

HIST 3140: RESEARCH ESSAY

DUE: Monday, 26 November 2018 by 11.59 pm

LENGTH: 3,000 words

QUESTIONS: Please answer ONE of the questions presented below (pp. 15-19) OR devise your own question in consultation with the professor (for the process, see below p. 20)

EXPECTATIONS. Please format the essay according to the York *Guide to the Presentation of an Essay in Ancient Greek or Roman History*, a copy of which can be found on the course Moodle site. The essay will be marked according to an assessment criteria sheet, a copy of which appears below. Students who disregard the reading lists and read general works instead do so at their peril. Each list has a number of starred items. Students cannot expect to obtain a satisfactory mark in the essay unless they at least read all of the starred items. Of course, students are very welcome to read beyond the items on the reading lists, although this is not required. **Please do not use online materials for this essay without checking with your tutorial leader first. Materials linked on Moodle or on academic journal databases such as JSTOR are, however, fine and can be used without checking.**

AVAILABILITY OF MATERIAL. Most readings for the essay are to be made available by links or PDFs posted on Moodle. There is an exception with items that cannot be scanned for copyright reasons, hard copies of which will be put on reserve in Scott library. The reading lists below indicate which items will be on reserve.

SUBMITTING THE MAJOR ESSAY. Please see above (pp. 3-4) for instructions on how to submit the research essay.

LATE ESSAYS AND EXTENSIONS. Please see above (p. 4) for the course policies on late essays and extensions.

Question 1 – The Last Days of Pompeii

This essay will particularly suit students who are interested in archaeology. We hear in a few literary sources about the earthquake in AD 62, but for the most part our assessment of the impact of this disaster has to be based on what we can actually see in the physical remains of Pompeii itself. Scholars who have studied this question have widely debated what the earthquake meant for the town. For example, Maiuri (writing in Italian) argued that after the earthquake the upper classes abandoned the town in large numbers, and that previously upper-class dwellings were invaded by the middle, mercantile classes, with their vulgar tastes in decoration. More recently, scholars have begun to question this particular account. So what did the earthquake mean for urban life in the city, beyond the obvious fact that it damaged some buildings?

To what extent did the earthquake of AD 62 change patterns of urban life in Pompeii?

Ancient Sources

Cooley, A. E. and Cooley, M. G. L. 2004. *Pompeii: A Sourcebook*. London and New York. Documents C1-C5 (= pp. 27-31).

Modern Scholarship

*Zanker, P. 1998. *Pompeii: Public and Private Life*. Cambridge, Mass. 124-133.

*Cooley, A. 2003. *Pompeii*. London. Ch. 1.

*Wallace-Hadrill, A. W. 1991. "Elites and Trade in the Roman Town," in Rich, J. and Wallace-Hadrill, A. W. (eds.), *City and Country in the Ancient World*. London and New York. Ch. 10.

*Allison, P. M. 1997. "Roman Households: An Archaeological Perspective," in Parkins, H., *Roman Urbanism: Beyond the Consumer City*. London and New York. Ch. 6.

Mouritsen, H. 1996. "Order and Disorder in Late Pompeian Politics," in Cébeillac-Gervasoni, M. (ed.), *Les élites municipales de l'Italie péninsulaire, des Gracques à Néron*. Naples and Rome. 139-144.

Fulford, M. and Wallace-Hadrill, A. 1998. "Unpeeling Pompeii," *Antiquity* 72: 128-145.

Wallace-Hadrill, A.W. 1994. *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*. Princeton. 118-131.

Dobbins, J. 1997. "The Pompeii Forum Project 1994-95," in Bon, S.E. and Jones, R. (eds.), *Sequence and Space in Pompeii*. Oxford. 73-87. [Scott res. DG70.P7 S46 1997]

Grahame, M. 1999. "Recent Developments in Pompeian Archaeology," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 12: 565-575, esp. 570-572.

McGinn, T. A. J. 2004. *The Economy of Prostitution in the Roman World: A Study of Social History and the Brothel*. Ann Arbor, Mich. 178-181.

Question 2 – Paganism in Ephesus

This topic will suit students who are interested in the pagan religions of the Roman Empire. Ephesus was famed in antiquity as a centre for pagan religion, boasting not just the Temple of Artemis, but also various temples and priesthoods connected with the Roman imperial cult, as well as a variety of other temples and rituals. This essay asks students to assess what being a religious centre meant for the society of the city. Students might think about the following factors in approaching the question: the role of religion in upper-class display; the role of religion in bringing different social groups together; the role of religion in bringing tourists to the city; the economic role of the cults of the city; and the role of cults as an expression of loyalty to Rome. There are, however, many other roles that pagan religions arguably played in Ephesian society.

