



## **Diocletian's Edict on Maximum Prices of 301 AD. A fragment found in Aigeira**

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### **Abstract**

Am Ende des 3. Jahrhunderts nach Christus steckt das Römische Imperium in einer Krise. In einer Zeit von politischer und wirtschaftlicher Instabilität erlässt der Römische Kaiser Diokletian ein Edikt, in dem er die Höchstpreise für Waren festlegt. Ein Fragment aus Aigeira auf der Peloponnes, zeugt von diesem Erlass. In dieser Seminararbeit wird diese epigraphische Quelle kritisch analysiert und in seinen weiteren Kontext gestellt.

### **Introduction**

The so-called "Edict of Diocletian" can be seen as one of the most important sources on Roman economical politics in the whole antiquity. Its significance is additionally underlined by numerous epigraphic evidence, found mainly in the Eastern parts of the former Roman Empire. One of these sources is a fragment that was discovered close to the ruins of the ancient city Aigeira, on the Peloponnesus. This paper will try to imbed the finding from Aigeira into its wider context. Also a

transcription and transliteration of the fragment shall be included. At the beginning a general introduction into the Diocletian's Edict, such as dating, spread and contents, shall give an outline on the topic. Afterwards the focus shall be laid especially on the fragment from Aigeira. The third chapter will deal with the general context, behind which the Edict had been issued. A final summary concludes the paper, followed by the bibliography, an index of abbreviations, the appendix with the transcription of the text from Aigeira and tablets that show the original writing from the stone inscription.

## 1. Diocletian's Edict on Maximum Prices

### 1.1. Dating and form

A fragment from Egypt dates the edict into Diocletian's 18<sup>th</sup> *tribunicia potestas*<sup>1</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> year as Emperor. His 18<sup>th</sup> year of reign started on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 301 AD, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December he was awarded with the *tribunicia potestas* for the 19<sup>th</sup> time. Therefore the Edict must have been issued between the end of November and the beginning of December in the year 301 AD.

Concerning the place, the edict had to be issued either in Antioch or in Alexandria, or somewhere in between, according to calculations by Corcoran.<sup>2</sup>

The form of the edict is an *Edictum ad provinciales* (imperial degree), what can be seen from the phrase *dicunt* and the address *provinciales nostri* (*praefatio* I 26). This form of imperial Edict was issued in direct speech until the times of Constantine.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.2. Spread in the Roman Empire

Archaeological research has shown, that until now all of the around 140 epigraphic fragments of the Edict<sup>4</sup> have been found in Eastern parts of the Empire, with one exception: in Pettorano, in the A<sup>b</sup>ruzzes (south Italy), a fragment of a Greek version

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<sup>1</sup> The *tribunicia potestas* was the authority of the Plebeian Tribune in Rome. With the reign of Augustus it became the center of the imperial power. The title had to be assigned annually and is consequently a useful tool to date coins and inscriptions, like in this case.

<sup>2</sup> The emperor is attested in Antioch in July 301 AD and then again in Alexandria in March 302 AD. Corcoran still prefers Antioch, because of what he calls the "Asian style" of the *praefatio*. (Simon Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs. Imperial Pronouncements and Government AD 284-324*, Oxford 2000, p. 206, 211).

<sup>3</sup> Theodor Mommsen/Hugo Blümmer, *Der Maximaltarif des Diocletian*, Berlin 1893, p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> Those fragments belonged to various steles, which showcased the Edict on public places.

of the Edict was discovered.<sup>5</sup> Usually only pieces found in Achaia were in Greek language and bilingual versions are not attested for sure<sup>6</sup>, what made scholars think of a later diversion.

To disprove such assumptions Guarducci, the publisher of the fragment from Pettorano, tried to relate the marble of the stone to Italy, which according to Corcoran cannot be taken as proof due to the testing conditions.<sup>7</sup>

James Ermantinger has looked closer at the places, where fragments appeared, in search for structures within them. They can be found in Egypt, Greece, Asia Minor, Italy, the Cyrenaica and Thrace. All the mentioned places within these provinces lay either on an important road (like Megalopolis and Tegea in Arcadia), were harbours (like Aigeira was the harbour on the bay of Corinth) or had military (like Heracleia in Caria) or religious functions (like Delphi or Aezani in Phrygia). Such places were traditional meeting places of merchants. Therefore, the choice of the places seems logical, even if they are not spread equally over the Roman Empire, which made scholars think, the Edict might have been issued only for the Western parts of the empire.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.3. Contents

The whole Edict can be divided into two parts: the first one is the *praefatio*, naming the tetrarchs, cause and purpose of it. The second part consists of an index that can be structured into 37 chapters, containing about 1400 goods and services.<sup>9</sup> The original title is unfortunately not known. Therefore, Theodor Mommsen, one of the most important historians of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has given it the name: *Edictum Diocletiani de pretiis rerum venalium*<sup>10</sup>. That title was inspired by other antique traditions like Lactantius (a fourth century Christian writer under Constantine), which uses the same vocabulary to describe the Edict.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Siegfried Lauffer (Edit.), *Diokletians Preisedikt* (Eine altertumswissenschaftliche Reihe 5), Berlin 1971, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Mommsen mentions fragments in Greek and Latin found at the same place in Gythion and Plataiai. In Lebadea too, chapter 8 of the index has been found twice (Mommsen/Blümmer, *Der Maximaltarif des Diocletian*, p. 58).

Lauffer, who tried to register all existing fragments of the Edict on prices, declared the fragments from Gythion and from Lebadea as missing (Lauffer, *Diokletians Preisedikt*, p. 8).

<sup>7</sup> Corcoran arguments that the sliver used for testing was really too small to provide positive results (Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, p. 230).

<sup>8</sup> Ermantinger, *The Economic Reforms of Diocletian*, p. 89ff.

<sup>9</sup> After Lauffer, *Diokletians Preisedikt*, p. 48–49.

<sup>10</sup> Diocletian's Edict on prices of products.

<sup>11</sup> See Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* VII. 6 and chapter 3.3.

The importance of the Edict can be seen in its accuracy and extent. We know of no other private, official or literary text from antiquity that contains such a complete index of products and prices.<sup>12</sup> Still there exists a tradition concerning price control before Diocletian. A price decree from a Sumerian town in Mesopotamia puts absolute prices on goods and services in 1950 BC. Likewise in the Codex Hammurapi prices and wages are absolute. Even if the tradition does not continue until Diocletian in such an extent, there are edicts either fixing the price for one specific good, or in one case for one geographical region, also in Roman times before the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. The new innovative, Ermantiger even calls it “revolutionary”, modification of Diocletian was to set a maximum instead of fixed prices.<sup>13</sup>

### 1.3.1. *Praefatio/Preface*

The *praefatio*, which is only attested in the Latin versions of the Edict, is written in a complex way, with constant repetition, reduplication and a strong emotive language, which can be seen as one example of the high rhetoric of late imperial pronouncements.<sup>14</sup>

The reason why the *praefatio* has not been translated as the index has been, is not completely clear. Still, there have been attempts from governors, like the one from Phrygia-Caria, Fulvius Asticus, to put a preamble before the index himself. His explanatory edict in Greek does not give an entirely accurate account of the imperial one, though.<sup>15</sup>

The first part of it lists the authority, the issuer: all four Tetrarchs are named together with all their imperial titles. That part is followed by the verb form *dicunt*: here plural *dicunt*, the standard edictal opening formula. The third part is the justification or panegyric of the edict. After the barbarians have been defeated, peace could be founded for eternity. The reason though, why the Edict has to be issued is to check the growth of greed and *avaritia* (avarice). The government is forced to interfere, as it is almost too late to control the *avaritia*, inflation and greed of men, who failed to reform themselves. This genuine plot device makes the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Ermantiger, *The Economic Reforms of Diocletian*, p. 69.

<sup>14</sup> Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, p. 207.

<sup>15</sup> Burkhard Meissner, *Über Zweck und Anlass von Diokletians Preisedikt*, in: *Historia. Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 49 (2000), issue 1, p. 92. The fragment was publicited in: Michael H. Crawford/Joyce Reynolds, *The Publication of the Prices Edict: A New Inscription from Aezani*, in: *The Journal of Roman Studies* 65 (1975), p. 160–163.

emperors appear forced to act.<sup>16</sup> In that part a common soldier is named as an example for the typical victim of the inflation, which cannot be taken as coincidence. The army fulfilled four important points to become the choice as example: it was the common bond between the Roman Empire, the average person could relate to the military situation, the military was the main consumer of products in the empire and the army was the power behind the emperor. If they got upset, they could replace the Tetrarchy or demand more from the peasant.<sup>17</sup>

What follows, is the actual *edictum* that puts a limit or a maximum on prices. The final part names the penalty for disobedience: death. Not only for the trader, selling over the maximum price, but also for people buying over the limit or holding back goods to increase the price. In the point of view of the emperors even the penalty has its justification, due to the Edict's universal fairness.<sup>18</sup>

### ***1.3.2. Index***

The Index is structured in 37 chapters that contain food, followed by the most important wages, then commercial/industrial products together with the matching wages. Although most of the chapters are signed with titles, the titles mostly aren't convenient to all products listed there.<sup>19</sup>

The index begins thus with a very extensive list of food, which seems logic, as food is of fundamental necessity concerning everyday life. Starting with field crops the first product mentioned is wheat. The list goes on with different field products such as beans, lentil, peas and mustard seeds. The second chapter concerns beverages, starting with wine to beer, grape juice/must and rose wine. It is remarkable, that only Italian wines are named and none of the Greek ones appear on the list. The following part concerns oil, vinegar, fish-sauce, salt and honey. Different kinds of meat, starting with pork, which too was favoured the most by the Romans, continue the list. Especially birds can be found in a very great variety. Fish and seafood fill the next chapter together with dry cheese at the end, which might have been sold together on the market. The end of food makes a paragraph about vegetables and fruits. This kaleidoscope of used ingredients delivers an interesting insight into

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<sup>16</sup> Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, p. 210.

<sup>17</sup> Ermantiger, *The Economic Reforms of Diocletian*, p. 81.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p.78.

<sup>19</sup> In the fragment of Aigeira I, only chapter 2 starts with a title. All the other titles from the original Latin version are here put together with the second line. (See chapters III, 1; IV, 1; V, 1)

Roman cuisine, which must have been at least in some dishes clearly dependent on supplies made available by traders and coming from great distances.<sup>20</sup>

The services start with workingmen like bricklayer and baker and go on with metalworkers; writer and tailors follow these. The chapter ends with teachers from all kinds of fields.

The following part concerns many different items, like animal skins, clothes and saddles. After listing several sorts of wood and products made out of wood, a chapter about costs of transport on land is added.

