

Book I.  
Title XLIV.

Concerning the Office of the Prefect of Food Supply.  
(De officio praefecti annonae.)

Headnote.

Prefect of Food Supply. When we bear in mind the inadequacy of transportation in ancient times, we can well realize the importance in every large city for providing food supplies. Free distribution of grain and other supplies—in later times of bread—was made in the cities of Rome and Constantinople and Alexandria, as shown in C. 11.23-25 and 28. See particularly headnote to C. 11.25, where the subject is considered in greater detail. The office of the prefect of food supply (annonae) is also considered at C. 12.58. In Cass., Var. 6, 18 (as given by Hogkin), the following was addressed to this officer on assuming office: “If the benefit of the largest number of citizens is a test of the dignity of the office, yours is certainly a glorious one. You have to prepare the annona (bread rations) of the sacred city, and to feed the whole people as at our board. You run up and down through the shops of the bakers, looking after the weight and fineness of the bread, and not thinking any office mean by which you may win the affection of citizens....Should a sudden tumult arise by reason of the scarcity of loaves, you have to still it by promising a liberal distribution....The pork-butchers are subject to our control. It is true that the corn is actually provided by the praetorian prefect, but you see that it is worked into elegant bread.” He has an official staff and jurisdiction in causes arising in connection with his duties. See also C. 1.27.1.

1.44.1. (In Greek).

The constitution fixes a definite method of distributing the bread rations in Constantinople, also defines the manner of transferring the right, imposing punishment on the disobedient.

1.44.2. [No Heading]

The constitution discontinues diminution of civic (bread) rations long in use and confirms those that have fallen out of use but were previously wont to be sold in fraud of the prefect of the food supplies and of the accountants of the regions.  
Given at Constantinople, March 8 (532).

Note.

This law is taken from Basilica 6.1.100. Heimbach interprets and translates the Greek somewhat differently from the Latin text of Krueger in the Code and says in his note to this law: “The constitution wants the civic rations to be furnished without that diminution which a former constitution, perhaps C. 1.44.2 sanctioned, and also wants those (rations) to be distributed to the poor which were wont to be distributed previously, but were not distributed and were rather retained and sold by the fraud of the prefect of the food supply and accountant of the region.” In place of in fraudem he translates frauds.

As understood by Krueger according to the Latin text in the Code, the fraud was not committed by these officials but against them (in fraudem). And he accordingly understands the law to mean that the diminished distribution of rations should not continue, but that the rations formerly distributed should be reinstated, and that the

difference had been wont to be sold, probably by the bakers, in fraud of the officials named.