What roles did pagan religion play in the society of the city of Ephesus during the first three centuries of the Roman imperial period?

Ancient Sources

- *Xenophon of Ephesus, *Ephesica*, esp. 1.1-2; 1.11; 5.15 (trans. Reardon, B.P.)
- *Achilles Tatius, *Leucippe and Cleitophon*, esp. 4.1; 6.3; 6.21; 7.12-14 (trans. Reardon, B.P.)
- Heliodorus, *Ethiopica* 1.22 (trans. Reardon, B.P.)
- **Die Inschriften von Ephesos* No. 27 (trans. Rogers, G.M. 1991. *The Sacred Identity of Ephesos: Foundation Myths of a Roman City*. London and New York. Appendix 1) [**Scott res. BL813.E64R64 1991**]
- **The Acts of the Apostles*, 19.23-41

Modern Scholarship

- *Koester, H. (ed.). 1995. *Ephesos: Metropolis of Asia*. Valley Forge, Pa. 1-25; 81-187; 229-306. [**Scott res. DF261.E5E7 1995**]
- *Oster, R. E. 1990. "Ephesus as a Religious Centre under the Principate, I," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 18.3: 1661-1726.
- *Scherrer, P. 2000. *Ephesus: The New Guide*. Trans. Bier, L. and Luxon, G. M. Istanbul. 44-57; 80; 92; 116-119; 148-150; 184-185; 208-216. [**Scott res. DF261.E5 E72 2000**] (This book gives clear and up-to-date descriptions and photographs of the physical remains of ancient Ephesus.)
- Rogers, G. M. 1991. *The Sacred Identity of Ephesos: Foundation Myths of a Roman City*. London and New York. [**Scott res. BL813.E64R64 1991**]
- Friesen, S. J. 1993. *Twice Neokoros: Ephesus, Asia, and the Cult of the Flavian Imperial Family*. Leiden. [**Scott res. BL 813 E64 F75 1993**]
- Koester, H. 1998. "The Cult of the Egyptian Deities in Asia Minor," in Koester, H. (ed.), *Pergamon Citadel of the Gods: Archaeological Record, Literary Description, and Religious Development*. Harrisburg, Pa. 111-133.
- Price, S. R. F. 1984. *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*. Cambridge. See index sv. "Ephesus" and Catalogue of Temples, pp. 254-257. [**Scott res. DG124.P74 1984**]
- Wood, J.T. 1877. *Discoveries at Ephesus*. London.

Question 3 – Prostitution in the Roman City

It is easy to take a prurient interest in Roman prostitutions, especially given the discoveries at Pompeii of explicit graffiti, purpose-built brothels, and naughty paintings. But the study of prostitution also has to form part of any serious appreciation of the social life of the Roman city. Scholars have varied in their accounts of just how widespread the phenomenon was in cities, both in terms of structures and practices. There is also debate about how the Romans thought about prostitution: some have suggested that the Romans were ashamed of the phenomenon and sought to restrict it to certain parts of the city; others (especially Thomas McGinn) have seen Roman attitudes as rather more ambivalent, and have rejected the 'zoning' theory. The law may help to illustrate Roman attitudes too. Did Roman cities criminalize prostitution in the way that many modern jurisdictions have? Or did the authorities let it flourish unchecked? Or was the legal position somewhere between prohibition and complete libertarianism? This essay will especially appeal to students who enjoy Roman social history and the history of gender and sexuality.

How ubiquitous a phenomenon was prostitution in the Roman city? Were the Romans ashamed of prostitution?

Ancient Sources

- *Cooley, A. E. and Cooley, M. G. L. 2004. *Pompeii: A Sourcebook*. London and New York. Documents D98 – D102 (= pp. 79).
- *Shelton, J.-A. 1988. *As the Romans Did: A Source Book in Roman Social History*. New York and Oxford. Documents 65; 139; 200; 212; 235; 326.