Various fabrics from wool to linen and silk are completed by the wages for those, who turned these raw materials into something useful.

While the three short chapters about slaves, marble and animals, ranging from wild African ones for the arena to draught animals, are interesting concerning social questions, the following chapter about spices, herbs and plants is important reconstructing the knowledge concerning botanical and medical relationships. The index ends with a pricelist about transportation of goods on water.<sup>21</sup>

One question stays unanswered: Where did the compilers of the index in Antioch get all these information he needed from? While Mommsen suggested a glossary as the base of the index, more recent research follows the idea of the *leges portus*,<sup>22</sup> which were issued for two towns in Africa: Zarai and Lambaesis. They have shown a similar type and order in listing the items like animals. As we know very little of imperial accounting systems and record-keeping, the possibility that information could be drawn out of existing imperial documents should also be taken into account.<sup>23</sup>

Additional information could also have been derived from the immediate locality. But does the Edict really reflect Antiochene conditions?

In the chapter *de linis*, five cities, Tarsus, Laodicea, Byblus, Scythopolis and Alexandria, are named to be the origins for linen clothes (weaving factories). All of those five cities are in Syria.

On the other side there is *cervesio*, celtic beer, listed in the Edict, after a long list of wines, all coming from Italian regions. Can non-Eastern beer reflect in some point

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<sup>20</sup> Wolfgang Kuhoff, *Diokletian und die Epoche der Tetrarchie. Das römische Reich zwischen Krisenbewältigung und Neuaufbau (284 – 313n.Chr.)*, Frankfurt am Main 2001, p. 552f.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 556.

<sup>22</sup> The *leges portus* are customs tariffs, which are attested, for example, in the following inscription: CIL 8. 4508 (AD 202).

<sup>23</sup> Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, p. 220.

the Balkan origin of the emperor, as Corcoran suggests?<sup>24</sup> Antioch was a great metropolis, imperial capital and therefore a very important place for the trading market, but to argue with the origin of Diocletian does not seem not be tenable. As well as even if the index seems to have an emphasis on Eastern cities and products, the Western parts don't stay unmentioned or unconsidered.

The prices within the index range from two *denarii*, the pool attendant in the baths can demand from each bather, to 150.000 *denarii* for a male lion. Not many products of luxury are mentioned, which give an impression of everyday life in the Roman Empire around 300 AD including the games in the arenas.<sup>25</sup>

The origins of the prices might have been calculated with help of local authorities, sending them the prices of their regions, so that an average could have been made out of actual price-tendencies. In comparison to prices of certain products from Augustine to Diocletian times, Ermantinger concludes, that the prices named in the *edictum de pretiis rerum venalium* (Edict on prices of products) were always over the average. The maximum on transport cost on water and on land even seemed to have been three to four times higher than contemporary sources state, which makes clear the function as edict on maximum prices.<sup>26</sup>

### **1.3.3. Writing and metrology**

The orthography of the different fragments cannot be seen as homogenous or uniform. Sometimes it even seems to be doubtful if it were mistakes in writing, not in listening. Maybe too depending on wrong pronunciation. Another amount of mistakes probably originated from the transfer of the writing by the provincial officials into the writing on the stone.<sup>27</sup> Especially in the Greek versions of the Edict a lot of deviations can be found, which might had to do with a missing official Greek translation so that local officials were forced to translate the Latin text themselves. Sometimes a certain Latin word was simply written down in Greek letters. Still the Latin index shows vocabulary based on Greek, even if there existed matching vocabulary in the Latin language.

The mentioned kinds of money, weights and measures are the official ones for that period of time. The coin is the *denar*, which cannot be seen as a silver-coin like he had been in Republican times, but rather as something much less worth, consisting mainly out of copper.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>25</sup> Kuhoff, Diokletian und die Epoche der Tetrarchie, p. 563.

<sup>26</sup> Ermantinger, The Economic Reforms of Diocletian, p. 86-112.

<sup>27</sup> Lauffer, Diokletians Preisedikt, p. 11.

Weights are measured either in pounds ((*italicum*) *pondo* or *libra*, Ἰταλική λίτρα, λείτρα (327.45 g)) or ounces (lat. *uncia* or gr. ὀγκία (27.28 g)).<sup>28</sup>

For most capacities the Edict refers to the *kastrensis modius* (lat. *kastrensis modius* or gr. καστρήσιος μόδιος (17.51 l)), the Italian modius (lat. *Italicus modius* or gr. Ἰταλικός μόδιος (8.754 l)), or the Italian sextar (lat. *Italicus sextarius* or gr. Ἰταλικός ξέστης, σεξτάριος (0.547 l)), which is mainly used for liquid goods as wine, oil or milk.<sup>29</sup>

There are also measurements attested like the Roman mile (lat. *passus mile* or gr. μείλιον, μείλον (1480m)) or the Roman foot (lat. *per* or gr. πούς).<sup>30</sup>

Additional, there are products sold either in one piece, as is bigger poultry, a boar or a deer, in pairs (lat. *par*, gr. ζεύγος), like smaller poultry (chicken, doves) or bigger fruits (melons) and of course shoes, or in groups of more pieces like vegetables or oysters. Raw materials are often quoted in bundles (lat. *fascis*, *fasciculus* and gr. δέσμη, δεμάτιον, φάσκος).

Weaved fabric is sometimes referred to per “weaved piece”, e.g. *tela* and *quaternion* (lat.) or ιστός, τετράλασσον, φασκία and φασκεία (gr.).<sup>31</sup>

Qualities of a certain product are often indicated with the word *forma* (lat.) or greek φόρμα, φώρμα, φούρμα.<sup>32</sup> Additional to that or alone, the description *maximus*, *primus*, *optimus* in Latin or κάλλιστος in Greek can be added. Sometimes one product can be sold in two different qualities. In that case usually the descriptions like *maximus* in contrary to *minor* respectively *sequens*, or *primus/optimus* in contrary to *secundus* or *sequens*. Concerning the size of a product *maior* in contrary to *sequens* can be used.

In the Greek versions of the text the differences are mainly made with φόρμης α', β', γ'<sup>33</sup> etc., or έργου πρωτείου, δευτερείου<sup>34</sup> etc.

Working wages are usually paid per day. Teachers get paid per month, depending on the amount of scholars. Some occupations are paid depending on their work, as are writers, veterinarians or tailors.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>31</sup> Mommsen/Blümmer, Der Maximaltarif des Diocletian, p. 60.

<sup>32</sup> Appearance, quality, texture.

<sup>33</sup> Type α, β, γ etc.

<sup>34</sup> The first/best work/labour, the second/second best work/labour etc.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 61.



An important difference between the official Latin and the Greek version of the Edict are the numbers of the price. While in Latin the number is written in Roman letters, the Greek has a numeral system using the Greek alphabet.

## 2. A Fragment found in Aigeira

### 2.1. History of discovery and outward appearance

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Professor Stais was informed by the mayor of Ροβάλωνα (Rovalona), which lies close to the ancient ruins of Aigeira, that two fragments with inscriptions had been found there. After making an autopsy himself, Stais recognised their importance and made an immediate effort to transfer the stone fragments into the Epigraphical Museum in Athens. Although he was the one to recover and to publicise these fragments for the first time, he does not mention their exact finding conditions, which consequently stay unclear.<sup>36</sup>

The first fragment (Aigeira I), this paper will be dealing with, is 1.50 meter high, 0.79 m wide and 0.25 thick. The second fragment (Aigeira II) is a little bit smaller with 0.85 m height, 0.65 m breadth and again 0.25 m thick. Aigeira I was broken into three parts, which were set back together.<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately the lines 7 to 9 of the first chapter and the line 11 of the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter are not, or just partially preserved, because of the break line.<sup>38</sup>

### 2.2. Contents

On both fragments the index is divided into two columns. On the first fragment, the first column starts with chapter I of the index, field-crops, over II, wine, to III, oil. The second column contains chapter IV meat, chapter V fish, and chapter VI with its various fruits and vegetables. Aigeira II starts in the first column with the last mentioned wages from chapter VII. These are the ones for a teacher of architects per month and per scholar, followed by the cloakroom and bathroom attendants. The last mentioned chapter VIII starts the end of the second column, where it stops, leaving the last chapter unfinished. The product listed in that chapter is leather, ranging from goats to hyenas.

<sup>36</sup> Βαλέριος Σταης, Το Διάταγμα του Διοκλητιανού. Δύο νέα τεμάχια ελληνικής μεταφράσεως, in: Αρχαιολογική Εφημερίς (1899), c. 146-155, here c. 147.

<sup>37</sup> See Figure 1.

<sup>38</sup> Σταης, Το Διάταγμα του Διοκλητιανού, c. 148.

### 2.2.1. The index: translation and critical comment

This chapter contains the translation of the transcription.<sup>39</sup> The Latin vocabulary, which was used in the Latin version of the Edict, is added together with the measurement and amount of *denarii*. On some products comments are made.

1. Τιμή = price, εἶδος = product, ὑπερ(βαίνει)ν = to exceed, => “Beneath are the prices for all products listed, that no one is allowed to exceed”.

#### Chapter I: Crops and seeds

1. Σίτος = wheat, *frumentum* (lat.), 100 *denarii* for one *kastrensis modius* (= 17,51 liter).

2. Κριθή = κρειθή = barley, *hordeum* (lat.), 60 *denarii* for one *kastrensis modius*.

3. Βρίζα = rye, *centenum sive sicale* (lat.), 60 *den.* for one *kast. mod.*

4.-5. Κένγχρος = millet, *milium* (lat.), two different kinds divided between κεκομμένος καθαρός = crushed, κόπτειν = to crush, *pinsere* (lat.); and ακόπος = not crushed; through crushing the roasted millet, they were shucked and are therefore more expensive than the normal ones:<sup>40</sup> 100 *den.* per *kast. mod.* for the crushed millet, 50 *den.* for the uncrushed one.

6. Μελίνη = panic grass, *panicium* (lat.), 50 *den.* for one *kast. mod.*

7. Πιστίκιον was reconstructed by Σταης out of the remainings = emmer, (the Latin version of this line is not preserved).<sup>41</sup>

8.-9. Spelt: Spelt is a kind of grain that was used for bread, pulp, etc.<sup>42</sup>

8. The 8<sup>th</sup> line is missing, but likely held a sort of spelt, so that the numbers 8 till 9 would cover spelt, *spelta mundaе* (lat.).

9. The remaining letters can be reconstructed according to other Greek fragments into σκάνδουλα = spelt, *scandula = scandala* (lat.), the *denarii* are not preserved but can be reconstructed from other fragments too: 30 *den.* for one *kast. mod.*

10. Ἔρβουλον = vetch (a small bean), (*hervulum* (lat.)), the amount of *denarii* is not preserved (measured in *kast. mod.*).

