

... were unable to cope after, apparently, provoked demands. To assure the steady production of "the start of life... some towns operated municipal bakeries.

AE, 1925, no. 162b

[Antioch, Pisidia, A.D. c. 93]

Lucius Antistius Rusticus, legate with rank of praetor of the Emperor Caesar DOMITIAN Augustus Germanicus, declares:

Whereas the duovirs and decurions of the most illustrious colony of Antioch have written to me that on account of the severity of the winter the price of grain has soared, and they have petitioned that the populace be given an opportunity to buy;

Therefore—may good fortune attend!—all who are either citizens or residents of the colony of Antioch shall declare before the duovirs of the colony of Antioch, within thirty days after this edict of mine is posted in public, how much grain each has and in what place, and how much he deducts for seed or for the year's supply of food for his household; and he shall make all the remaining grain available to purchasers of the colony of Antioch. Furthermore, I fix next August 1 as the date of the sale. And if anyone fails to comply, let him know that I shall claim for confiscation whatever is withheld contrary to my edict, reserving a one-eighth share as a reward for informers.

Whereas, furthermore, I am assured that before this prolonged severe winter a *modius* of grain in the colony cost eight or nine asses, and it is most unjust for anyone to profiteer from the hunger of his fellow citizens, I forbid the price of grain to exceed one *denarius* per *modius*.³⁶

SEG, vol. IV, no. 512

[Ephesus, Asia, second century]

... Thus it happens at times that the populace is plunged into disorder and riots by the inexcusable audacity[?] of the bakers' agitation in the market place. Under these circumstances they should by now have been haled into court and have paid the penalty. But since it is necessary to prefer the welfare of the city to the punishment of these individuals, I

36. At that, the governor is permitting a maximum price of about twice the pre-famine normal price. It is probable that there is a reference to this famine in the New Testament (*Revelation* 6:6): "And I heard a voice, as it were, in the midst of the four animals saying, 'A choenix of grain for a denarius, and three choenices of barley for a denarius; and chest nut on the oil and wine.'"

thought it best to bring them to their senses by an edict. Wherefore, I forbid the bakers to assemble in association³⁷ and their officers to make inflammatory speeches, and I order them to give complete obedience to those in charge of the community's welfare and to provide the city fully with the necessary production of bread. If any of them is caught from this time on either meeting contrary to my orders or leading any riot or agitation, he shall be haled into court and suffer the appropriate punishment; and if anyone dares to hide and continue disrupting the city, he shall in addition be branded on the foot with the word *decuria*,³⁸ and anyone who harbors any such person shall thereby become liable to the same punishment. [The rest is here omitted.]

69. IMPERIAL INTERVENTION

Dependent in considerable part on the contributions of the wealthy and on other unstable sources of income, and freely disbursed by municipal administrations on nonproductive public works and services such as theaters, baths, festivals, and banquets, many civic treasures were in a state of chronic insolvency by the second century. To overcome the chaotic effect of such conditions upon the imperial revenues, the central government took, increasingly, a direct hand in local affairs. This development was, it may be noted, in keeping with the growing centralization of administration in general in the hands of the emperors. Beginning with Nerva or Trajan, the emperors frequently appointed their own representatives (*correctores* or *curatores*) to direct the finances of municipalities in difficulties. One of the principal tasks with which Pliny the Younger was charged when sent to govern Bithynia was a systematic reorganization of municipal finances. Three of his letters on this subject are given in the second selection here. Among his other letters, one reported to the emperor that the town of Apamea refused to open its books for his inspection on the ground that it was guaranteed local autonomy in its treaty of alliance with Rome (cf. vol. 1, §§ 132, 134), but Trajan ordered the investigation to be made "at my personal wish without prejudice to their privileges." In another, Pliny suggested a plan whereby members of the municipal council would be compelled to pledge their own property as a means of solving the town's financial problem; though the emperor disapproved this proposal as "inconsistent with the justice of our times," it is in fact entirely in keeping with the already established principle and con-

37. The governor by this act suspends the right of association that the bakers had apparently enjoyed (cf. §§ 51-52).

38. "City council," indicating presumably that he was branded by its order.