Modern Scholarship

- *Laurence, R. 1994. *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*. London and New York. Chs. 5-6.
- *McGinn, T. A. J. 2013. "Sex and the City," in Erdkamp, P. (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Rome*. Cambridge. 317-335.
- *McGinn, T. A. J. 2004. *The Economy of Prostitution in the Roman World: A Study of Social History and the Brothel*. Ann Arbor, Mich. Chs. 3; 5-7; 9. [Scott res. HQ113 .M34 2004]
- *Wallace-Hadrill, A. 1994. "Public Honour and Private Shame: The Urban Texture of Pompeii," in Cornell, T. and Lomas, K. (eds.), *Urban Society in Roman Italy*. London. 39-62.
- Fleming, R. 1999. "Quae corpora quaestum facit: The sexual economy of female prostitution in the Roman Empire," *Journal of Roman Studies* 89: 39-61.
- McGinn, T. A. J. 1998. *Prostitution, Sexuality and the Law in Ancient Rome*. Oxford. Chs. 2; 6-9.
- Robinson, O. F. 1995. *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome*. London. 67-70.

Question 4 – The Grain Supply of Rome

One of the greatest difficulties faced by the inhabitants of Rome related to their food supply. All manner of different factors could intervene to hinder the flow of food into the capital. But just how conscious were the authorities of these problems? This essay, which will suit students interested in the ancient economy and Roman government policy, asks you to take as a case study the most important element in the Roman diet: grain. There has been considerable scholarly disagreement on just how much the Roman authorities sought to consciously intervene in the importation of grain. Was there a sort of ancient command economy in relation to grain? Or was the grain supply left mainly to private enterprise and the free market?

What difficulties were encountered in supplying the populace of the city of Rome with grain? To what degree did the authorities of the city consciously seek to deal with grain supply problems?

Ancient Sources

*Shelton, J.-A. 1988. *As the Romans Did: A Source Book in Roman Social History*. New York and Oxford. Documents 152 and 153.

*Plutarch, *Life of Gaius Gracchus* 5.

*Plutarch, *Life of Pompey* 25-27.

*Appian, *The Civil Wars* 1.66-70; 1.88.

Appian, *The Mithridatic Wars* 93.

Dio Cassius 39.61; 39.63; 54.1; 55.22.

Tacitus, *Histories* 1.73; 1.86; 1.89; 3.8; 3.48; 4.38; 4.52.

Modern Scholarship

*ALDRETE, G. 2009, *Daily Life in the Roman City: Rome, Pompeii and Ostia*. Norman, Okla. 196-202.

*Garnsey, P. 1988. *Famine and Food Supply in the Graeco-Roman World*. Cambridge. Chs. 11-14.

*Erdkamp, P. 2005. *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire*. Cambridge. Chs. 5-6.

*Aldrete, G. S., and Mattingly, D. J. 1999. "Feeding the City: The Organization, Operation and Scale of the Supply System for Rome," in Potter, D. S. and Mattingly, D. J. (eds.), *Life, Death and Entertainment in the Roman Empire*. Ann Arbor, Mich. 171-204. [Scott res. DG 272 L54 1999]

*Rickman, G. 1980. "The Grain Trade under the Roman Empire," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 36: 261-275.

Casson, L. 1980. "The Role of the State in Rome's Grain Trade," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 36: 21-33.

Garnsey, P. and Rathbone, D. 1985. "The Background to the Grain Law of Gaius Gracchus," *Journal of Roman Studies* 75: 20-25.

Question 5 – Hadrian and the City

This essay will suit students with a particular interest in the political history of the Roman Principate. The emperor Hadrian travelled far and wide in the Roman Empire during his reign. He founded cities, regenerated others, and added to the monuments of many more. He had a profound impact on the cultural life of them all. This essay asks students to examine the ways in which Hadrian had an impact on the cities of the Empire, and the purpose of his dealings with cities. This is a large question, so students are asked to look at the city of Rome, and then choose two more cities as case-studies.

What impact did the emperor Hadrian have on the cities of the Roman Empire? What was the ideological or political point of his interactions with cities? In your answer use the city of Rome as a case-study, along with two of the following: Antinoopolis; Cyrene; Athens; Italica (Spain); the Italian cities other than Rome.