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<sup>39</sup> For the transcription see Appendix.

<sup>40</sup> Plin. XVIII. 61; cited after Mommsen/Blümmer, *Der Maximaltarif des Diokletian*, p. 64.

<sup>41</sup> Σταης, *Το Διάταγμα του Διοκλητιανού*, c. 164 and Lauffer, *Diokletians Preisedikt*, p. 214.

<sup>42</sup> Mommsen/Blümmer, *Der Maximaltarif des Diokletian*, p. 64.

11.-12. Φάβα = bean, *faba* (lat.), the first one is crushed (kibbled) (καθαρός) and therefore more expensive: 100 *den.* for one *kast. mod.*, in contrary to 60 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*

13. Φακῆς = lentil, *lenticla* (lat.), 108 *den.* per *kast. mod.*

14.-18. Different kind of peas:

14. Λάθυρος = chicklings, *herbilia = ervilia* (lat.), 80 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*;

15.-16. Πίσος = bean, *pisa* (lat.), ἠλεσμένος = crushed, either 100 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*, or not crushed 60 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*;

17. Ἐρέβινθος = chickpea, *cicer* (lat.), 100 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*,

18. Reconstructed to ὄροβος = bitter vetch, *hervum = ervum* (lat.), 100 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*

19. Βρόμος = oats, *avena* (lat.), by the Romans usually seen as weed and used as food for the cattle,<sup>43</sup> 30 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*

20. Βουκέρως = fenugreek, *faenum Graecum* (lat.), mainly used as food for the cattle or in medical cases; sometimes mentioned as ingredients for wine, must, oil, etc.,<sup>44</sup> 100 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*

21.-22. Θέρμος = lupine, *lupinus* (lat.), distinguished between ὠμός = raw and ἐφθός = cooked; the raw lupines come to 60 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*; the following cooked lupines are logically measured in the *Italian sextarius* (= 0.547 l), in which liquids are measured; one *Ital. sext.* of cooked lupines come to only 4 *den.*

23. Φασίωλος = kidney bean, *fasciolus = phasiolus* (lat.), are sold ξηρός = dried per one *kast. mod.* for 100 *den.*

24. Λινόσπερμον = flaxseeds, *lini semen* (lat.), 150 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*

25. Ὄρυζα = rice, *oryza* (lat.), καθαρά = cleaned, per *kast. mod.* 150 *den.*

26. Τισάνη = πτίσανη = barley, *tisana* (lat.), καθαρά = shucked, μο. probably means κ. μο. and therefore per one *kast. mod.* 100 *den.*

27. Ἄλιξ = another kind of spelt, *alica* (lat.), καθαρός = cleaned, μο. again can be interpreted as κ.μ., therefore one *kast. mod.* per 200 *den.*

28.-32: Different kind of seeds:

<sup>43</sup> Plin. XVIII. 149.

<sup>44</sup> Mommsen/Blümmer, *Der Maximaltarif des Diocletian*, p. 65.

28. Σήσαμον = sesame, *sesamum* (lat.), used for bread and cakes, as well as in medical cases,<sup>45</sup> 200 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*

29. Χορτόσπερμον = hayseed, *faeni semen* (lat.), 30 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*

30. Μηδική σπέρμα = alfalfa seed, *Maedica = Medica herba* (lat.), was mainly used as food for horses and probably introduced over Media,<sup>46</sup> 150 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*

31. Κάνναβις = hemp, *cannabis* (lat.), σπέρμα = seeds, *semen* (lat.), for sowing, but also served roasted as dessert or together with wine,<sup>47</sup> 80 *den.* for one *kast. mod.*

32. Βίκια = Wicke, *bicia* (lat.), ξηρά = dried, *sicca* (lat.), meant as seeds, used grown mainly as food for cattle, which is sold in chapter XVII. 6 of the index.

33. Μελάνθιον = black caraway, *nigella sativa* (lat.); this differs from all the other fragments that name μήκων = poppy, *papaver* (lat.) instead; maybe a misunderstanding from the Greek translator; 150 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*

34. Κύμινον = caraway, *cyminum = cuminum* (lat.), καθαρός = cleaned, 200 *den.* per *kast. mod.*

35. Ραφάνινος = “from the radish”, *raphaninus* (lat.), σπέρμα = seed, 150 *den.* per one *kast. mod.*

36.-37. Σινάπιον = mustard (here grains), *sinapis* (lat.), ἡγασμένος = ἡργασμένος = prepared, beside their use as spicy, they were also used for medical purposes,<sup>48</sup> plain ones 150 *den.* per *kast. mod.*, prepared ones 8 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*

## Chapter II: Wine and other beverages

1. Οἶνος = wine, entitles the following chapter, *vinum* (lat.); here οἴνου, *item vini* (lat.).

2.-8. All the following wines are from Italian regions and are sold for 30 *denarii* per Italian sextarius:

2. Πικήνος = Picene (e.g. wine from Picenum), *Picenum* (lat.).

3. Τιβουρτῖνος = Tiburtine (e.g. wine from Tibur), *Tiburtinum* (lat.).

4. Σαβινήσιος = Sabine (e.g. wine from Sabinum), *Sabinum* (lat.).

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<sup>45</sup> Cels. V. 15.

<sup>46</sup> Plin. XVIII. 144.

<sup>47</sup> Galen VI. 549 f. cited after Mommsen/Blümmer, *Der Maximaltarif des Diocletian*, p. 66.

<sup>48</sup> Plin. XIX. 170.

5. The remaining for letters could be reconstructed into Ἀμιννέος = Ἀμινναῖος = Aminean (e.g. wine from Aminneum), *Aminneum* (lat.).
6. Σαίτης = Setine (probably wine from Setia in Latium), *Saitum* (lat.)<sup>49</sup>, if form Setia, a very special wine, that is said to have been the favourite of Augustus.<sup>50</sup>
7. Σερεντίνος = Σουρρεντεινός = Surrentine (e.g. wine from Surrentum), *Surrentinum* (lat.).
8. Φαλερινός = Falerian (e.g. wine from Falernum), *Falerinum* = *Falernum* (lat.).
- 9.-10. Οἶνος παλαιός, πρώτο γεῦμα = “old” wine/tablewine, “old” in this context means probably, that he is over one year old,<sup>51</sup> first “taste”/ quality; *vinum vetus primus gustus* (lat.), per *Ital. sext. 24 den.*, δεύτερο γεῦμα = second “taste” / quality; *sequentus gustus* (lat.), per *Ital. sext. 16 den.*
11. Οἶνος χυδέος = ordinary wine, *vinum rusticus* (lat.), per *Ital. sext. 8 denarii.*
- 12.-13. Κερβησία = wheatbeer, *cervesia* (lat.), maybe originating from Spain, κάμον and ζῦθος = different kinds of barelybeer,<sup>52</sup> *camun* and *zythum* (lat.), might be originally Celtic and Egyptian sorts of beer,<sup>53</sup> κερβησία and κάμον for 4 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*, ζῦθος for only 2 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*
14. Κάροινον = “boiled down, sweet wine”, *caroenum* (lat.), Μεόνιος = from Maeonia (in Lydia), *Maeoniam* (lat.), per *Ital. sext. 30 den.*
15. Χρυσαττικός = chrysattic wine, *chrysatticum* (lat.), probably sweet, maybe raisin wine,<sup>54</sup> per *Ital. sext. 24 den.*
- 16.-17. Ἐψητός = ἐψητός = must, *decoctum* (lat.), ἔψεμα = ἔψημα = must, *defritum* = *defrutum* (lat.), the second must is probably boiled down more, therefore more expensive: 20 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*, whereas the first one comes to 16 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*
18. Κονδεῖτον = spiced wine, *conditum* (lat.), 24 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*
19. Ἀψινθᾶτον = vermouth (wine), *apsinthium* (lat.), 20 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*
- 29 Ῥοσατον = rose wine, *rosatum* = *rhosatum* (lat.), 20 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*

<sup>49</sup> Lauffer, Diokletians Preisedikt, p. 218.

<sup>50</sup> Plin. XIV. 61.

<sup>51</sup> Mommsen/Blümmer, Der Maximaltarif des Diocletian, p. 69.

<sup>52</sup> Lauffer, Diokletians Preisedikt, p. 218.

<sup>53</sup> Mommsen/Blümmer, Der Maximaltarif des Diocletian, p. 70.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 70.

### Chapter III: Oil, vinegar and other ingredients to prepare dishes

1.-4. Different kinds of oil:

1. Ἐλαιον = oil, olive oil; *oleum* (lat.), ὀμφάκινον = “oil from green fruits”, *florum* (lat.), this oil was pressed from the still green olives and applied to be the best kind of oil, 40 *den.* for one *Ital. sext.*

2. Δευτερο γεῦμα = second “taste”, quality of the oil mentioned above; probably the oil, that was coming out at the end while pressing, 24 *den.* for one *Ital. sext.*

3. Κιβηριός = χυδαῖος = common oil, *cibarius* (lat.), pressed from ripened olives, 12 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*

4. Ἐλαιον ραφάνινον = radish oil, *oleum raphaninum* (lat.), 8 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*

5. Ὅξος = vinegar, wine-vinegar; *acetum* (lat.), 6 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*

6.-7. Γάρον = fishsauce, *liquamen* (lat.), in two qualities: γεῦμα πρῶτον and δεῦτερον γεῦμα ; to 16 and 12 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*

8. Ἄλας = salt, *sal* (lat.), the added γασσρησίον is unique one this fragment and probably refers to the *kastrensis modius*, therefore the measurement, 100 *den.* per *kast. mod.*

9. Σαλακονδεῖτον = spiced salt, *sal conditum* (lat.), 8 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*

10.-12. Μέλι = honey, in first und second quality to 40 and 24 *den.* per one *Ital. sext.*

12. Φοινίκινος = “from dates”, *foenicinus* (lat.), 8 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*

### Chapter IV: Meat, poultry, venison, fat

1. Κρέως χοιρίου = pork meat, *caro porcino* (lat.), is here probably named first, as it was very much liked by the Romans and its consume wider spread than that of beef,<sup>55</sup> 12 *denarii* per *Ital. p.* (= 327.45 g).

2. Βόειον = “from the cow” (e.g. beef), *bubula* (lat.), 8 *den.* per *Ital. p.*

3. Αἴγειον = “from the goat” (e.g. goat meat), *caprina* (lat.), προβάτειον = “from the sheep” or mutton, *sive verbecina* = *sive vervecina* (lat.), 8 *den.* per *Ital. p.*

4.-7. Products from the pig:

4. Βοῦλβα = uterus, *bulba* (lat.), 24 *den.* per *Ital. p.*

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<sup>55</sup> Plin. VIII. 209.

