

# THE EDICT OF DIOCLETIAN AND A THEodosIAN REGULATION AT CORINTH

(PLATE 52)

TWENTY YEARS AGO James Wiseman edited an inscription, found in the excavation of the Corinth Gymnasium by the University of Texas, as a Greek-Latin nonsense inscription. This article will provide a new interpretation for it and present another Late Roman regulation from Corinth.<sup>1</sup>

1 (I-70-13)

Pl. 52:a

A single fragment of fine-grained, gray-white-blue marble, broken all around, finished on back. Parts of five lines in Latin mixed uncial lettering, with thin guide lines visible on top part of lines 2–4. Found August 3, 1970 in the Gymnasium excavations (FL 6). Published in *Hesperia* 41, 1972, “The Gymnasium Area at Corinth, 1969–1970,” no. 29, pp. 40–41. H. 0.073, W. 0.097, T. 0.037 m. L.H. 0.006–0.013, space between lines 0.001–0.003, average letter space 0.0074 m.

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..... ut praESCRIPto metu compesceretur audacia,  
quod rARUM ADMODum est humanam condicionem  
sponte BENEFICAM deprehendi et semper praecep-  
tor metuS IUSTISSIMus officiorum invenitur es-  
5 se moderator, pLACET, ut. . . .  
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“... to restrain insolence by attaching a prescribed penalty—since it is indeed rare to find the human nature spontaneously tending to the good, and since, as a guide, fear is always found the most suitable preceptor in the fulfillment of duties—it is ordered that. . . .”

*Line 1:* Bottom part of *p* damaged.

*Line 2:* Only the bottom right tip of the oblique stroke of the first letter survives.

*Line 3:* More than half of the first letter is visible. Although there are no other occurrences of *b*, the expectable form of its uncial appearance is highly compatible with the traces on the marble.

*Line 4:* The top parts of the dotted letters are visible.

*Line 5:* Most of the bottom part of the line has been lost. Only *ce* is certainly legible.

<sup>1</sup> The present article is a part of an ongoing study that is expected to publish all the Late Roman and Byzantine inscriptions in Corinth not assigned to other people as well as all the previously published ones. I wish to thank very cordially Dr. Charles Williams, II, Director of the Corinth excavations, for suggesting this challenging and most rewarding task to me, as well as for his valuable help and for the permission to study and republish I-70-13 and to publish Corinth I-2684 for the first time. I also wish to thank the Reinhold Ekholm Foundation (Finland) for the scholarship that made a second field trip to Corinth and the completion of this article possible.

The text itself, chapter 18 of the preamble to Diocletian's Edict on Prices, does not show any discrepancies when compared with the two other fragments recording the same passage.<sup>2</sup>

The Corinth fragment corroborates the theory that the preamble was written in Latin,<sup>3</sup> but the tariff was translated into Greek at least in the province of Achaia.<sup>4</sup> Until now, Oitylos has been the sole place in Achaia with fragment(s) exclusively in Latin. The other places in Achaia have either Latin preambles with the tariff in Greek<sup>5</sup> or only fragments of the Greek tariff.<sup>6</sup>

It is estimated that the Corinth fragment had 40 letters on a given line, which would indicate a column width of *ca.* 0.30 m. Probably there were several columns in the preamble, possibly two or three, so that its some 190 lines could be read with convenience.<sup>7</sup>

2 (I-2684)

Pl. 52:b

A single fragment of grayish white marble, from a slab smoothly finished on the back, less well on the front. Broken all around. The marble probably belonged to a revetment, whose back has been sawn, perhaps purposely, for the inscription. Parts of three lines in lank Late Roman lettering. Found March 31, 1965 in Koutomatza, in a field of Ioannis Sophos, southwest of the Amphitheater (probably grid PQ 15–16). Unpublished.

