AN EDICT OF DIOCLETIAN, FIXING A MAXIMUM OF PRICES THROUGHOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE

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An edict of Diocletian, fixing a maximum of prices throughout the Roman empire by Diocletianus & W. M. Leake

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THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

A.D. 303.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

MDCCCXXVI.

As the following pages form the Sequel of a part of the "Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor," &c. they have been printed uniformly with that work, in order to admit of their being bound up at the end of the Appendix.

PRELIMINARY NOTE.

VERY soon after the "Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor" was printed, Mr. W. Bankes presented lithographic copies of the Latin inscription of Stratoniceia described in pages 229 and 329 of that work to the libraries of the British Museum and of the University of Cambridge. Nearly about the same time Mr. L. Vescovali of Rome brought to England the tracing of a Latin inscription from a stone which he found in the possession of a gentleman at Aix in Savoy, who had been travelling in the Levant*.

M. Vescovali, on looking over the inscriptions of Sherard and Chishull in the British Museum, was surprised to find that the inscription at Aix was a portion of the same Imperial Edict which had been transcribed at Eskihissár (Stratoniceia) in part by Sherard, and more completely by Mr. Bankes. Being acquainted with the remarks which I had published on Sherard's transcript of this inscription, M. Vescovali communicated his discovery to me, and at the same time was so kind as to allow me to examine the tracing which he had brought from Aix, and to take a copy of it. I found that the stone at Aix contained only a portion (the first two-thirds) of the imperial ordinance, without any part of the catalogue of priced commodities which was the object of it; and that even this portion is rendered incomplete by the fracture of the stone at either end. On the other hand, the inscription at Aix supplies several defective places in Mr. Bankes's copy; and in particular it preserves at

* I have not yet been able to learn exactly where the stone was found.

the beginning the names and titles of the reigning sovereigns, which are entirely deficient on the monument of Eskihissár. These names and titles, indeed, are not quite complete in the inscription at Aix, as might be supposed from what has just been stated as to the fracture of the stone; but the lacunæ are easily supplied. From the part which is preserved it appears that an emperor, whose name is wanting, was in his 7th consulship, and the 18th year of the imperial dignity; that Maximian was at the same time in his 6th consulship, and in the 17th year of his imperial dignity; and that Constantius and Galerius were Cæsars. Hence it is certain that the deficient name was that of Diocletian, and that the date of the Edict is the 303rd year of the Christian æra, when Diocletian and Maximian were respectively in the above-mentioned years of their consulships and imperial dignities.

From a comparison of M. Vescovali's impression of the stone at Aix with the transcript from Eskihissár by Sherard and Bankes, I have endeavoured to obtain as much as possible of the entire Decree. Of an ordinance intended for promulgation throughout the Roman empire, and of which both the existing ancient copies were executed in distant parts of the empire, where the Latin language was not in general use, and probably by illiterate engravers, it could hardly be expected to obtain an exact counterpart as it issued from the imperial chancery, even if the inscriptions were in perfect preservation, and we had before us the original monuments themselves, or casts or tracings of them. As it happens, we have the tracing of a part only of one of the ancient copies, all the remainder of the composition being derived from two modern transcripts of the other ancient duplicate. These, although executed by careful and experienced hands, yet having been made from an original in many parts ill-preserved, which seems to have been engraved by a Greek workman, and which was never completely finished, are of course liable to orthographical errors. Under such circumstances I have thought it sufficient for the present purpose to separate the words, and to print them in common type wherever there could be no doubt about them; leaving it to those who are more skilled in the language to restore the

grammatical construction of the Ordinance which precedes the List of Commodities. Wherever the words could not be made out satisfactorily, I have inserted the capital letters from Mr. Bankes's transcript, as well as they could be imitated in print; in doing which it has been necessary to express the Γ (S) of the Eskihissár inscription by a Greek gamma, and the Λ (A) by a Greek lambda. The characters in the copy of the Edict at Aix, although rudely formed, more nearly resemble the usual lapidary writing of that age. They are $\frac{5}{8}$ths of an inch in height.

As M. Vescovali's copy is a fac-simile, I have followed it literally as far as it goes, noting the *variantes* in the transcripts of Sherard and Bankes as far as they appeared to be of any importance. For the conclusion of the Decree, and the entire List of Commodities, I have followed Mr. Bankes's copy, noting the variations in Sherard's, whose transcript does not contain a catalogue half so long as that of Mr. Bankes, nor is it so complete as far as it extends *. The original copiers or engravers of the Decree having continually confounded B with U or V, and E with Æ, I have not thought it necessary to follow these errors in the parts taken from Sherard and Bankes, but have written the words in the usual orthography: in like manner I have occasionally corrected, but in this instance not without a sign of indication †, those evident mistakes of one letter for another, which have been caused either by the ignorance of the original engravers, or by the doubtful appearance which many of the characters, rudely formed at first, and now half obliterated by time, may have presented to the eyes of the modern transcriber.

W. M. Leake.

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* The inscription at Eskihissár is on the external wall of a marble prostyle edifice, probably the βουλευτήριον or court-house of Stratonicela. Mr. Bankes obtained the part of the inscription not copied by Sherard by clearing away the earth from the wall.

† The restored or corrected letters are placed between brackets of this form ( ).