

## Dyme. Death punishment for six counterfeiters

**Description:** Fragment of white marble, inscribed only on the front for sixteen lines; dimensions are h: 0.62 m w: 0.285 m d: 0.16 m . The block is broken on the left so the initial letters of every line are lost and the inferior part is very ruined; nevertheless, according to some scholars (e.g. Weil 1882 and Rizakis, *Achaïe* III; contra Martha 1878) the text seems to be complete and to cease at the sixteenth line

**Layout:** Non-stoichedon

**Letters:** Hellenistic koinè. The average height of the letters is h:0.015 m , but varies between h:0.01 m and h:0.02 m . The line-spacing is more regular ( h:0.012-0.015 m ). A second hand-cutter seems to have intervened in ll. 13-16

**Origin:** Dyme

**Dating:** Second century BC. With regard to paleography, the date fluctuates from the end of the 3rd century BC to the middle of the 2nd; the numismatic records of the city could limit it to the period 190-146 BC. Anyway 146 BC is an absolute terminus post quem non due to subsequent Roman domination: no city under Roman rule would have been free to punish anyone with death

**Findspot:** Dyme; the block was reused as a step of staircase by some private citizens

**Current location:** Rizakis enumerates the houses of three different owners in the town of Kato Achaia (the current name of Dyme) in which Martha 1878 and Bingen 1954 mentioned having seen it. After 1964 (when Bingen 1954 saw it for a second time) the stone was lost until the 1990s, when it was found again by Maria Lacaki. Current location unspecified; it could have been put in a warehouse directly in Dyme or in the Archeological Museum of Patras

**Reference edition:** A.D. Rizakis, *Achaïe* III 2, pp. 40-43

**Other editions:** ed. pr. Martha 1878, 98-99, no. 4 (facsimile, autopsy); Fick 1880, 323-324 (only ll. 1-12); Weil 1882, 235-238 (autopsy, facsimile, new annotated edition); R. Dareste, B. Haussoullier, T. Reinach, *RIG* II 38 (with a juridical comment); W. Dittenberger, *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 530 (based on autopsy of Loefstedt; cf. *Syll.*<sup>2</sup>); H.W. Pleket, *Epigraphica* 11 (only ancient Greek text, based on *Syll.*<sup>3</sup>); Thür and Stumpf 1989, 171-183 (with an extended commentary and a numismatic appendix; cf. tab. XIII for numismatic testimonia); Thür 1991, 115-122 (based on autopsy of Sakellariou, with a commentary)

**Photographs:** Rizakis, *Achaïe* III, pl. II.2 (very low quality)

**Translations:** R. Dareste, B. Haussoullier, T. Reinach, *RIG* II 38 (in French); Thür and Stumpf 1989, 171-183 (in German); Thür 1991, 115-122 (in Modern Greek); Rizakis, *Achaïe* III, 40-43 no. 2 (in French)

**Bibliography:** Head 1911, 415-418; Bingenc1954, 87 no. 6; Crawford 1968, 55-59; Jenkins 1972, passim; Melville Jones 1972, 39-43; Montevecchi 1973, 100 ff.; Stroud 1974, 157-188; Aalders 1978/79, 7-10; Wayte 1979, 252 ff.; Bravo 1980, 675-987; Burelli Bergese 1978, 43-51; Crawford 1982, passim; Burelli Bergese 1986, 15-23; Sherk 1990, 249-288; Rizakis, *Achaïe* I., 19-64; Casadesús Bordoy 2007, 45-62; Kremmydas 2012, 456-458; Metcalf 2012, passim

[ἐπὶ θεο]κόλου Φιλοκλέος,  
[γραμ]ματιστᾶ Δαμοκρί-  
[του βουλ]άρχου Κλέωνος  
[τούσδε] ἅ πόλις κατέκριν-  
5 [ε θανάτ]ου, ὅτι ἱεροφώρεον

- [καὶ νό]μισμα ἔκοπτον χάλ-  
 [κεον]· Θραικίωνα εἶτε Ἀντί-  
 [οχος] ὄνομα αὐτῶι ἐστι,  
 [Κύλ]λιν τὸν χρυσοχόον,  
 10 [Κυλλ]άνιον ἢ εἰ Πανταλέ-  
 [ω]ν ἢ εἴ τι ἄλλο ὄνομα,  
 [Μο]σχόλαον Μοσχολάου.  
 [ἐπὶ ...]φάνεος βουλάρχου  
 [ - - - ]ΠΙΛΛΑΣ Δρόμα  
 15 [ἐπὶ βου]λάρχου [Φ]ιλέα  
 [ - - - ]ίας Ὀλυμπίχου.

