

the chosen problems of Roman Empire currency — excluding the specific commodity market — but they also neglected, as a rule, the purely economic causes of price fluctuations. All attempts at restoring the prices which were so important for recognizing the system of value forming the basis of the Roman economy, have been generally considered a very difficult field in which to conduct systematic research work<sup>3</sup>.

Some new possibilities for doing that kind of research arose only through the discovery of, till now, unknown fragments of Diocletian's edict including, among other items, the prices of basic monetary ores<sup>4</sup>.

In this situation — despite some severe difficulties which arose with the interpretation of the papyrological documents — it seems fully justified to consider an attempt at showing the fluctuation of gold value in relation to goods, on one hand while on the other, there is the possibility of showing in a new light some of the important problems from the economic history of ancient Rome, such as the matter of ore outflow from the area of the Empire, problems of thesaurization and also the social consequences of the market fluctuations of monetary ore prices<sup>5</sup>.

The problem of prices in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century is, except for the papyrus documents, comparatively weakly supported by sources. However, the period of the late Empire provides some important information on the subject of the purchase-sale transactions due to the official legislative acts and moreover due to the sets of imperial constitutions which arose as a result of codification works conducted under Theodosius II and later under Justinian. However, Diocletian's edict is without doubt the main source of information for the economic history of the late

<sup>3</sup> U. Kahrstedt, *Kulturgeschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit*<sup>2</sup>, Bern 1958, p. 212. For more information on that subject see Mickwitz, *Geld*; *id.*, *Ein Goldwertindex der römisch-byzantinischen Zeit*, Aegyptus XIII 1933, p. 95 f.; A. Segré, *Circolazione monetaria e prezzi nel mondo antico in particolare in Egitto*, Roma 1922; F.M. Heichelheim, *On Ancient Price Trends from the Early First Millennium B.C. to Heraclius I*, Finanzarchiv XV 1955, h. 3, p. 498 f.; J. Szilagyi, *Prices and Wages in the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire*, Acta Antiqua XI 1963, fasc. 3—4, p. 325 f.; A. Balil, *Notas sobre precios y costes en época Romana*, Quadernos de Historia Economica de Cataluña XIII 1975, p. 9 f.; M.N. Fiodorov, *Iz istorii torgovykh otnoshenij Kirgizstana i sopriedielnykh regionov v VII—XII vv. (k voprosu o cenach)*, [in:] *Archeologičeskie pamiatniki Priissykulia*, Frunze 1975, p. 135 f.; R. Duncan-Jones, *Two Possible Indices of the Purchasing Power of Money in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (in:) *Les „Dévaluations”*, p. 159 f.; S. Mrozek, *Preisverhältnisse in der spätrömischen Zeit*, Gdańsk 1980 (manuscript).

<sup>4</sup> See S. Lauffer, *Diokletians Preisedikt*, Berlin 1971; R. and F. Naumann, *Der Rundbau in Aezani* (Istanbuler Mitteilungen, Beiheft 10), Tübingen 1973; M. Giachero, *Edictum Diocletiani et Collegarum de pretiis rerum venalium*, Genova 1974.

<sup>5</sup> Compare S. Mrozek, *Dewaluacje pieniądza w starożytności grecko-rzymskiej* (Money Devaluations in the Greek-Roman World), Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk 1978, p. 5. See also S. Utczenko, *Kryzys i upadek republiki w starożytnym Rzymie* (The Crisis and Fall of the Roman Republic), Warszawa 1973, p. 41.