

Editor's preface

The Edict of Maximum Prices was issued in AD 301 in the name of the emperors of the First Tetrarchy, the Augusti Diocletian and Maximian, and their Caesars Galerius and Constantius. It is known generally as Diocletian's Prices Edict and consists of a long Preamble that describes the Edict's purpose (to curb the rampant greed of retailers) and a long list of goods and services whose prices it was illegal on the pain of death to exceed. The list has some 1400 items arranged in seventy chapters of widely varied length and subject. The items included range from prices for lions for the games and horses for chariot-racing (most expensive) to prices for vegetables and wages for attendants at the baths (least expensive). The text represents a remarkable cross-section of the Roman economy of its time.

Imperial edicts were a favoured medium of Tetrarchic rule, and the Prices Edict is the best known and best preserved because it was widely inscribed, probably on the initiative of provincial governors. Larger and smaller parts of the Edict's text are known from inscribed versions in more than forty different places, mainly (or only) from the eastern half of the empire – principally in the provinces of Achaia, Crete-Cyrene, and Caria-Phrygia. The highly rhetorical Preamble is always found in the original Latin, while the list of maximum prices was always translated into Greek at sites in Achaia. Elsewhere the list was inscribed in Latin.

The fullest known version of the Edict and list of maximum prices was inscribed at Aphrodisias, and the Aphrodisias example is also the best preserved of all known versions—c. 40 per cent of the whole text survives at Aphrodisias. The present volume has two complementary aims: (1) to present a full text of the Edict, based on the Aphrodisias inscription supplemented by other surviving versions as necessary, and (2) to present the full archaeology of the Edict's inscription on the Civil Basilica at Aphrodisias—which can be reconstructed in unusual detail. The Edict is a remarkable text, and its inscription at Aphrodisias is one of the most striking monuments of public writing in the ancient world.

From its surviving versions, it is possible to arrive at a near-complete 'consolidated' text of the whole edict, and starting from the Aphrodisias version, a new numeration of some of the chapters is presented here. The volume also provides translations into English and Turkish. It includes too a text and translation of separate fragmentary Tetrarchic edicts that sought in some way to regulate the currency. This Currency Dossier, inscribed at the Basilica in Aphrodisias with the Prices Edict, is not known elsewhere.

Fragments of the Prices Edict were found at Aphrodisias in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and some large pieces

were recovered at the site in the 1937 campaign led by Giulio Jacopi. Many more fragments and large parts of its inscribed panels were recovered by Kenan Erim in excavation at the Basilica, mainly in 1970 and 1971, together with the fragments of the Currency Dossier (Pls. 4–6). Further fragments of both edicts have been recovered since, up to recent campaigns in 2018 and 2019.

The Aphrodisias version of the Prices Edict and the new currency dossier were presented and studied in a series of articles by Kenan Erim, Joyce Reynolds, and Michael Crawford,¹ supplemented by articles on the Aezani text of the Prices Edict by Crawford and Reynolds.² This phase of research on the Aphrodisias evidence was pulled together by Joyce Reynolds in 1989.³

A new, archaeo-epigraphic phase of research started in 1999 when Phil Stinson began both a study of the architecture of the Basilica and a long collaboration with Michael Crawford to work out, on both epigraphic and architectural grounds, precisely where and how this long text was inscribed at the Basilica. From the excavation of many fragments at the front of the Basilica in 1970–71, Joyce Reynolds had concluded in 1989: 'It is now safe to regard this as the place in which the text was displayed'.⁴

Phil Stinson has been able to show conclusively that much greater precision is possible. The Edict was not displayed in front of the Basilica but was actually inscribed on its exterior, directly onto the marble-panelled screen that formed its engaged columnar north façade. This context and the first fruits of several years of collaboration (1999–2001) of Crawford and Stinson were presented separately by Crawford in 2002 and Stinson in 2016.⁵ They have continued their collaboration since.

1 K. T. Erim and J. M. Reynolds, 'The Copy of Diocletian's Edict on Maximum Prices from Aphrodisias in Caria', *Journal of Roman Studies* 60 (1970), 120–41; K. T. Erim, J. M. Reynolds, and M. Crawford, 'Diocletian's Currency Reform. A New Inscription at Aphrodisias', *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 171–7; K. T. Erim and J. M. Reynolds, 'The Aphrodisias Copy of Diocletian's Edict on Maximum Prices', *Journal of Roman Studies* 63 (1973), 99–110.

