

The Classical Review

DECEMBER 1893.

MR. J. B. MAYOR much regrets that the pressure of other engagements obliges him to retire from the editorship of the *Classical Review* at the end of the present year. He is glad however to be able to announce that his place will be taken by MR. G. E. MARINDIN, of Broomfields, Farnham, Surrey, the joint-editor of the new edition of Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, and that there will be no other change in the members of the staff. All future contributions should be sent to MR. MARINDIN.

DIOGENES AND DELPHI.

Γνώθι σεαυτὸν, καὶ τὸ νόμισμα παραχάραξον —such according to Suidas were two Pythian precepts.¹ The meaning of the first is clear; but the meaning of the latter is decidedly obscure. 'Adulterate the coin' is scarcely a likely piece of advice for a Delphic priest or priestess to give. It appears to me that some inquiry into the ancient customs of coinage is necessary, before we can hope to understand the riddling phrase of the Delphic Sphinx.

First, what is the meaning of the verb παραχάρασσειν? On the analogy of other verbs beginning παρα- it seems that it might mean either of two things, to stamp wrongly or amiss, or to stamp additionally, to add to or alter the existing stamp.

From the first of these meanings we naturally get the notion of falsification and forgery. And there can be no doubt that often the word παραχάρασσειν bears this

¹ There does not seem any reason to suppose that they were given at one time. But some likeness in meaning between them is implied.

meaning. So in Lucian (*Demonax*, 5) παραχάραττων τὰ εἰς τὴν δίαίταν is rightly rendered in the Didot version 'quae ad victum pertinent in deterius mutans.' So we read in Aristides (*Λογ. Πολ.* p. 661) of παρακεχαραγμένα ὀνόματα, 'debased words'; and παραχάρακτης is 'a forger.' The more ordinary and usual word, however, for forgery of money is παρακόπτειν, which is common in this sense.

So far as I have observed, the lexicons do not allow that παραχάρασσειν can be used in the second sense which I have suggested. Yet some word would certainly be wanted for this use. Greek coins after the earliest period frequently bear, in addition to the ordinary state types or devices, on one side or the other a subsidiary device, called by modern numismatists 'a symbol,' which is in many or most cases a sort of signature of the magistrate responsible for the coin, being no doubt usually a copy of his signet. Examples will be found in the plates of my *Types of Greek Coins*; for example, a bunch

of grapes beside the Victory on a Boeotian coin (Pl. XII., 37); a striding Zeus and a seated Hermes behind the heads of Pallas on two Corinthian coins (Pl. VIII., 42, 43).

There was another custom, specially prevalent in Asia, which has a bearing on this matter. The coinage of Asia, consisting mainly of gold darics and silver sigli or shekels with the effigy of the Great King, was peculiarly liable to falsification; and many of the cities of Asia Minor in order to detect forgeries had a custom of placing a small stamp or counter-mark on money of the regal issues, thereby testing its goodness, since a plated coin would not stand the stamping, and thereby guaranteeing it for further circulation. Many of the coins of Asia Minor of the Persian age, especially silver coins, have come down to us covered with the counter-marks impressed on them by cities or by individuals, each of which was a fresh test and a fresh guarantee of genuineness.

In Europe and the west it was more customary to re-strike than to counter-mark coin. The pieces of money issued by neighbouring cities were, if of suitable weight and size, constantly used in the mints of Greece, Italy, and Sicily as blanks, which could be heated, and receive a fresh impression of the types of the re-minting city. It is by no means rare to find Greek coins bearing underneath the obvious types, and almost effaced by them, the devices of some other city: the Pegasus of Corinth showing beneath the ear of corn of Metapontum and the like.

Any of these processes would be well described by the word *παραχάρασσειν*, since in all cases an additional or a subsidiary *χαρακτήρ* was placed on the money. I cannot cite any passage of an ancient writer in which the word is thus used in its direct sense. But then it is unlikely that so technical a use would occur in ordinary literature. That a figurative use hence derived occurs in ancient writers I hope presently to show. It is notable that the similar word *παρασημαίνεσθαι* means sometimes to counter-seal and sometimes to counterfeit a seal.

Let us then turn to the Pythian response with which we started, and see how these observations bear on it. For the rendering 'forge money' I would substitute a less direct and more refined meaning, 'test or re-strike all current usages and views to see if they are genuine; and if they are, make them part of your own life.' This advice goes very well with the kindred 'know thyself.'

The Delphic response was said to have been first given to Diogenes of Sinope. And as to the occasion we have most confused and inconsistent accounts in Diogenes Laertius (vi. 20). It appears that, according to Diocles, Diogenes' father was a trapezites, or banker, and adulterated the coin, which caused his son's exile. But Eubulides (or Eubulus) maintained that Diogenes was a sharer in his father's crime, as well as in its punishment. And it is stated, apparently on the authority of the same writer, that Diogenes confessed the deed in his work *Πάρδαλις* or *Πόρδαλος*. There was a story afloat that Diogenes, being in charge of the coinage, was urged by the workmen to adulterate it, and went to Delphi to inquire whether he should do as he was urged. The oracle replying in figurative language, *Παραχάραξον τὸ νόμισμα*, Diogenes took the command literally and, obeying it, had to fly the country. But some writers again maintained that the consultation of the oracle took place after the flight from Sinope. How is it possible for us at this distance of time to reconcile these stories, or to discern which among them is most trustworthy?