**Apparatus criticus:** I. 2: [γραμ]ματιστᾱ Weil : [προσ]τ[ά]τα Martha. I. 4: [τούσδε] ἁ πόλις Fick. II. 5-6: *ἱεροφῶρεον* / [καὶ νό]μισμα Weil : *ἱεροφωρέον* / [τες νό]μισμα Hirschfeld apud ZfN, 9, 1882, 236-237 : [καὶ ἄγαλ]μα Martha. I. 7: [Θ]ραικίωνα εἶτε Ἀντί[...] Weil : [Ὀ]ρδικίωνα εἴτε ἄν τι | [ἄλλο] Martha : εἶτε Ἀντι|[νόωι] Fick : εἶτε Ἀντι|[όχωι] Hoffmann : εἶτε Ἀντί|[οχος]Syll.<sup>2</sup>. I. 8: [Κύλ]λιν Rizakis : [...]ιν Martha : [...]τιν Weil : [Κύλλ]ιν Fick : [Κρά]τιν Hoffmann. I. 10: [Κυλλ]άνιον Fick. II. 10-11: Πανταλέ[ω]ν Rizakis : Πανταλέ|[ων] Weil : Πανταλέ|[οντ]ι. I. 12: [Μο]σχόλαον Hoffmann : [ἐστι Μο]σχόλαον Martha : [καὶ Μο]σχόλαον Weil. I. 13: [ἐπὶ ...]φάνεος Rizakis : [...]ράνεος Martha : [ἐπὶ Δαμο]φάνεος Weil. I. 14: ΠΙΛΛΑΣ Weil et Rizakis : [Πε]ρίλλας dubitanter Hoffmann : [Ἀσκλη]πιαδαςSyll.<sup>2</sup>. I. 15: APXOYIINEA Martha : MAPXOYIIEA Weil qui interpretavit [ἐπὶ βου]λάρχου Φιλέα : [πολε]μάρχου Κινέα (dubitanter, etiam Κλέα) Hoffmann, sed contra Bingen. I. 16: ΙΑΣ Martha, probavit Rizakis : [Σω]τίας dubitanter Weil, sed in eius apographo fortasse [ - - - ]πιας legi potest : ΙΑΣ Loefstedt sed in Syll.<sup>3</sup> dubitatur utrum [...]μας an [Ὀλυμ]πίας sit.

### Translation:

[When] Philokles was [theo]kolos, Damokritos was [secre]tary, Kleon was chairman [of the boule], the polis condemned to death [the following men], for they committed an impiety(?) [and] minted bro[nze co]ins: Thrakion or if his name is Anti[ochos], [Kyl]lis the goldsmith, [Kyll]janios or if his name is Pantale[o]n or another one, [Mo]scholaos son of Moscholaos.  
 [When - - - ]phanes was chairman of the boule, [...]pillas son of Dromas.  
 [When] Phileas was chairman [of the bou]le, [...]ias son of Olympichos.

### Commentary:

Even though many scholars have attempted to explain this document, there is still no satisfactory explanation for it, in large part because this specific type of document is all but unique. All the same, the nucleus is quite clear: the city of Dyme, the westernmost city in Achaia, condemned to death six men who were found guilty of something relating to counterfeit money. The polis in its entirety (I. 4) was called to express this judicial sentence, as it was for other important decisions like the quasi-contemporary free extension of the right to citizenship (cf. Rizakis, *Achaïe* III, no. 4A, II. 6-7: *τούσδε ἁ πόλις πολί|τας ἐποιήσατο*). In that case, maybe there was some urgency after the devastation produced by war; here instead there is a state of exceptional seriousness rather than emergency.