2 M. H. Crawford and J. M. Reynolds, 'The publication of the Prices Edict: a new inscription from Aezani', *Journal of Roman Studies* 65 (1975), 160–3; 'The Aezani copy of the Prices Edict', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 26 (1977), 125–51; and 'The Aezani copy of the Prices Edict', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 34 (1979), 163–210.

3 In *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (London 1989), 253–317.

4 *Ibid.* 265.

5 M. H. Crawford, 'Discovery, autopsy, and progress: Diocletian's jigsaw puzzles', in T. P. Wiseman (ed.), *Classics in Progress* (London 2002), 145–63; P. Stinson, *Aphrodisias VII. The Civil Basilica* (Wiesbaden 2016).

Stinson's study of the Basilica, built c. AD 100, reconstructed a huge roofed structure (L: 145 m, W: 30 m) of considerable grandeur and designed for business and administration. It was surely where the late antique governor gave judgement, on the splendid raised tribunal in the more elevated and architecturally extravagant hall with which the building's interior terminated at its south end.⁶ The Edict was inscribed on the north façade, the building's principal entrance, where three doorways were framed by colossal engaged columns between which was an elaborate marble screen carved in imitation of three tiers of wooden panelling (here Fig. 4).

More recent research has shown that the grand space onto which the north façade looked, formerly known as the 'South Agora', is now more correctly to be identified as a grand urban park called in late antiquity 'the Place of Palms'. It featured a 170-m long pool and was surrounded by Ionic colonnades into which the north façade of the Basilica was eventually integrated on its south side.⁷

Crawford's work on the epigraphic side has been helped by Simon Corcoran, Benet Salway, Joyce Reynolds, Ulrike Roth, and Charlotte Roueché. Stinson's work on the Edict as an epigraphic monument and its precise movement across the panelled façade of the Basilica presented in this volume (Ch. 2) has been greatly assisted by Julia Lenaghan. Stinson also prepared the set of drawings that accompany the text, and Lenaghan has collected the inventory numbers, find-places, notebook references, measurements, photographs, and first publication reference for every surviving fragment of the Edict as inscribed at Aphrodisias (Appendix 2). This work has allowed the positioning and numbering of all the surviving fragments in the graphic reconstructions presented here (Figs. 6–13). They give a detailed panel-by-panel and chapter-by-chapter reconstruction of the whole Edict. The reconstructions include some 275 inscribed marble fragments, large and small.

The north façade of the Basilica and the Edict of Maximum Prices are currently the objects of a five-year research and restoration project, begun in 2018, generously funded by Mr Murat Ülker and pladis (Pls. 1–3). The idea is to restore part of the façade of the Basilica where it faces onto the Urban Park and to display both the context and the text of Diocletian's Prices Edict. Not enough survives of the façade for a full anastylosis; instead the project is making a partial anastylosis that can represent the form and monumentality of the building's front (Pl. 2). The Edict is displayed on a light steel construction supporting modern text panels, set up in line with the side walls of the Basilica at its northern end (Pl. 3). The panels transcribe the Latin text and its Turkish and English translation as prepared for this volume.

It remains to thank the authors, collaborators, and sponsors who have made this volume possible – for their patience and generosity that have seen this work to publication. Special thanks are due to Mr Murat Ülker for his far-sighted interest in Diocletian's Prices Edict, to the Loeb Classical Library Foundation at Harvard University for a handsome grant to publish this volume, and to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye that make all our work at Aphrodisias possible.

R. R. R. Smith
Oxford, June 2023

6 Stinson, *Civil Basilica* (n. 5), 37–53.

7 A. Wilson, B. Russell, and A. Ward, 'Excavations in an urban park ('South Agora'), 2012' in R. R. R. Smith et al. (eds.), *Aphrodisias Papers 5: Excavation and Research at Aphrodisias, 2006–2012* (Portsmouth, RI: *Journal of Roman Archaeology* Supplement 103, 2016), 77–90.

Author's preface

This volume forms the second dealing with the Civil Basilica at Aphrodisias—its architecture and epigraphy. It contains the text of the Prices Edict and of the Currency Dossier, both issued by the Roman emperor Diocletian and his colleagues and inscribed on the façade of the Basilica. The text of the Prices Edict has been assigned to the appropriate intercolumniation and level of the façade and supplemented on the basis of the other Latin copies and the Greek translations; it is in part on the basis of the evidence from Aphrodisias that we can now reconstruct almost the whole edict, with no more than a handful of missing, and a slightly larger number of incomplete lines.¹ Only the chapters on purple clothing (Ch. 57) and ‘pigmenta’ (Ch. 68), and the revised chapter on water transport (Ch. 70) remain seriously incomplete. The other copies and versions are cited only insofar as they provide evidence to supplement the Aphrodisias copy: no attempt is made to provide a complete list of variant readings even for the Latin copies, let alone for the Greek versions, interesting though these would undoubtedly be in the context of a study of the diffusion of information in the Roman Empire.²