5. Σούμενον = udder, *sumen* (lat.), 20 *den.* per Ital. p.
6. Συκωτόν = “with figs fattened liver from pig or goose”, *catum* (lat.), 16 *den.* per Ital. p.
7. Αλιστόν = “salted pork or salt meat”, *laridum* (lat.), καλός = here best, *optima* (lat.), 16 *den.* per Ital. p.
- 8.-9. Πέρνα καλή πετασῶνος = probably “best ham of the front” (likely from the pig), *perna optima petasonis* (lat.), Μαινατικός = Μαινοπικός = menapic (e.g. from Gallia, today Belgium), *Menapicus* (lat.), Κερρεϊτανός = cerretanic (e.g. from Spain, Pyrenees), *Cerritanus* (lat.), Μαρσικός = marsic (e.g. from Italy), *Marsicus* (lat.), all of them 20 *den.* per Ital. p.
10. Στέαρ = fat (from animals, probably pig), *adeps* (lat.), νεαρός = fresh, *recens* (lat.), 20 *den.* per Ital. p.
11. From the eleventh line is only the price of 12 *den.* preserved.
12. ὄνουχες = claws, *ungellae* (lat.), πιτράσκειν = to sell, *distrahere* (lat.), “to be sold for the price of each kind of meat” (e.g. there are no further prices named); one part of the line is not preserved, but once showed the Greek word for stomach, *aqualiculus* (lat.).
- 13.-14. Εἰσίκτιον = jellied meat, *isicium* (lat.), χοίριος = from the pork, *porcinus* (lat.), 2 *den.* for one ounce (= 27,28 gramm), βόιος = from the cow, *bubulus* (lat.), 10 *den.* for one Ital. p.
- 15.-16. Λυκανική = smoked sausage “lucanic way”, *Lucanica* (lat.), again with pork for 16 *den.* per Ital. p. and from the cow for 10 *den.* per Ital. p.
- 17.-20. Φασιανός = pheasant, *fasianus* = *phasianus* (lat.), τεθραμμένος = fattened, *pastus* (lat.), 150 *den.* per piece, or βοσκός = wild; *agrestis* (lat.), 125 *den.* per piece.
19. Φασιανή = female pheasant, *fasiana* = *phasiana* (lat.), the price for this one is not preserved;
20. Wild female pheasant for 100 *den.* per piece.
- 21.-22. Χήν = goose, *anser* (lat.), for the fattened one 200 *den.* per piece, 100 for the wild.
23. ὄρνιθες = chicken, *pulli* (lat.), sold per pair for 60 *den.*
24. Πέρδιξ = partridge, *perdix* (lat.), per piece 30 *den.*

25.-26. Τρυγών = turtledove, *turtur* (lat.), λιπαρός = best quality, either fatter, because prevented from reproduction or a certain kind of turtledove; *singul[ari]s* (?) (lat.), 16 *den.* per piece; *agrestis* (lat.), the wild one is sold for 12 *den.*

27. Κιχλοκόσσυφος = thrush, *turdus* (lat.), sold per 10 pieces for 60 *den.*

28.-29. Φάσσα = wild dove, *palumbus* (lat.), sold as pair for 20 *den.*, whereas περιστέρα = breded dove, *columbinus* (lat.), comes to 24 *den.* per pair.

30. Ἀτταγήνα = hazel hen, *attagena* (lat.), 20 *den.* per piece.

31. Νῆσσα = duck, *anas* (lat.), 40 *den.* per pair.

32. Λαγός = hare, *lepus* (lat.), 150 *den.* per piece.

33. Κουνίκολος = (ἡμίλαγος) = rabbit, *cuniculus* (lat.), Aigeira I is the only Greek fragment where this form (κουνίκολος) was found. This difference probably originates out of a lack of knowledge on the side of the local translator, who simply wrote down the Latin word in Greek letters, 40 *den.* per piece.

34. Ἀμπελίων = probably goldfinch, *ampelio* (lat.), λιθαρός = see line 25/26 of the same chapter, per 10 pieces 40 *den.*

35. Ἄγρειος = either a second quality to the previous goldfinch or a special article, *agrestis* (lat.), otherwise the wild version of the goldfinch (?), as the Latin word *agrestis* would fit this (see line 18 of this chapter) and the Greek translation could again have originated from a mistake, 10 pieces for 20 *den.*

36. Σύκαλλος = fig-pecker (little bird), (*ficedula*) (lat.), 10 pieces for 40 *den.*

37. Στρουθός = sparrow, *passer* (lat.), 16 *den.* for 10 pieces.

38. Μῦς ἐλίος = hazel dormouse, edible dormouse, (*glis*) (lat.), Varro (Roman author, 116-27 BC) tells us about cages, build to breed them in,<sup>56</sup> 40 *den.* for 10 pieces.

39.-40. Παών = peacock, *pabus* = *pavus* (lat.), ἄρσης = male, *mas* (lat.), θήλια = female, *femina* (lat.), for the male 300 *den.* per piece, for the female 200 *den.* per piece.

41. Κολοί = probably κολοιοί = therefore daws, the translator must have confused *coturnices* (lat.), ὄρνυξ = quail, with *cornices* (lat.), κολιός = daw. Next to Aegira I, also a fragment from Atalante and the one from Argos show the same mistake. Sold for 20 *den.* per 10 pieces.

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<sup>56</sup> Varr. III. 15.



42. Ψάρ = starling, *sturnus* (lat.), 20 *den.* per 10 pieces.
43. Συάργιον = “meat from wild boar”, *apruna* (lat.), it was the most favourite venison of all, and therefore not only hunted, but also bread in special wild parks,<sup>57</sup> 16 *den.* for one Ital. p.
44. Ἐλάφιον = “meat from deer”, *cervina = cerbina* (lat.), 12 *den.* per Ital. p.
45. Δόρκειον = antelope or gazelle, *dorcus* (lat.), αἰγάργρειον = probably chamois or wild goat, *capra* (lat.), κεμάδιον = probably doe, *damma* (lat.), all of them for 12 *den.* per Ital. p.
46. Γαλαθηνός από γάλακτος = suckling pig, *porcellus lanctans* (lat.), 16 *den.* per Ital. p.
47. Ἄρκειον = lamm, *agnus* (lat.), 12 *den.* per Ital. p.
48. Ἐρίφειον = kid (young goat), *haedus* (lat.), 12 *den.* per Ital. p. (live weight).
49. Στέαρ = fat, lard; *sevum = sebum* (lat.), βόιον = from the cow, προβάτειον = from the sheep, used for medical cases or for making soap,<sup>58</sup> 6 *den.* per Ital. p.
50. Βούτυρον = butter, *butyrum* (lat.), for medical use,<sup>59</sup> 16 *den.* per Ital. p.

#### Chapter V: Fish and seafood

- 1.-2. Ἰχθύος = fish, *piscis* (lat.), τραχύς = thistly, *aspratilis* (lat.), but together with ἰχθύος: cured cod, θαλάσσιος = seawater fish, *marinus* (lat.), the first quality 24 *den.* per Ital. p., δεύτερος = “of second quality”, 16 *den.* for the second quality per Ital. p.
- 3.-4. Ποτάμιος = “river fish” (e.g. sweetwater fish), *flubialis = fluvialis* (lat.), καλλίστος = the best, best quality sweetwater fish per Ital. p. for 12 *den.*, the second quality fish per Ital. p. for 8 *den.*
5. Ἰχθύος παστός = salted, marinated fish, *salsus* (lat.), 6 *den.* per Ital. p.
6. Ὀστρίον = oyster, *ostria* (lat.), sold per 100 pieces for 100 *den.*
- 7.-9. Ἐχῖνος = sea urchin (here raw, not peeled), *echinus* (lat.), 100 pieces for 50 *den.*

<sup>57</sup> Plin. VIII. 211, Varr. III. 13,1.

<sup>58</sup> Plin. XXVIII. 191.

<sup>59</sup> Gal. VI. 683 cited after Mommsen/Blümmer, *Der Maximaltarif des Diocletian*, p. 81.

8. Νεάρος = fresh, κεκαθαρμένος = peeled, cleaned, *purgatus* (lat.), 50 *den.* per *Ital. sext.* (Logically the peeled sea urchins are not sold anymore per piece, but per *Ital. sext.*)

9. Ἐχῖνος παστός = salted, marinated sea urchin, 100 *den.* per *Ital. sext.*

10. Σφόνδυλος = spondylus, thorny oyster; *sphondulus* = *spondulus* (lat.), per 100 pieces 50 *den.*

11. Τυρός ξηρός = dry cheese, *caseus siccus* (lat.), 12 *den.* per *Ital. p.* The question why dried cheese appears in the middle of fish and seafood is not clear. It probably was sold together at the market. Fresh cheese in contrary appears in the index in chapter VI. after milk (index VI. 96).

12. Σάρδα, σαρδεῖνη = anchovy, *sarda* and *sardina* (lat.), the exact difference between *σάρδα* and *σαρδεῖνη* is not completely clear. The second however is most of the time identified as anchovy.<sup>60</sup> There is no indicated dimension, but λίτρα (pound = 327.45 g) was reconstructed by Σταης: 16 *den.* for one *Ital. p.*

#### **Chapter VI: Vegetables and other agricultural products**

1. Κινάρα = artichoke, *cardus* (lat.), 10 *den.* for 5 pieces.

2. Σφόνδυλοι κιναρῶν = heads of the artichokes, *spondylus* (lat.), 6 *den.* for 10 pieces

3.-10. All following vegetables are sold in first (πρωτεῖος) and second (δευτερείος) quality for 4 *den.* except the first quality endive (10 *den.*).

3.-4. Ἴντουβος = endive, *intibum* = *intibus* (lat.), the two qualities here maybe indicate to divide between the tame and the wild genus,<sup>61</sup> 10 *den.* per 10 pieces of “first quality”/the garden endive, “second quality” sold for 4 *den.* per 10 pieces.

5.-6. Μόλοχος = mallow, *malva* (lat.), here again might be the difference between tame and wild genus, πρωτεῖος for 4 *den.* per 5 pieces, δευτερείος again for 4 *den.*, but for 10 pieces.

7.-8. Θρεῖδαξ = θρεῖδαξ = lettuce, *lactuca* (lat.), first quality or kind, as the lettuce for 4 *den.* per 5 pieces, second quality for 4 *den.* per 10 pieces.

9.-10. Κράμβη = cabbage, *coliculi* (lat.), first quality again sold in 5 pieces for 4 *den.*, lower quality 4 *den.* for 10 pieces.