H. 0.135, W. 0.17, T. 0.045 m. L.H. 0.03–0.038, space between lines 0.013–0.018, average letter space 0.0166 m.

[ Ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας κ(αὶ?) ν(ε?)ίκης κ(αὶ?) αἰωνίου διαμονῆς τῶν ]  
 [δεσποτ]ῶν τῆς οἰκο[υμένης Φλ(αβίου) Ἀρκαδίου κ(αὶ?) Φλ(αβίου) Ὀνω-  
 ρίου κ(αὶ?) ]  
 [Φλ(αβίου Θεοδ]οσίου τῶν αἰω[νίων κ(αὶ?) τροπαιούχων Αὐγ(ούστων?) ]  
 [διετυπ]ῶθη μεταξὺ [τῶν Ἑλληνίδων πόλεων εἰς ταῦτὸ . . . ]

“[In the name of Safety and Victory and the Eternal Endurance of the Emper]ors of the Oiko[umene Flavius Arcadius, Flavius Honorius, and Flavius Theod]osius, [triumphing *Augusti* for] life,

<sup>2</sup> Cf. plate LXXXIV in *Edictum Diocletiani et Collegarum de pretiis rerum venalium* II, M. Giacchero, ed., Genoa 1974, where the Corinth fragment would have to be placed with line numbers 130–135. Note, however, that in the present article reference to fragments and their place of provenience will be an Anglicized version of the toponyms in *Diokletians Preisedikt*, S. Lauffer, ed., Berlin 1971.

<sup>3</sup> Of the 15 Latin fragments previously found in Greece (the province of Achaia along with Samos and Crete), the following 11 pertain to the preamble: Delphi II–V, XII, XIII (cf. J. Bingen, “Le fragment 13 de l’Edit du Maximum,” *BCH* 108, 1984, pp. 543–544), Gytheion I, Knossos I, Oitylos, Plataia I, and Tegea I. The remainder of fragments from the Greek islands (Hierapytna, Knossos II, III, and Samos) belong to the tariff itself. On a palaeographical note, only Plataia I and the Samos fragments seem to have been executed in uncial or mixed uncial lettering comparable to that of the Corinth fragment.

<sup>4</sup> For the exceptional Pettorano fragment in Italy, cf. Lauffer (note 2 above), pp. 1–2 with note 5.

<sup>5</sup> Delphi, Gytheion, Plataia, and Tegea.

<sup>6</sup> Aidespos, Aigeira, Argos, Asine, Atalante, Athens, Boiai (cf. *BullEp* 1974, p. 247), Elateia, Geronthrai, Karystos, Kleitor, Lebadeia, Megalopolis, Megara, Pharai, Skolos, Tamynai, Thebes, Thelpusa (cf. *BullEp* 1974, p. 82), Thespiiai, and Troizen.

<sup>7</sup> As Lauffer has observed ([note 2 above] p. 2, note 8), the general appearance and the arrangement of the Edict in the monuments has not been a theme of an in-depth study. Therefore the proposal of a text field *ca.* 0.65 × 0.95 m. in size for the preamble should be considered as conjectural.

[a regulation] was passed between [the Greek cities (meeting) in the same place. . . .]”

*Line 2:* The top of the line is lost. Only nu is certain, but the bottom parts of the more severely damaged letters allow it to be read along the lines of this usual form of imperial titulature, also present in the parallel text mentioned in note 8 below.

*Line 3:* The first letter, probably omicron, has a trace of its right lunar stroke visible on the edge of the stone.

*Line 4:* The right, slightly lunar stroke of omega is preserved. The last letter could also be read as chi. Note the special form of ksi.

This inscription has an obvious parallel in a Megarian document among others.<sup>8</sup> There is no concrete evidence upon which to establish the precise width of a given line because of the various inconsistencies in ligatures and abbreviations possible in this period, and even more, because the present text is in various parts hypothetical. With the suggested restoration, line 2 has (a) 42 letters (= ca. 0.702 m.) with a maximum of abbreviations, or (b) 46 letters (= ca. 0.766 m.) with only Φλ(άβιος) abbreviated, or (c) 56 letters (= ca. 0.93 m.) with no abbreviations. In bringing this into accordance with the more secure restoration of line 1 with its 37–42 letters (= 0.6142–0.6972 m.), it would seem that alternative (a) is the most appropriate. On the other hand, the restoration of six letters in the beginning of lines 2–4, as well as a length of line ca. 0.70 m., must remain theoretical. Nevertheless, I would regard a restoration without Arcadius less probable, because the full name with no abbreviations would be needed to have 41–43 letters in line 2.<sup>9</sup>

As Denis Feissel has pointed out, διατύπωσης was used most commonly for the passing of regulations by the provincial assembly consisting of representatives of various cities meeting in the capital of their province, in our case Corinth.<sup>10</sup> It is therefore tempting to regard

<sup>8</sup> *IG VII*, 24. Present whereabouts unknown. For convenience, I quote the whole text as edited by W. Dittenberger in *SIG*<sup>3</sup>, Leipzig 1917, no. 908:

