

Book XI.
Title XVI. (XV)

Concerning Bakers.
(De pistoribus.)

11.16.1. Emperor Leo to Vivianus, Praetorian Prefect.

If any public baker (manceps) hereafter obtains the rank and office of count of storehouses by unlawful solicitation, favoritism, money or in any other manner, he shall be shorn of the rank which he received in violation of the interdict of Our Serenity, shall be punished a fine of 20 pounds of gold and shall be recalled to the association and corporation of public bakers, and every special rescript obtained in any manner, contrary to this sanction, shall be entirely void.
(about 457-465).

Note.

The technical term used for a public baker seems to have been manceps. He was also the miller until in later times the milling business was separated from that of the bakers. In Rome, bread was originally baked by the slaves in the houses. The bakery business was introduced about 171 B.C. The control of the grain supply and of the bakers was in the hands of the aediles. We find associations of bakers in the early part of the empire. They baked bread and sold it. These associations came gradually under the control of the state and became public hereditary guilds in the capitals of the empire. They belonged to the corporati mentioned in the previous title. There were at one time 265 bakeries in Rome. These public guilds seem to have existed only in the capitals of the empire, but associations of bakers must, of course, have existed in every city, and they all, doubtless, became hereditary. In the capitals of the empire, they were used to dole out the free bread. See Stockle, Spatrom u. byz. Z. 47-50; Gothofredus on C. Th. 14.3.

The bakers themselves as well as their property was subject to the liturgy here mentioned, and the provisions of law as to the latter were similar to the provisions made in regard to the property of the public seamen. The associations of bakers further had certain lands scattered through the provinces at their disposal, the income therefrom being used for their benefit. Associated with the bakers were the associations of catabolenses, muleteers, who cause the grain to be hauled to the mills and the flour to the bakeries. 1 Karlowa 917; Cujacius, Obs. 16.5; Gothofredus on C. Th. 14. 3. The bakers in Constantinople seem to have been under the direct control of the prefect of the city. But in Rome they were under the direct supervision of the prefect of the food supply, who, in turn, was under the city prefect. 1 Karlowa 867-868. In the formula in regard to the appointment of the prefect of food supply, according to Cass., Var. 6.18, it is said, among other things: "You have to prepare the food supply of the sacred city, and to feed the whole people as at one board. You run up and down through the shops of the bakers looking after the weight and fineness of the bread *** Should a sudden tumult arise by reason of the scarcity of loaves you have to still it by promising a liberal distribution." See Hodgkin, Letters of Cassiodorus.