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<sup>60</sup> Mommsen/Blümmer, *Der Maximaltarif des Diocletian*, p. 82.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83

Here the index stops, leaving the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter unfinished.

### **3. The wider context: Diocletian and his time**

#### **3.1. The political and economical situation at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD**

To get a more precise picture of how the situation in the Roman Empire had been by the time of Diocletian's takeover, we have to look more closely to some different developments emerging in the third century. Reasons for the so-called third century collapse were large-scale population expansions, migration, displacements and social changes. The main migration currents across Eurasia were southwards and westwards. Gothic people had shifted slowly from Scandinavia southwards. Also the Vandals and the Burgundians started to put increasing pressure on the indigenous tribes of West and Central Germany.<sup>62</sup>

The contacts with Rome had led to an expanding trade, whose luxury goods promoted the rise of a nobility. The growth of a war-chief's retinue, where the bravest young men were chosen from several tribes and bound by oath to fight and die for their leader, was followed by a fusion into great tribal confederations. By the time of the third century three important groupings had emerged: the Alemanni (Central German Suevic tribe), the Franks (lower Rheinlands) and the Saxons (sea-people between Elbe and Weser). From the North Sea to the Black Sea the Roman Empire was confronted with a belt of enemies.<sup>63</sup>

From the East the house of Sasan followed the Parthian kingdom of the Arsacids with its first king Ardashir, who was crowned King of Kings in Ctesiphon (near today Bagdad) in 226 AC. His son Shapur I. conquered Antioch and managed to capture Valerian (Roman Caesar from 253-260 AD) in Edessa.<sup>64</sup>

The repeated shocks of invasions, year after year for generations, ruined civil life. From agriculture, population to cities and trade, all suffered from this chronic insecurity. The emperors had to raise new armies, equip them, pay them and transport them thousands of miles. If they could not immediately resist the invaders, they used appeasement-politics, which proved to be very expensive.<sup>65</sup>

To be able to pay all the military expenses, emperors debased the coinage again and again, resulting in uncontrolled inflation. Added to these miseries was a plague that moved across North Africa and the Balkan, assisted by famines throughout the

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<sup>62</sup> Stephan Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*, New York-London 1985, p. 15.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> Shapur I. made the moment of this victorious capture immortal in the rock monument of Bishapur.

<sup>65</sup> Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*, p. 16f.

250s. As a consequence towns shrank dramatically and flights caused deserted landscapes.<sup>66</sup>

Archaeological evidences tell a uniform story: hoards of buried coins and abandoned or fortified towns reflect this insecurity, people had to face in their everyday life.<sup>67</sup>

In Gallia the Rhine army commander Postumus had himself proclaimed emperor of an independent Gaul, the *Imperium Galliarum*. Usupers were springing up everywhere.

This was the world Diocletian was born into.<sup>68</sup>

### 3.2. Diocletian: Rise and installation of the *Tetrarchy*

Nicomedia, the capital of the roman province of *Bithynia et Pontus* in November 284 AD: Roman troops gather before the gates. The year before they had lost their emperor Carus in the campaign against the Persian ruler Vahram II. After that his son and new *Augustus* M. Aurelius Numerianus lead the army back west on their countermarch. During this time, however, Numerianus died under unexplained circumstances. A group of high ranked officers were summoned to discuss the following steps, that had to be taken, and decided to appoint C. Valerius Diocletianus, a *domesticus regens* in the army of Numerianus, new emperor.<sup>69</sup> In November 284 AD the army acclaimed him emperor in front of the gates of Nicomedia. At the same time Diocletian awards himself with the second *praenomen* and *nomen genitile*: Marcus Aurelius and therefore aligns himself in the row of the Illyrian emperors like Claudius Gothicus, Probus and Carus. All this goes back to Marcus Aurelius himself, who soon after his death became an idealized figure in literature. When Septimius Severus named his son Bassianus after Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who made history as Caracalla and awarded the Roman citizenship to all free *peregrini* in the Roman Empire, that name became even more important.<sup>70</sup>

This first step as emperor can therefore be seen as first governmental program. But still there was M. Aurelius Carinus, the older brother of Numerianus, leading troops as *Augustus* in Eastern parts of the empire. After a time of civil war and a victory in

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>67</sup> For example in Athens we still have the remains of a fortification wall from that period.

<sup>68</sup> Williams, Diocletian and the Roman Recovery, p. 18ff.

<sup>69</sup> Alexander Demandt, Diokletian als Reformator, in: Alexander Demandt, Andreas Golz, Heinrich Schlange-Schönigen (Edit.), Diokletian und die Tetrarchie: Aspekte einer Zeitwende, Berlin 2004, p. 1–9, here p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> Kuhoff, Diokletian und die Epoche der Tetrarchie, p. 29–30.

a battle against Diocletian, Carinus was killed, apparently out of personal revenge (even if the motif is not completely comprehensible), and therefore made the decision clear: Diocletian had finally reached his legitimacy.<sup>71</sup>

But who was that man behind the title *Augustus*? Unfortunately very little is known about Diocletian's origins. He was born in Dalmatia, maybe close to Spalatum (today Split in Croatia) where he built a huge palace to spend his last years after his retirement. Besides this, also his *gens* isn't completely clear. Scholars think that he either must have been a freedman himself, or son of a freedman, in the household of the senator Anullinus. If Diocletian, then Diocles, has been a freedman himself, he would actually have been born a slave. Either way, he would have had belonged to the lowest status, and would not have received anything of what Romans counted as education.<sup>72</sup>

But in times like these, even men from utter social obscurity had a place where they could rise to great power: the army. The social status of the ordinary legionary soldier in the Roman Empire had always been high, but never as high as in the mid-third century when different military power centres were fighting for their existence. Soldiers were named *honestiores*, men of rank. For generations, the provinces of Danubia, including Dalmatia, had been regions of recruitments to fill the ranks of the army. These Danubian professional soldiers worked their way up through the crisis to the highest commands, as did Diocletian.<sup>73</sup>

What kind of empire did Diocletian now receive? The third century AD was a time of economical and social crisis. Combined pressures of invasions, civil wars, plagues and economic depression encouraged quick changes of emperors<sup>74</sup> as well as the rising of independent kingdoms within the empire (e.g. the Palmyrean kingdom of queen Zenobia). To curtail such developments, Diocletian had to react in different ways, but of course he also could not be everywhere at the same time, protecting his threatened borders. His first action after replacing the most important positions in administration was to appoint his fellow officer Maximianus *Caesar* and in 286 even *Augustus*, e.g. his equal co-emperor (Dyarchy).<sup>75</sup> In doing this he followed examples like the eight years of shared governance of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, the successors of Antoninus Pius. Together they already achieved some victories against invading tribes in Europe and Minor Asia. But this

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>72</sup> Williams, *Diocletian and the Roman Recovery*, p. 22.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>74</sup> In the 50 years between the assassination of Severus Alexander and the coup of Diocletian, almost all 15 „legitimate“ emperors died of a violent death after an average reign of about three years.

<sup>75</sup> Kuhoff, *Diokletian und die Epoche der Tetrarchie*, p. 31.

was not the end of Diocletian's reform. In March and May 293, Constantius and Galerius were appointed *Caesares*. The Tetrarchy was created.<sup>76</sup>

The empire was divided into four parts, leaving Diocletian with Thrace, Macedonia, Asia and Egypt, his *Caesar* Galerius Noricum, Pannonia and Moesia. In the West Maximian ruled over Italy and Africa, Constantius over Spain, Gaul and Britain. Still all four of them were supposed to rule the whole *Imperium Romanum* in *concordia* (harmony), as the Porphy statues in Venice that are bricked into the walls of San Marco suggest.<sup>77</sup>

After the installation of the Tetrarchy, the Emperors tried to stabilise the coinage by introducing the *folles*, a silver plated bronze coin. Tendencies to establish a new solid gold and silver currency built the foundation for the following late antiquity.<sup>78</sup> His economical efforts still have to be seen in connection with other reforms. After the peace contract with Narses in 298, where the Roman Empire even had territorial gain to record, finally peace could be founded in the Eastern provinces. Diocletian increased the number of soldiers in the army and restructured it. In the new parts of the Empire new fortifications and the *strata Diocletiana*, a street system connecting Damascus with Palmyra and the Euphrates, were build. The provinces were diminished and new administrative offices were created.<sup>79</sup>

For all these programs Diocletian needed money and therefore introduced a new taxation system. In consequence of the big constructions, the state increased the demand locally. To increase the purchasing power of gold helped to finance all this expensive investments, which came with the price of local inflation though. The Edict on Maximum prices therefore might be seen as an additional step to these expanding and moving governmental activities.<sup>80</sup>

### 3.3 Impact and open questions

One source has influenced the minds of scholars, concerning Diocletian's price edict, as no other has. Lactantius, a fourth century Christian writer under Constantine states in his work *De mortibus persecutorum*:

Lac.mort.persec. VII. 6-7: „Idem (Diocletianus) cum variis iniquitatibus immensam faceret caritatem, legem pretiis rerum venalium statuere conatus

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>77</sup> Hartwin Brandt, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit: von Diokletian und Konstantin bis zum Ende der konstantinischen Dynastie (283-363)*, Berlin 1998, p. 25.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>79</sup> Meissner, *Über Zweck und Anlass von Diokletians Preisedikt*, p. 88.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

est. Tunc ob exigua et vilia multus sanguis effusus, nec venale quicquam metu apparebat et caritas multo deterius exarsit, donec lex necessitate ipsa post multo rem exitium solveretur.<sup>81</sup>

He is writing a *vituperatio*, the opposite of a *panegyric*. In discrediting the immediate predecessors of Constantine, he enhanced Constantine's usurpation of power, what he makes clear himself by writing: "*Constantium praetereo, quoniam dissimilis ceterorum fuit dignusque qui solus orbem teneret.*" "I pass over Constantius, for he was unlike the others, and one who alone was worthy to rule the world."<sup>82</sup>

Instead of the traders, Lactantius blames Diocletian's greed for the inflation. It is true that with the division of the empire into four parts the cost for a bigger army rose. As well as the fortifying of the new borders must have caused local decline in prices, the main empire-wide inflation existed already before Diocletian and can mostly be seen as the fault of his predecessors, as already seen above.

The shedding of blood in connection with the Edict on prices has no parallel in any other source. It might have been only inspired by the penalty mentioned at the end of the *praefatio* for those breaking the law.<sup>83</sup>

The last thing Lactantius writes in this paragraph is, that the Edict was repealed shortly after its introduction. The inscription found in Aphrodisias shows revisions in the sea-freight section. That implies that enough times passed to allow for initial inscribing and later addition. The law therefore must have been working for at least some time, maybe until Diocletian retired in May 305.<sup>84</sup> Nevertheless, after Diocletian's reforms until the second decade of the fourth century, no variations in prices are attested what seems to prove the positive effect of the Edict.<sup>85</sup>

If we look at the author of *De mortibus persecutorum* (On the deaths of the persecutors), we find one important fact that might have influenced him on his comment on Diocletian and his deeds. This fact concerns Lactantius religious confession: He was a Christian. But how can this detail be essential to the reader?