[ὅ]περ σωτηρίας καὶ ν[εῖκ]ης [καὶ αἰ]ωνίου δι[α]μον[ῆ]ς  
 [τῶ]ν δεσποτῶν τῆς [οἰ]κουμ[έν]ης Φλ. Ἄρκ[αδ]ίου  
 καὶ Φλ. Ὀνωρίου κ(αὶ) Φλ. Θεοδοσίου τῶ[ν] αἰωνίω[ν] κ(αὶ) τρο-  
 5 πούχων Ἀγγγ. διετυπώθη μεταξὺ τῶν Ἐ[λ]ληνίδ[ων]  
 πόλεων εἰς ταὐτὸ συνέλθουσῶν ἐν τῇ Κορινθίων μητρο-  
 πόλει ἐπὶ τοῦ λαμ. κ(αὶ) μεγαλοπρεπεστάτ[ου] ἁ[ν]θ. Κλ. Βαρίου, ὁπ[ό]σα  
 10 χρῆ ἐκάστην πόλιν κ(αὶ) πό[τ]ε [εἰς] τὴν ὀρροεπραιποσιτίαν <λ>ύειν τῶ[ν]  
 μὲν Βοιωτικῶν καὶ Εὐβοϊκῶν καὶ τῆς Αἰτωλίας πόλεων εἰς  
 τὴν Σκαρφιαίων παρεουσῶν, τῶν δὲ Πελοποννησιακῶν  
 εἰς τὴν Κορινθίων, καὶ ἔστιν ἡ γνῶσις καθῶ[ς] ὅ[τι] ποτέτακται·  
 εἰς τὰ κατὰ Σκάρφειαν ὄρρια ἐπὶ τῆς εἰ' ἐπι[νε]μήσεως --, ]  
 [εἰς τὰ κατὰ Κόρινθον ὄρρια -- ]

<sup>9</sup> [δεσποτ]ῶν τῆς οἰκουμένης Φλαβίου Ὀνωρίου κ(αὶ?) Φλαβί- | [ου Θεοδ]οσίου with date of A.D. 408–424. Also, for similar spatial reasons, a restoration with 50 letters (= 0.83 m., in line 2) including the names Gratian and Valentinian, subsequently with a date of A.D. 379–383, during the reign of Theodosius I, seems even more improbable. I have put no question marks after Φλ(αβίου) in my transcription, since I regard the abbreviated form in a document of this type as very probable.

<sup>10</sup> D. Feissel and A. Philippidis-Braat, “Inventaires en vue d’un recueil des inscriptions historiques de Byzance. III. Inscriptions du Péloponnèse,” *TravMém* 9, 1985, p. 286. For other epigraphically attested διατυπώσεις, see, e.g., *ibid.*, no. 24, pp. 285–287 (regulations for restoring a theater in Sparta, under Publius Ampelius, proconsul of Achaia in A.D. 359); *IG XII* 9, 907 (regulations for another restoration during the

the Corinth fragment as a text similar to the Megarian one, both being copies of a single original.<sup>11</sup> In that case, the proconsul in charge of the regulation would be Claudius Varius, who had his seat of office in Corinth in A.D. 401/402. This would also conform with the joint reign of Arcadius, Honorius, and Theodosius II (A.D. 402–408); in conclusion, however, other possibilities are not totally out of the question.<sup>12</sup>

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same year and by the same person, in Chalkis; also published in *SIG*<sup>3</sup>, no. 905); *IG XIV*, 455 (under Flavius Felix Eumathius, consular of Sicily in A.D. 433); *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis*, C. H. Kraeling, ed., New Haven 1938, no. 272, p. 467 (ecclesiastical or imperial regulation, possibly 6th century after Christ); *SEG* 32, 1982, no. 1554B (Arabia, edict of Anastasius).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. lines 5–6 quoted in note 8 above.

<sup>12</sup> See note 9 above. J. H. Kent, *Corinth*, VIII, iii, *The Inscriptions 1926–1950*, Princeton 1966, no. 507, pp. 167–168, is another fragmentary inscription belonging roughly to the same period. Although most of the imperial titulature is restored, a new date of A.D. 394–408 is posited for this piece, either during the regime of Theodosius I, Arcadius, and Honorius, of Arcadius and Honorius, or of Arcadius, Honorius, and Theodosius II (cf. Feissel and Philippidis-Braat [note 10 above], no. 11, p. 276).



1. Corinth I-70-13



2. Corinth I-2684