The text indeed was put on stone in different moments, as we can understand for three reasons: graphically the stonecutter of II. 13-16 is not the same of II. 1-12 (Weil 1882, 237), syntactically the two last convicted are in nominative and no longer accusative (-πιλλας, -ιας versus *Θραικίωνα*, -λιν, -άνιον, [Μο]σχόλαον) and lastly the fifth and the sixth death sentences were delivered under a different magistrate (i.e. the boularchos) than the other ones. This means that there were certainly some time intervals between the diverse sentences, although it is not easy to determine how long they actually were, or why. Since the prominent eponymous office in Dyme – like other areas of northwestern Greece – was the theokolos, a priestly office (Rizakis, *Achaïe* III, 32), and the three boularchoi here mentioned were in office under the same theokolos Philokles (= during the same year), the time-limited role of boularchos can be understood in various ways: the incumbency could have been for a shorter period in a year than was that of the theokolos, e.g. for three or four months (*RIG* II, p. 372), or it could have been incumbent as long as the other, but with an eponymy restricted to the very period when the incumbent presided over the boule (Syll.<sup>3</sup>). So we cannot know if the change of boularchoi implies intervals of days or months, but it is hard to agree with Sherk 1990, 258 that their eponymy is false (on this see also

Rizakis, *Achaïe* III, 33-34). One thing may be taken for granted: all the six convicted were implicated in the same crime, because it is hardly believable that money counterfeiting in Dyme was usual three different times a year (Aalders 1978/79, 10 note 19). This temporal discrepancy has been explained with a progressive identification of the six criminals.

But what was exactly the crime for which they were condemned to death? Answers here are more complex. First of all, it is essential to understand whether the crime is only one or double; the expression is not so perspicuous, since we can read something involving *ἱεροφωρεῖν* (which is nearly a hapax) and *νόμισμα κόπτειν*; but given that the first verbal form lacks its ending, we can integrate either *ἱεροφώρεον* / [καὶ νό]μισμα ἔκοπτον (two verbs on the same plane) or *ἱεροφωρέον* / [τες νό]μισμα ἔκοπτον. However, accepting the first hypothesis, as nearly everybody has done, some scholars have explained it as a periphrastic expression, making the sense of the phrase equal to *ὡς ἱεροσύλοι ἔκοπτον* (cf. especially *RIG* II, pp. 374-375; Burelli Bergese 1986, 18-19). In fact, the first solution for the problem (see Weil 1882, 236; the aim was also to explain the harshness of the punishment) involved the existence of a temple, from which the six convicted offenders would have stolen bronze objects as their main source of smeltable metal; but the temple solution seems (not only to me) to be at least unconvincing (Thür and Stumpf 1989, 173-174). It is necessary to remember that money counterfeiting was already a serious enough crime in ancient Greece to justify the infliction of the death punishment (actually it was the standard penalty for it: cf. e.g. the monetary treaty between Mytilene and Phocaea, *IG* XII 2, 1, ll. 14-15, and Dem. 20.167; 24.212-214; see also Burelli Bergese 1978, 43-51), and so it remained employed – in horrible ways – until the modern era (beginning of the 19th century), i.e. as long as a country's currency was thought to be the personification of the economy of the state (cf. for example Wayte 1979, 252). Therefore, the most plausible reconstruction is that the six criminals committed an impiety exactly when – and because – they coined false money, namely producing subaerate coins, with a bronze core completely covered with silver: the practice here, not the origin of the metal, is illegal and impious. Despite its high level of plausibility, this interpretation still raises two linguistic problems, related to the use of *χάλκεον* and *κόπτειν* in the context. First of all, *χάλκεον* is usually used to indicate an authentic bronze coin, while the typical – and more precise – Greek expression for subaerate ones is the quite literal *ὑπόχαλκον* (for this use, cf. for example the Nikophon's decree on coinage found in Athens: Stroud 1974, ll. 10-13). But as Melville Jones 1972, 42-43 has shown, there are some epigraphical examples of the Hellenistic period in which *χάλκεον* clearly indicate subaerate coins; furthermore, bronze coins were small change, so it would be not so useful for the counterfeiters to mint them, unless they had a huge and very cheap source of bronze (Aalders 1978/79, 9); for this reason, thinking of subaerate coins would seem be more appropriate. Conversely, the use of *κόπτειν* is stranger and more complicated to explain: generally, in fact, Greeks tend to specify forged currency emissions with verbs such as *παρακόπτειν*, *παραχαράττειν* (in which the prefix *παρά* shows the violation of law) or *διαφθείρειν* (which instead highlights the destructive nature of counterfeiting money), while *κόπτειν* is used, again, for regular coins issues (Aalders 1978/79, 9; but some exceptions are traceable, like Hdt. 3.56). In the case of Dyme, some other explanations have been attempted but not so successfully: for example (Burelli Bergese), the six convicted would have minted bronze coins not in order to steal the saved silver but simply in conflict with the instruction given them by Dyme or by the Achaean League, what seems quite bizarre behavior. Others have thought that they stole not the metal but the authentic coin dies, producing a coin issue which was totally similar to the genuine ones (Thür, followed by Rizakis). It is important to understand that in ancient Greece, as far as it is possible to know, people who were implicated in forgery crimes were generally technicians in the local mint or in any case magistrates related to coinage (e.g. the notable story about the exile of Diogenes from Sinope in Diog. Laert. 6.20-21; cf. also Casadesús Bordoy 2007, 45-62, about Diogenes and Crawford 1968, 55-59, about plated coins in antiquity). If so, a reasonable context could be reconstructed: six people, some of whom were technicians with lower class origins, some others citizens, utilized the authentic dies in order to mint subaerate coins; gradually uncovered or gradually convicted, all six were condemned to death; perhaps, just as Thür and Rizakis have suggested, the six men received the task of a new coinage directly from their fellow-citizens, but they betrayed the confidence granted by the city and committed fraud.