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<sup>81</sup> „When he (Diocletian) had caused great inflation through his various misdeeds, he tried to establish a law on the prices of goods for sale; and then much blood was spilt over small and cheap items, while out of fear no goods appeared for sale and the inflation raged all the worse, until at last after the destruction of many people the law was of necessity repealed.“ Quoted after Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, p. 205.

<sup>82</sup> Lact. *mort. persec.* VII. 6-7. Translation after Ermantinger, *The Economic Reforms of Diocletian*, p. 76.

<sup>83</sup> Meissner, *Über Zweck und Anlass von Diokletians Preisedikt*, p. 84.

<sup>84</sup> Corcoran, *The Empire of the Tetrarchs*, p. 232.

<sup>85</sup> Meissner, *Über Zweck und Anlass von Diokletians Preisedikt*, p. 99.

Diocletian is known today for many things. But next to his political and economic reforms there is also one black spot in his deeds: the persecutions of Christians beginning in the year 303. Some scholars today doubt that Diocletian played the leading part in starting again these cruel actions and suggest his *Caesar* Galerius to have been the driving force behind the persecutions, as they raged most fiercely in provinces subjected to him. Anyhow, the Tetrarchs could not tolerate any religious movement that doubted the old Roman values, as their new government was build on a sacral ideology focusing mainly on Jupiter and Hercules.<sup>86</sup> Isn't it more likely that the Christian author, writing under a successor of Diocletian, was strongly influenced by the image of Diocletian as the last emperor who gave the order to disgrace and kill Christians?

### **Final summary**

The reforms of Diocletian can for sure be taken as important acts, which must have influenced economy of that time severely. The fragment from Aigeira however, allows us to examine especially the way officials handled such imperial degrees locally. The many mistakes and variations within orthography and some products make it likely that in the Greek mainland officials were forced to make individual translations.

Additionally the great extend of the index helps us to get a better understanding of everyday life and needs of the population in the Roman Empire around 300 AD.

An interesting topic for future research would be an archeobiological and archeozoological research program, focusing on the reconstructed antique environments of each plant or animal, named in the index.

### **Abbreviations**

- c. .... column
- den. .... denarii
- edit. .... editor
- gr. .... Greek
- Ibid. .... Ibidem
- Ital. p. .... Italian pound
- Ital. sext. .... Italian Sextar

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<sup>86</sup> Brandt, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit*, p. 25.



kast. mod. ....Kastrensis Modius  
 lat. ....Latin  
 p. ....page  
 transl. ....translator  
 X .....denarii

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## Appendix

### The index: transcription

The appendix will give a transcription of the products mentioned on Aigeira I. Completions are depicted in round brackets. For the original writing see figure 2-7.

1. (Τί)νας τιμάς εκάστου είδους ο(υδε)νί εξέσται  
υπ(ερβαίνει) υποτέτακτα(1)

Κεφ.

1. Σίτου κ.μο. α' X ρ'
2. Κρειθῆς κ.μο. α' X ξ'
3. Βρίζης κ.μο. α' X ξ'
4. Κένχρου κεκομμένου καθ(αροῦ) (κ.μο.) α' X ρ'
5. Κένχρου ἀκόπου κ.μο. α' X ν'
6. Μελίνης καθ(αρᾶς) κ.μο. α' X ν'
7. Πιστακίου (?) κ.μο. α' X --
8. -----
9. ----- ουλης κ.μο. α' -----
10. Ἐρβούλου κ.μο. α' -----
11. Φάβατος καθ(αροῦ) κ.μο. α' X ρ'
12. Φάβατος μή κεκαθαρμ(ένου) κ.μο. α' X ξ'
13. Φακῆς κ.μο. α' X ρ'
14. Λαθύρου κ.μο. α' X π'
15. Πίσου ἠλεσμένου κ.μο. α' X ρ'

16. Πίσσου μή ἠλεσμένου κ.μο. α' X ξ'
17. Ἐρεβίνθου κ.μο. α' X ρ'
18. Ἵ(Ο)ρόβου κ.μο. α' X ρ'
19. Βρόμου κ.μο. α' X λ'
20. Βουκέρατος κ.μο. α' X ρ'
21. Θέρμων ὠμῶν κ.μο. α' X ξ'
22. Θέρμων ἐφθῶν ιταλ. ξ. α' X δ'
23. Φασιώλου ξηροῦ κ.μο. α' X ρ'
24. Λινοσπέρμου κ.μο. α' X ρν'
25. Ὀρύζης καθ(αρᾶς) κ.μο. α' X ρν'
26. (Π)τισάνης καθ(αρᾶς) κ.μο. α' X ρ'
27. Αλικής καθ(αροῦ) κ.μο. α' X σ'
28. Σησάμου κ.μο. α' X σ'
29. Χορτοσπέρμου κ.μο. α' X λ'
30. Μηδικοῦ σπέρματος κ.μο. α' X ρν'
31. Καννάβεως σπέρματ(ος) κ.μο. α' X π'
32. Βικίας ξηρᾶς κ.μο. α' X π'
33. Μελανθίου κ.μο. α' X ρν'
34. Κυμίνου κ.μο. α' X σ'
35. Σπέρματος ῥαφανίνου κ.μο. α' X ρν'
36. Σιναπίου κ.μο. α' X ρν'
37. Σιναπίου (ε)ιργασμέν(ου) ξ. α' X η'

Κεφ.

1. Οἴνου
2. Πικήνου ιταλ. ξ. α' X λ'
3. Τιβουρτίνου ιταλ. ξ. α' X λ'

4. Ἄ(μιν)νίου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X λ'
5. Σαίτου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X λ'
6. Σερεντίνου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X λ'
7. Φαλέρνου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X λ'
8. Οἴνου παλαιοῦ πρώτου γεύματος ἰταλ. ξ. α' X κδ'
9. Οἴνου παλαιοῦ δευτέρου γεύματος ἰταλ. ξ. α' X ις'
10. Οἴνου χυδέου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X η'
11. Κερβησίας ἦτοι Μακάμου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X δ'
12. Ζύθους ἰταλ. ξ. α' X β'
13. Καρυήνου Μεονίου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X λ'
14. Χρυσαιτικοῦ ἰταλ. ξ. α' X κδ'
15. Ἐμετοῦ ἰταλ. ξ. α' X ις'
16. Ἐμέματοῦ ἰταλ. ξ. α' X κ'
17. Κονδείτου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X κδ'
18. Ἀψινθάτου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X κ'
19. Ροσάτου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X κ'

Κεφ.

1. Ἐλαίου ὀμφακίνου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X μ'
2. Δευτέρου γεύματος ἰταλ. ξ. α' X κδ'
3. Κιβαρίου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X ιβ'
4. Ἐλαίου ῥαφανίνου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X η'
5. Ὄξους ἰταλ. ξ. α' X ς'
6. Γάρους γεύματος πρωτίου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X ις'
7. Δευτέρου γεύματος ἰταλ. ξ. α' X ιβ'
8. Ἄλατος γασστροησίου μο. α' X ρ'

9. Σαλακονδείτου      ἰταλ. ξ. α' X η'
10. Μέλιτος πρωτείου      ἰταλ. ξ. α' X μ'
11. Μέλιτος δευτερίου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X κδ'
12. Μέλιτος φοινικίνου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X η'

Κεφ.

1. Κρέως χοιρείου      ἰταλ.λι. α' X ιβ'
2. Βοίου      ἰταλ.λι. α' X η
3. Αἰγείου ἢ προβατείου      ἰταλ.λι. α' X η'
4. Βούλβης      ἰταλ.λι. α' X κδ'
5. Σουμένου      ἰταλ.λι. α' X κ'
6. Συκωτοῦ      ἰταλ.λιτ. α' X ις'
7. Ἀλιστοῦ καλοῦ      ἰταλ.λίτ(ρα) X ις'
8. Πέρνας καλῆς Πετασῶνος ἤτοι Μαινα  
 (π)ικῆς ἢ Κερρειτανῆς      ἰταλ. λι. α' X κ'
9. Μαρσικῆς      ἰταλ. λι. α' X κ'
10. Στέατος νεαροῦ      ἰταλ. λι. α' X κ'
11. -----      ----- X ιβ'
12. Ὀνύχων δ'---- (τιμῆς τῆς) αὐτῆς ὄσης καί  
 τό κρέας πιπράσ(λεται) -----
13. Εἰσικίου χοιρείου      ὀγ. α' X β'
14. Εἰσικίου βοίου      λι. α' X ι'
15. Λυκανικῶν χοιρείων      λι. α' X ις'
16. Λυκανικῶν βοίων      λι. α' X ι'
17. Φασιανός τεθραμμένη      ----X σν'
18. Φασιανός βοσκός      ----X ρκε'
19. Φασιανή θήλεια τεθραμμένη      -----

20. Φασιανή βοσκή X ρ´
21. Χήν τεθραμμέμος X σ´
22. Χήν βοσκός X ρ´
23. Όρνίθων ζευγ(ος) α´ X ξ´
24. Πέρδιξ α´ X λ´
25. Τρυγών λιπαρά α´ X ις´
26. Βοσκή τρυγών α´ (X ιβ´)
27. Κιχλοκοσσύφων ι´ X ξ´
28. Φασσών ζευγος X κ´
29. Περιστερῶν ζευγος X κδ´
30. Άτταγήνα α´ X κ´
31. Νησσών ζευγος X μ´
32. Λαγός X ρν´
33. Κουνίκολος X μ´
34. Άμπελίωνα(ς) λιπαρούς ι´ X μ´
35. Άγρειοι ι´ X κ´
36. Σύκαλλοι ι´ X μ´
37. Στρουθοί ι´ X ις´
38. Μύες έλιοί ι´ X μ´
39. Πάων άρσης X τ´
40. Θήλια πάων X σ´
41. Κολεοί ι´ X κ´
42. Ψάρες ι´ X κ´
43. Συναγρίαου λι. α´ X ις´
44. Έλαφίου λι. α´ X ιβ´
45. Δορκείου ήτοι αιγαγρείου ή  
κεμαδίου λι. α´ X ιβ´

46. Γαλαθηνοῦ ἀπό γάλακτος λι. α' X ις'
47. Ἀρνίου λι. α' X ιβ'
48. Ἐριφείου λι. α' X ιβ'
49. Στέατος βοίου ἤτοι προβατείου λι. α' X ς
50. Βουτύρου λι. α' X ις'

Κεφ.