There is, however, one substantial unresolved problem: when I first began to work on Ch. 67, I thought that its difficulties derived from the fragmentary nature of the Greek translations. But a recently published Latin fragment of Ch. 68 makes it clear that there were two versions of that chapter, and I now think that Ch. 67 also existed in two versions (see below, Ch. 4, Parallel Texts, for details); the problem cannot at present be resolved and it is to be hoped both that it will not need a further three centuries for enough evidence to accrue and that there are no further chapters in two (or more) versions to be discovered.

It follows, however, from what has just been said, that the text printed below is as complete as it is currently possible to

make it; in any case, it incorporates a definitive numbering of the chapters. The material available up to then was published by Joyce Reynolds in 1989.³ I have incorporated significant discoveries since, that are known to me, but have made no attempt to include fragments that consist of no more than a few letters. I am grateful to Angelos Chaniotis, the successor to Joyce Reynolds as the Aphrodisias epigrapher, for sharing with me the texts of recently discovered pieces.

In particular, the text of the Preamble printed here offers the form of the Imperial titulatures as they appeared at Aphrodisias, but otherwise simply the traditional consolidated text, to which neither Aphrodisias nor indeed other discoveries since S. Lauffer's edition of 1971 offers anything new.

The text is also accompanied, for the first time in some eighty years, by an English translation; the commentary by contrast is austere, partly because there seems to be no point in repeating information to be found in the Lauffer edition, partly because a vernacular translation is in many respects a replacement for a commentary; the volume as a whole, indeed, should be seen as a supplement to the Lauffer edition.

The volume also includes the present state of the text of the Currency Dossier at Aphrodisias, certainly inscribed after the Prices Edict had been inscribed; and the Introduction attempts to understand the two initiatives in relation to each other, drawing also on the edict of Fulvius Asticus at Aezani, a revised text of which forms Appendix 1. My principal interest in all these texts is in what they can tell us about the history of the ancient economy.⁴ Both the Prices Edict and the Currency Dossier are of some complexity; of the latter no other copy has yet been discovered; and the former has nothing that could be described as a twin.⁵ David Langslow has confirmed the acceptability of some of the more surprising Latin forms, for which I am most

1 See M. Crawford, ‘Discovery, autopsy, and progress: Diocletian's jigsaw puzzles’, in T. P. Wiseman (ed.), *Classics in Progress* (London 2002), 145–63, for the history of discovery of copies of the Edict and the genesis of a (very nearly) complete text; I could there have observed that the existence of the Edict does not seem to have impinged on Gibbon. I should like with the usual disclaimer to thank John-Peter Wild, Dominic Rathbone, and audiences at the British School in Athens and the British School at Rome, and participants in meetings of the British Epigraphy Society (London) and Ancient Law in Context workshops (Edinburgh), in a CEDANT workshop (Pavia), and in a London workshop on the Currency Dossier for helpful comments, on the last occasion my colleagues Benet Salway and Simon Corcoran, along with Elio Lo Cascio, in particular.

2 All known copies come from the eastern part of the Empire, apart from the Pettorano fragment, which in my view was transferred from Achaia to Italy in modern times; that said, the revised chapter on water transport contains many more western points of departure and arrival, presumably with western input.