Thür, in his second paper dedicated to this inscription (Thür, Stumpf 1989, 180-183), has added an interesting appendix (with the help of Stumpf, a numismatic) about two plated coins from Dyme; the second one, Munich, Dyme no. 12, is a subaerate silver coin from the Achaean city, from the series which was minted between 190 and 146 BC, under the major issue of the League. This coin bears a diagonal incision, a sign that – according to numismatics – its counterfeited nature was discovered and made evident in this way (the act of *διακόπτειν*: cf. Stroud 1974, 171-172). This could be useful to date the inscription more precisely.

Another important note concerns onomastics. Among the six convicted, only three have their own patronymic; one, the goldsmith, has his name alone; the remaining two have more than one name, probably because the judges (who were fellow citizens) did not agree about their exact identity; this incertitude could be explained if these two were neither citizens nor inhabitants in Dyme, but perhaps workmen originating from the countryside or from neighboring cities. The old theory about a group of foreign thieves is outdated, because all the names

except Thrakion seem to be very common (e.g. Pantaleon, Olympichos) or alternatively local (e.g. Moscholaos, Dromas or the uncertain Kyllis; see Rizakis, *Achaïe* III, 43, for general accounts about onomastics). Some scholars (most recently Rizakis, for example) have thought that the sentences (at least the former ones) were delivered in absentia but regrettably this seems to remain a mere hypothesis, for there is no positive supporting element (cf. *RJG* II, p. 375). It is true that judges employed great care in specifying names but accuracy should be normal in judicial trials, especially if there were doubts about someone's identity. Thür and Rizakis have supported a very tempting reconstruction, in which the fraud was uncovered only some time later, when a subaerate coin was accidentally identified in the city: in this case, maybe some of the responsible men were not present in Dyme at that moment.

One last problem requires a few more words: the relationship between Dyme and the League about this crime. It is clear in this case that the repression of crime directly concerned the city alone, which was called to punish the responsible people: no federal magistrate or external authority seems to be involved. Definitely, Dyme would want neither to tarnish its reputation toward the other cities of the League nor to discredit the common money; beyond that, the Achaean League does not seem to play any substantial role. For this reason, at the same time, it is impossible to think that the actual crime was an illegal coinage against the League, neither required nor monitored by the city: more generally about the League, *pace* Syll.<sup>3</sup>, it needs to be considered that Polybios 2.37.10 could have emphasized its monetary unity (Rizakis, *Achaïe* III, 43).

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