1. Ἰχθύος τραχέος θαλασσίου λι. α' X κδ'
2. Ἰχθύος δευτέρου λι. α' X ις'
3. Ἰχθύος ποταμίου καλλίστου λι. α' (X ιβ')
4. Ἰχθύος δευτέρου ποταμίου λι. α' X η'
5. Ἰχθύος παστοῦ λι. α' X ς'
6. Ὀστρίων ρ' X ρ'
7. Ἐχίνων ρ' X ν'
8. Ἐχίνου νεαροῦ κεκαθαρμένου ἰταλ. ξ. α' X ν'
9. Ἐχίνου παστοῦ ἰταλ. ξ. α' X ρ'
10. Σφόνδυλοι ρ' X ν'
11. Τυροῦ ξηροῦ λι. α' X ιβ'
12. Σαρδῶν ἤτοι σαρδειῶν (λι. α') X ις'

Κεφ.

1. Κινάραι πρωτεῖαι μεγάλαι ε' X ι'
2. Σφόνδυλοι κιναρῶν ι' X ς'
3. Ἴντουβοι πρωτεῖοι ι' X ι'
4. Ἴντουβοι δευτερεῖοι ι' X δ'
5. Μολόχαι πρωτεῖοι ε' X δ'
6. Δευτερεῖαι ι' X δ'

- 7. Θρειδάκων πρωτίων ε' X δ'
- 8. Θρειδάκων δευτερίων ι' X δ'
- 9. Κραμβῶν πρωτίων ε' X δ'
- 10. Κραμβῶν δευτερίων ι' X δ'

**Table of figures**

Fig. 1: The fragment from Aigeira. Epigraphical Museum, Athens. (Foto: Prantl 2009)

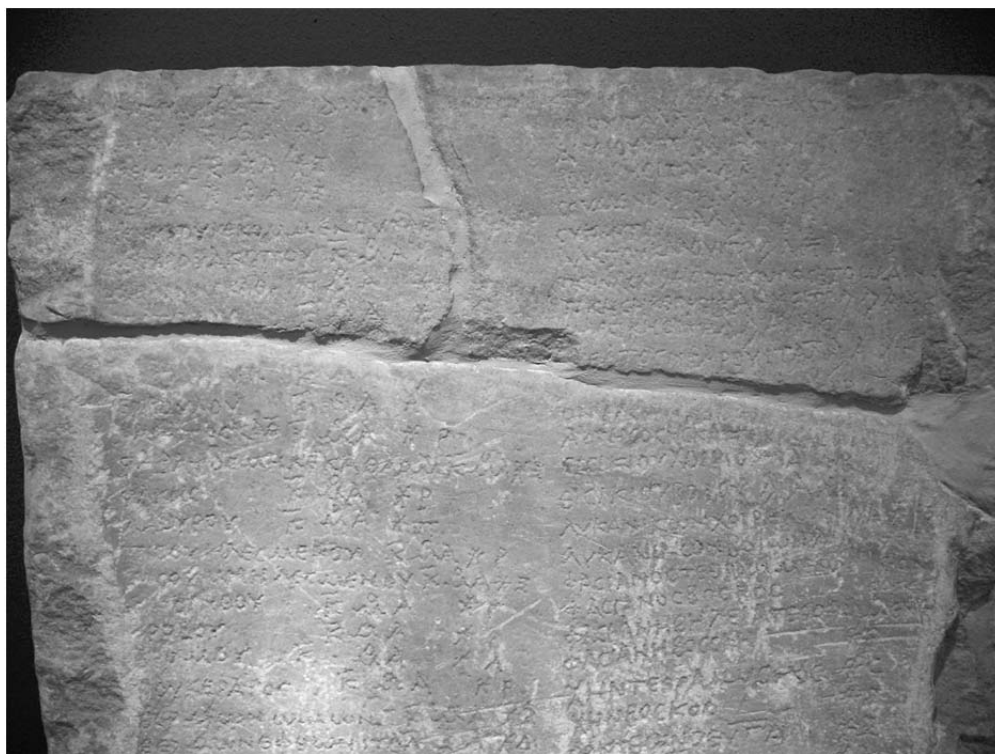




Fig. 2: Chapter I: ( Σταης 1899,c.149)

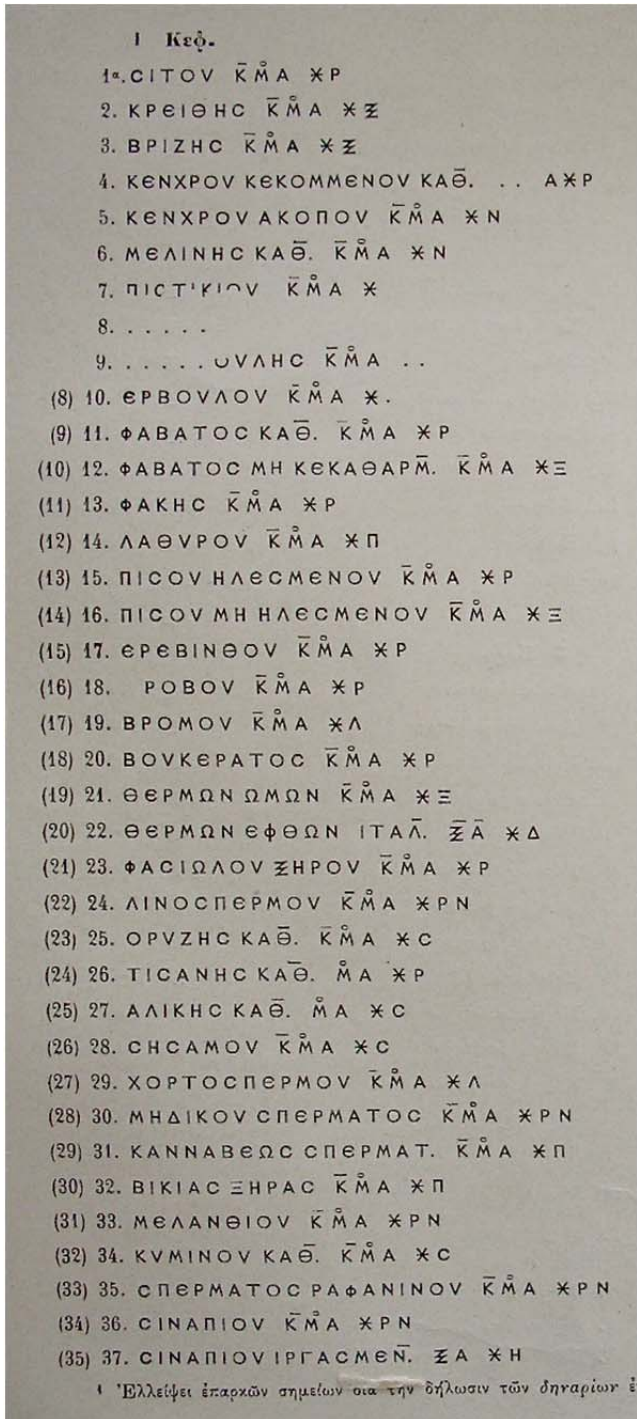


Fig. 3: Chapter II: (Σταης 1899, c.151)

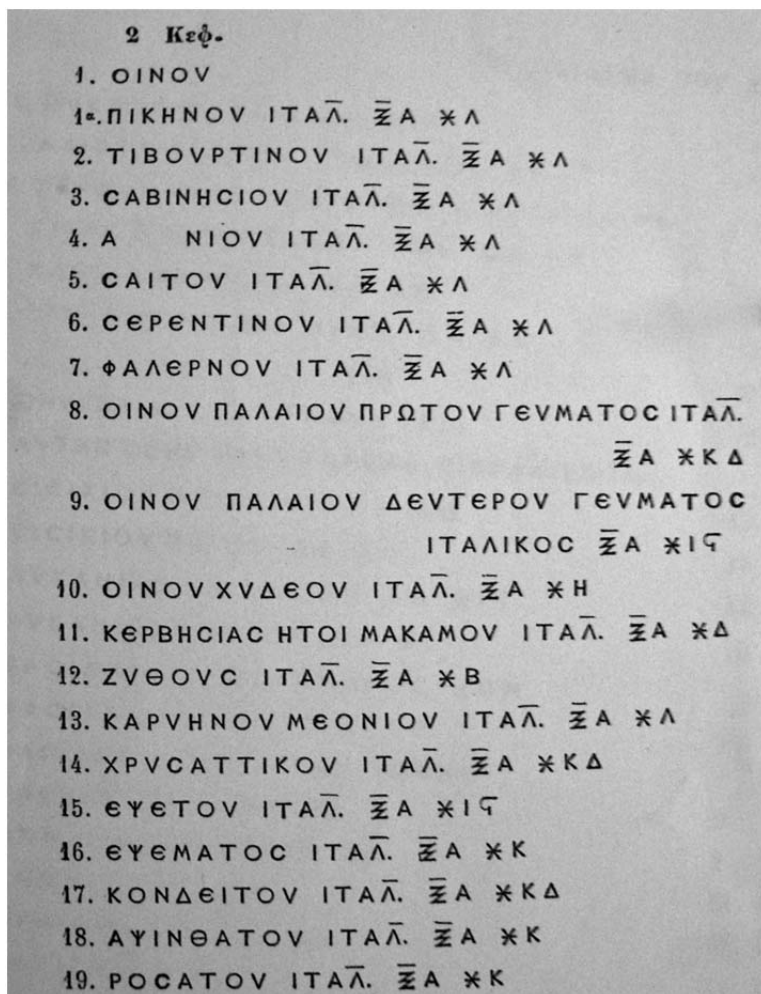


Fig. 4: Chapter III: (Σταης 1899, c.151)