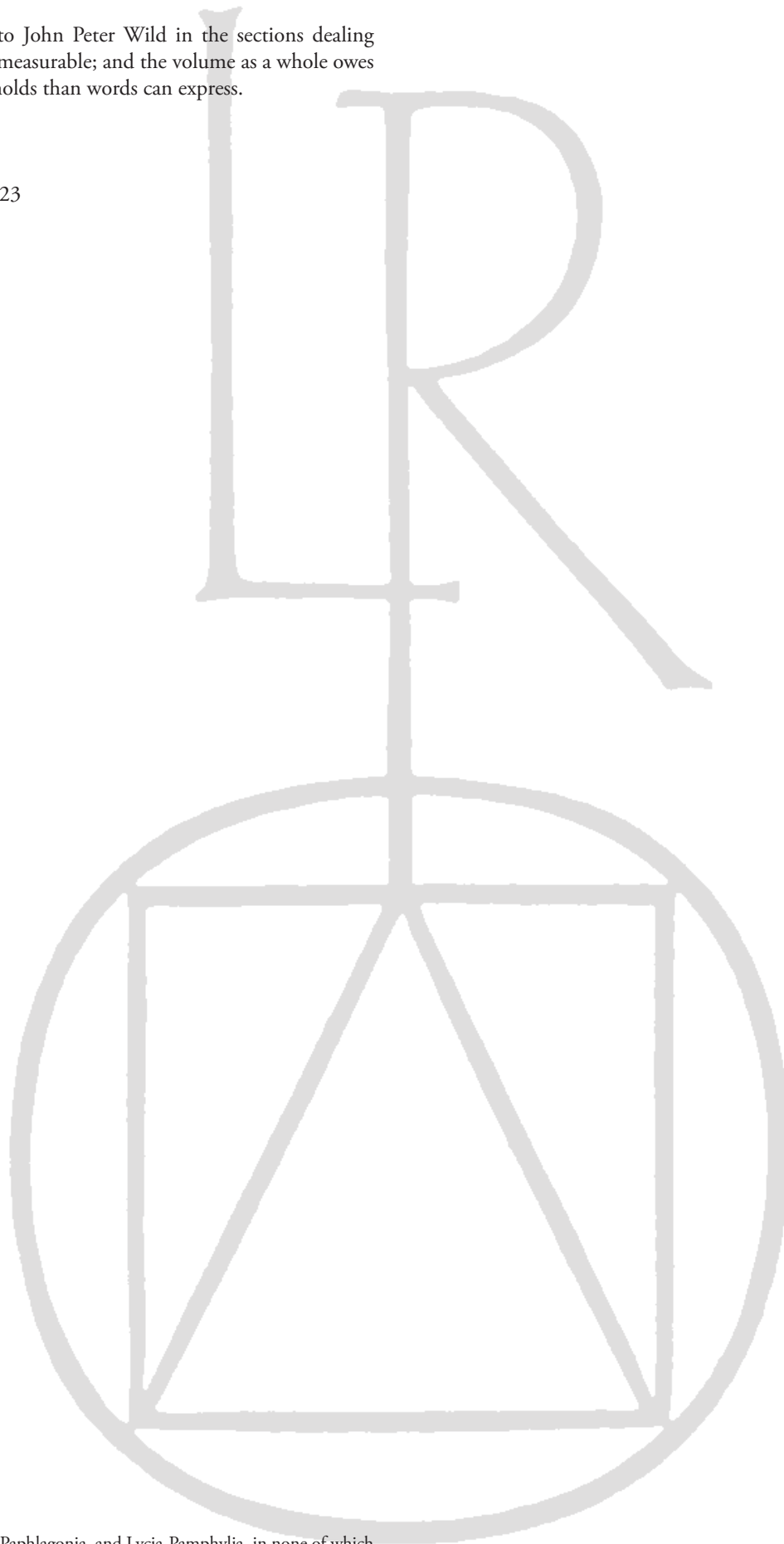
3 J. M. Reynolds, in C. Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (London 1989), 265–317, preceded by the Currency Dossier, 252–65.

4 See M. Crawford, ‘From Alcibiades to Diocletian: slavery and the economy in the longue durée’, in U. Roth (ed.), *By the Sweat of your Brow* (London 2010), 61–73.

5 For the suggestion that the Caesariani Preamble, the first Caesariani Decree, the Edictum de Accusationibus and the second Caesariani Decree form a multiply disseminated Galerian dossier of AD 305, see S. Corcoran, ‘Galerius' jigsaw puzzle’, *Antiquité Tardive* 15 (2007), 221–50; the pattern of epigraphic distribution, as far as can be ascertained, has some similarities to that of the Prices Edict, spread across provinces in the southern Balkans and Asia Minor, including Crete, and with the texts, otherwise circulated in Latin, displayed in Greek in Achaia (*IG* II–III² 1121, now 13249 [Athens]). Note that Corcyra, with a Latin copy (*CIL* III 578 = *IG* IX/4, 797; now *AE* 2002.1302), was in the province of Epirus (Vetus), not Achaia. In Asia Minor, no copies have been found in Phrygia-Caria (probably divided into at least three provinces by 305),

grateful; my debt to John Peter Wild in the sections dealing with clothing is unmeasurable; and the volume as a whole owes more to Joyce Reynolds than words can express.

Michael Crawford
London, March 2023



but rather in Asia, Paphlagonia, and Lycia-Pamphylia, in none of which have fragments of the Prices Edict as yet been found.