Zeller accepts the lead of Goettling,¹ who puts forth a plausible but entirely subjective theory that Diogenes, with evil intent, bent on forgery, went to Delphi, and finding in the *πρόναος* of the temple written up the words *παραχάραξον τὸ νόμισμα*, at once seized on them as an authorization. He returned and adulterated the coin, and, being in consequence driven into exile, was seized with remorse, and had to attempt a reconciliation with self by cynic austerities. All which is perfectly possible: but to treat such mere fanciful constructions as history is indeed *παραχάρασσειν τὴν ἱστορίαν*, in the worst sense. The fact is that for the forgery of Diogenes there is no evidence of the smallest consistency and value. According to Zeller the case against him rests on Eubulus the comedian who, as well as Menippus, is mentioned as having written a work called *Διογένους πρᾶσις*; and his evidence in regard to Diogenes is of just about as much value as that of Aristophanes in regard to Socrates.

If we allow the double meaning of *παραχάρασσειν* here advocated, it becomes easy to understand the origin of the stories which the scandal-loving Athenians no doubt gladly accepted in regard to Diogenes,

¹ *Gesam. Abhandl.*; 251. Steinhart in the *Allgem. Encycl.* xxv. p. 301 takes a more reasonable and more sceptical view.

whether they were true or not. Supposing that Diogenes like Socrates applied to Delphi in real perplexity as to the course of life, what reply to the son of a money-changer could be more appropriate than 're-mint the current coin'? And if confusion were to arise between the good and bad meanings of *παραχάραξον*, the good meaning being little known outside the circle of financial experts, and if the Athenians in consequence were to invent scandalous stories about Diogenes, who could be surprised? The mere fact that Diogenes' father was a banker would be sufficient motive. It is said that in his writings Diogenes confessed the truth of the accusation. It is likely enough that he would not choose to descend from his lofty contempt for vulgar opinion, in order to set himself right with his neighbours.

The *τὸ* clearly implies that whatever was to be done was to be done to things, whether money or usages, already current. And whereas Apollo would hardly bid any one debase either the coinage or usage with what was worthless, he might very well bid his votaries refuse to take them on trust, but rather to 'prove all things and hold fast that which was good.'

That some later writers, such as Plutarch and Julian, understood the reply to Diogenes in some such sense seems to be clear. In Plutarch's essay on Alexander,¹ the great

¹ *De Alex. s. virt. s. fort.*, i. 10.

conqueror is represented as saying that he will become a follower of Diogenes, and take the advice given to the latter: *δεῖ καὶ μὲ..... παραχάραξαι τὸ βαρβαρικῆ θέσει κατεσκευασμένον Ἑλληνικῆ πολιτείᾳ*. He must mean that he wanted, not to debase or corrupt the barbaric forms of society but to put his own stamp on them, to counter-mark them, that they might henceforth pass current. The same force for the word, also in allusion to the response to Diogenes, seems to be required in various passages of Julian,² *τῆς τῶν πολλῶν δόξης ὑπερόρα καὶ παραχάραττε μὴ τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀλλὰ τὸ νόμισμα*. If we here take *νόμισμα* to mean prevailing usages and everyday views, the current coin of society, we may translate 'Look beyond popular opinion, and remould, not truth, but current views.'

The suggested vindication of Diogenes of course rests on conjecture, and claims to attain not certainty but probability. But it seems to me to accord better with human nature in general, and Athenian nature in particular, than the version of Goettling. In any case it seemed worth while to call attention to ambiguities lurking in the word *παραχάρασσειν*, and to suggest the possibility of a more reasonable interpretation of the Delphic response.

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² *Orat.* vi. and vii. repeatedly.

ARISTOTLE'S CRITICISMS OF THE SPARTAN GOVERNMENT.

FIRST let us consider the chapter which treats *ex professo* of the Spartan government, *Politics* ii. 9. There are two points of view according to Aristotle: (1) How does the Spartan constitution compare with the (ideally) best arrangement? and (2) Is it consistent with its own scope and character? That the citizens are entirely emancipated from the necessity of manual labour and enjoy leisure, is in agreement with the ideal of the state. But the never-ceasing care and repression of the *helots* very materially cuts short that leisure. It is difficult to strike the correct mode of treatment, viz. between the two extremes of excessive freedom and of stern repression.

The stern self-restraint of the constitutional aim is realized in the Spartan *men* but fails utterly of attainment in the

women, their life being dissolute and extravagant (*ζῶσι γὰρ ἀκολάστως πρὸς ἅπασαν ἀκολασίαν καὶ τρυφερῶς*). In such a state wealth must needs be honoured, and the control of affairs rests mainly with the women, as is the case generally with military nations (cf. the mythological subjection of Ares to Aphrodite). Their dissoluteness is readily explained, viz. by the absence from home of the Spartan men in their wars with Argos, with the Arcadians and Messenians; the men were thus naturally prepared for the legislation of Lycurgus while the lawgiver failed to overcome the opposition of the women.¹

Another evil is the gradually increasing inequality in the ownership of land, resulting

¹ Cf. the contradiction of the idealizing Plutarch *Lycurg.* 14.