f.; M. O. B. Caspari, “A Survey of Greek Federal
Coinage”, JHS 37, 1917, 169; Aymard, op. cit., 168.

13 See Weil, Zeitschr. f. Numism. 9, 245 nr 11.


15 See for monetary terminology i.a. J. Hangard, Monetaire en daarmee verwante
metaforen, Groningen 1963.

16 A possibility suggested already by Weil, Zeitschr. f. Numism. 9, 236.
involved may have been rather modest, and death sentences were duly pronounced\textsuperscript{17} and published.

The names of the condemned seem to belong to the fringe of the civic body or below. Three persons are mentioned without mentioning their father's name and two of them are known by two or more names, which is unimaginable in the case of citizens or respectable strangers. The goldsmith Kratis, who may have possessed the skill required for coining activities, may have been a slave or foreigner; it is not impossible even that he, and perhaps also other condemned persons, belonged to the personnel of the Dymeans mint\textsuperscript{18}.

It is noteworthy that the two persons who were condemned later in the same year, but apparently in the same case\textsuperscript{19}, are mentioned with their father's name and therefore may have been citizens of Dyme. Their guilt may have come to light later on, or they may, by procedural means, have been able to delay the final verdict in their case.

\textsuperscript{17} Death penalties seem to have been normal in Greece for the counterfeiting of money; cp. Dem. 20, 167; 24, 212: \textit{--- δι' νόμος διατηρεί ἀπάθως ὡς ἐγὼ εἶναι τὰς πόλεων, διά τοῦ νόμου} διαφθείρη, διανοοῦν τὴν ζημίαν εἶναι. and the well-known monetary pact between Mytilene and Phocaeia (H. Bengtson, \textit{Die Staatsverträge des Altertums} II, München-Berlin 1962, 228; Pleket, \textit{op. cit.} 6), II.14 f. But it is dubious whether the condemned in Dyme had debased the alloy of the coins. In the monetary pact mentioned above, the death penalty was provided just for wilful debasing by which the state may have incurred serious damage and Demosthenes speaks in both passages quoted of \textit{corruption} of the money. In Rome (cp. R. Taubenschlag s.v. \textit{Münzverbrechen} in \textit{RE} 16, 1 (1933), 455 ff.) the death penalty was pronounced in cases of counterfeiting of money only against slaves (\textit{Dig.} 48, 10, 1, 13; cp. \textit{Dig.} 48, 10, 9).

\textsuperscript{18} About connections between goldsmiths and mint personnel see Weil, \textit{Zeitschr. f. Numism.} 9, 236 n. 1.

\textsuperscript{19} It seems very improbable that there would have been two other cases of sacrilege and illegal coining during the same year in a relatively small city.