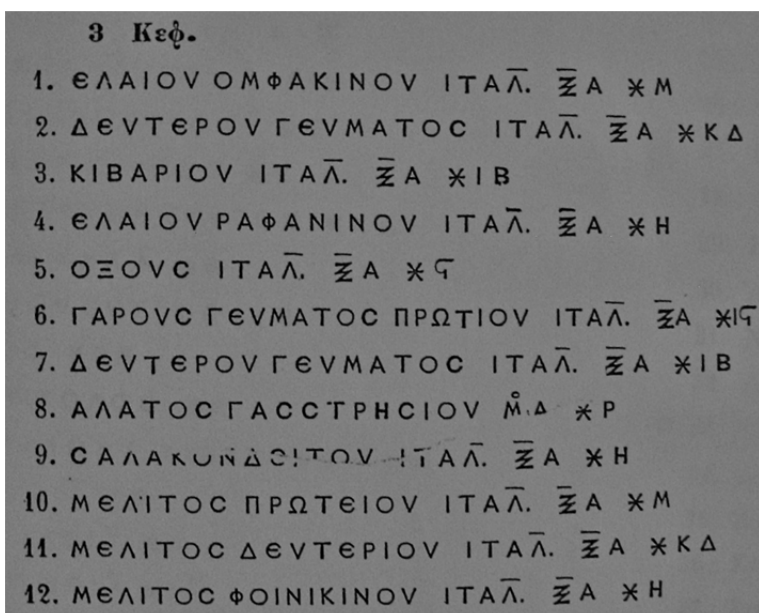
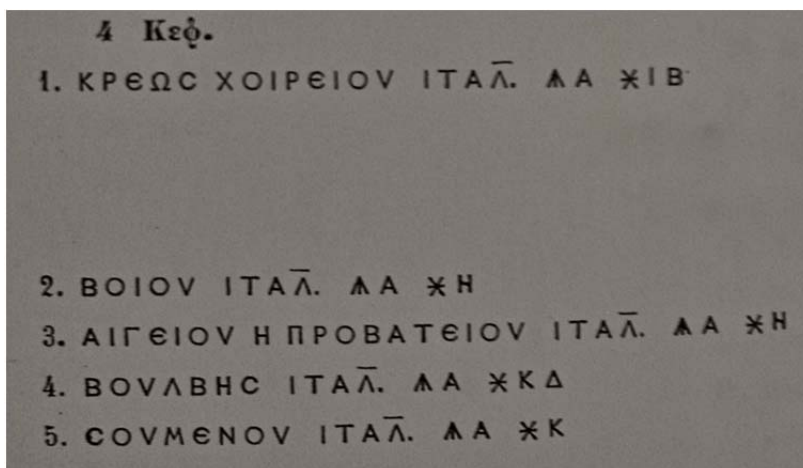


Fig. 5: Chapter IV: (Σταης 1899, c.151, 153, 155)



6. CΥΚΩΤΟΝ ΙΤΑΛ̄. ΛΑ ΨΙΓ
7. ΑΛΙΣΤΟΝ ΚΑΛΟΝ ΙΤΑΛ̄. ΛΙΤ̄. ΑΨΙΓ
8. ΠΕΡΝΑΣ ΚΑΛΗΣ ΠΕΤΑΣΩΝΟΣ ΗΤΟΙ ΜΑΙΝΑ  
ΤΙΚΗΣ Η ΚΕΡΡΕΙΤΑΝΗΣ ΙΤΑΛ̄. ΛΑ ΨΚ
9. ΜΑΡΣΙΚΗΣ ΙΤΑΛ̄. ΛΑ ΨΚ
10. ΣΤΕΑΤΟΣ ΝΕΑΡΟΝ ΙΤΑΛ̄. ΛΑ ΨΚ
11. . . . . ΨΙΒ
12. ΟΝΥΧΩΝ Δ. . . . . (ΤΙΜΗΣ ΤΗΣ)  
ΑΥΤΗΣ ΟΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΟ ΚΡΕΑΣ ΠΙΠΡΑΣ(ΚΕΤΑΙ)
13. ΕΙΣΙΚΙΟΝ ΧΟΙΡΕΙΟΝ ΓΑ ΨΒ
14. ΕΙΣΙΚΙΟΝ ΒΟΙΟΝ ΛΑ ΨΙ
15. ΛΥΚΑΝΙΚΩΝ ΧΟΙΡΕΙΩΝ ΛΑ ΨΙΓ
16. ΛΥΚΑΝΙΚΩΝ ΒΟΙΩΝ ΛΑ ΨΙ
17. ΦΑΣΙΑΝΟΣ ΤΕΘΡΑΜΜΕΝΟΣ ΨCΝ
18. ΦΑΣΙΑΝΟΣ ΒΟΣΚΟΣ ΨΡΚΕ
19. ΦΑΣΙΑΝΗ ΘΗΛΕΙΑ ΤΕΘΡΑΜΜΕΝΗ . . .
20. ΦΑΣΙΑΝΗ ΒΟΣΚΗ ΨΡ
21. ΧΗΝ ΤΕΘΡΑΜΜΕΝΟΣ ΨC
22. ΧΗΝ ΒΟΣΚΟΣ ΨΡ
23. ΟΡΝΙΘΩΝ ΖΕΥΓ̄. Ᾱ ΨΞ
24. ΠΕΡΔΙΞ Ᾱ ΨΛ

25. ΤΡΥΓΩΝ ΛΙΠΑΡΑ  $\bar{\Lambda}$  ΧΙΓ  
 26. ΒΟΣΚΗ ΤΡΥΓΩΝ  $\bar{\Lambda}$  ΧΙΒ  
 27. ΚΙΧΛΟΚΟΣΣΥΦΩΝ  $\bar{\Gamma}$  ΧΞ  
 28. ΦΑССΩΝ ΖΕΥΓΟΣ ΧΚ  
 29. ΠΕΡΙΣΤΕΡΩΝ ΖΕΥΓΟΣ ΧΚΔ  
 30. ΑΤΤΑΓΗΝΑ  $\bar{\Lambda}$  ΧΚ  
 31. ΝΗССΩΝ ΖΕΥΓΟΣ ΧΜ  
 32. ΛΑΓΟΣ ΧΡΝ  
 33. ΚΟΝΙΚΟΛΟΣ ΧΜ  
 34. ΑΜΠΕΛΙΩΝΑ ΛΙΠΑΡΟΝΣ  $\bar{\Gamma}$  ΧΜ  
 35. ΑΓΡΕΙΟ  $\bar{\Gamma}$  ΧΚ  
 36. ΣΥΚΑΛΛΟ  $\bar{\Gamma}$  ΧΜ  
 37. ΣΤΡΟΝΘΟ  $\bar{\Gamma}$  ΧΙΓ  
 38. ΜΥΕΣ ΕΛΙΟ  $\bar{\Gamma}$  ΧΜ  
 39. ΠΑΩΝ ΑΡΧΗΣ ΧΤ  
 40. ΘΗΛΙΑ ΠΑΩΝ ΧΣ  
 41. ΚΟΛΕΟ  $\bar{\Gamma}$  ΧΚ  
 42. ΥΑΡΕΣ  $\bar{\Gamma}$  ΧΚ  
 43. ΣΥΑΓΡΙΑΟΝ  $\bar{\Lambda}$  ΧΙΓ  
 44. ΕΛΑΦΙΟΝ  $\bar{\Lambda}$  ΧΙΒ  
 45. ΔΟΡΚΕΙΟΝ ΗΤΟΙ ΑΙΓΑΓΡΕΙΟΝ Η ΚΕ  
 ΜΑΔΙΟΝ  $\bar{\Lambda}$  ΧΙΒ  
 46. ΓΑΛΑΘΗΝΟΝ ΑΠΟ ΓΑΛΑΚΤΟΣ  $\bar{\Lambda}$  ΧΙΓ  
 47. ΑΡΝΙΟΝ  $\bar{\Lambda}$  ΧΙΒ

48. ΕΡΙΦΕΙΟΝ  $\bar{\Lambda}$  ΧΙΒ  
 49. ΣΤΕΑΤΟΣ ΒΟΙΟΝ ΗΤΟΙ ΠΡΟΒΑΤΕΙΟΝ  $\bar{\Lambda}$  ΧΓ  
 50. ΒΟΝΤΥΡΟΝ  $\bar{\Lambda}$  ΧΙΓ

Fig. 6: Chapter V: (Σταης 1899, c.155)

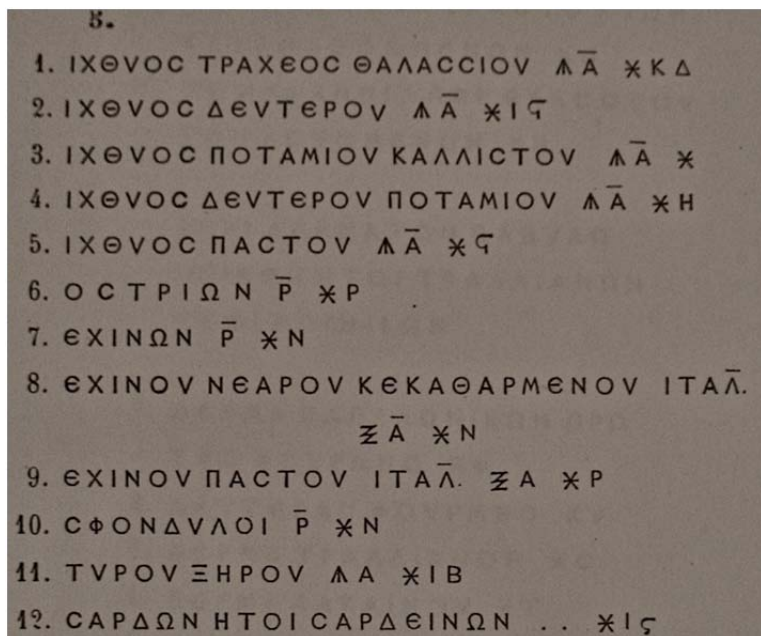
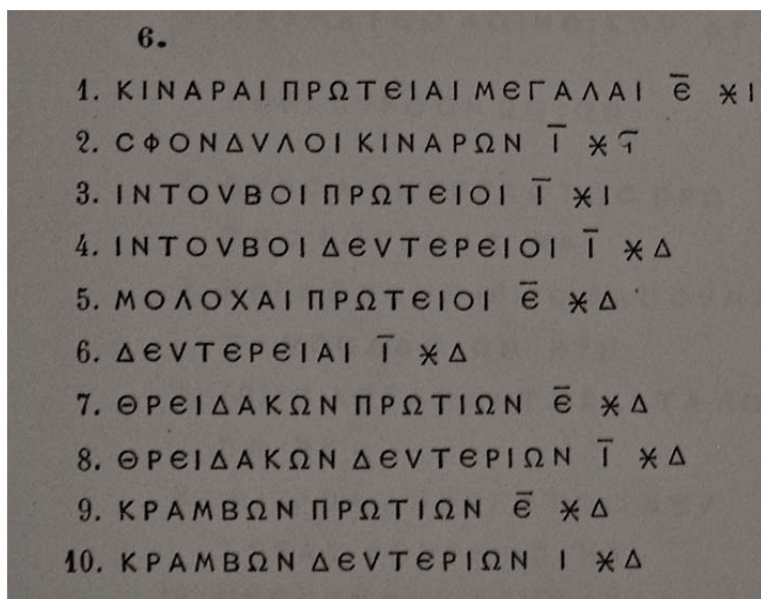


Fig. 7: Chapter VI: (Σταης 1899, c.155)



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