Ancient Sources

*Cassius Dio, Book 69

Historia Augusta “Life of Hadrian”

Modern Scholarship

General

*Boatwright, M. T. 2000. *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire*. Princeton, NJ. [Scott. res. DG295 B62 2000]

*Birley, A. R. 1997. *Hadrian: The Restless Emperor*. London and New York. [Scott res. DG295 .B57 1997]

Speller, E. 2003. *Following Hadrian: A Second-Century Journey through the Roman Empire*. Oxford and New York [Scott res. DG295 .S38 2003] (This is not quite an academic text, but has a fictional element. It is, nevertheless, an entertaining read, and gives a good introductory overview of Hadrian's reign. It would be best not to cite it as a source.)

Rome

*Boatwright, M.T. 1987. *Hadrian and the City of Rome*. Princeton, NJ. [Scott res. DG295 B63 1987]

Cities other than Rome

Boatwright, M. T. 1989. “Hadrian and Italian Cities,” *Chiron* 19: 235-271.

Benjamin, A. S. 1963. “The Altars of Hadrian in Athens and Hadrian's Panhellenic Program,” *Hesperia* 32: 57-86.

Bell, H. I. 1940. “Antioopolis: A Hadrianic Foundation in Egypt,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 30: 133-147.

Fraser, P. M. and Appelbaum, S. 1950. “Hadrian and Cyrene,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 40: 77-90.

Reynolds, J. M. 1978. “Hadrian, Antoninus Pius and the Cyrenaican Cities,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 68: 111-121.

Syme, R. 1964. “Hadrian and Italica,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 54: 142-149.

Boatwright, M. T. 1997. “The Traianeum in Italica (Spain) and the Library of Hadrian in Athens,” in Buitron-Oliver, D. (ed.), *The Interpretation of Architectural Sculpture in Greece and Rome*. 193-217.

DEVisING YOUR OWN ESSAY TOPIC:

Students may devise their own essay topics, provided that they conform to the following process:

1. An essay proposal must be submitted to the professor **FOUR** weeks before the essay due date at the latest. Proposals may be submitted in class in hard copy, or electronically via email.
2. The proposal must contain the following:
 - (a) A question to be answered in the essay;
 - (b) Six to eight ancient sources to be used in the essay; and
 - (c) Six to eight scholarly modern works to be used in the essay, together with an indication of where they are to be found online or in the York library system.

In other words, the proposal should closely resemble the format used above for the essay questions and reading lists. The ancient sources and modern works listed in the proposal must be closely and directly relevant to answering the proposed question.

3. To be acceptable, the proposed question must closely relate to the aspects of Roman urban history covered in HIST 3140. It may not substantially overlap with any essay that a student has completed in a previous course (this would breach the University's academic honesty policies).
4. The professor will provide written feedback on the proposal, either in hard copy or by email.
5. A copy of the proposal, together with a copy of the feedback received from the professor must be attached to the back of the essay when it is submitted.

State Management and Private Enterprise in the Grain Supply of Ancient Rome

Ranfateh Chattha

HIST 3140

Tutorial 01

26/11/2018

This essay explores the importance of grain to the ancient Roman world. It will contextualize the case of the city of Rome as one of endemic grain insecurity while outlining the problems associated with keeping the city fed. Grain will be presented as a socio-political lever and the state's interest in ensuring the availability of grain to its urban populace will be illustrated. From there, this essay will provide an overview of the key measures taken by the state during the Republic and the Principate in managing the grain supply of the city. In particular, I will examine the institution of the grain dole and the establishment of the *annona* to demonstrate the active role played by the state in the grain supply. At the same time, I will establish the pivotal role of private merchants and shippers in supplying the city with grain. Ultimately, this essay will demonstrate that the grain supply system of ancient Rome was constituted by concerted state management that relied on private merchant capital.

Grain was imperative for life in antiquity. It was the most important and cheapest source of calories for the masses of the Roman world.¹ It is estimated that cereals, particularly barley and wheat², provided two thirds of Romans' caloric intake.³ Agriculture in the Roman world was fairly rudimentary. Crops heavily depended on good soil and abundant rain, and crop failure stemming from a lack of rainfall in one year could hardly be made up in the next: wheat growing was vulnerable and variable, and the surplus to be traded was difficult to predict.⁴ Average wheat yields were likely fairly low, with farmers producing a surplus of maybe 5 to 10 percent if things went well.⁵

¹ Rickman 1980, 262

² *Ibid.* 261

³ Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 172

⁴ Rickman 1980, 261

⁵ Aldrete 2009, 188

Consequently, shortage in the grain supply, rather than surplus, was the primary state of affairs for Rome.⁶ Rome was in a peculiar position as an exceptionally populous city whose existence depended upon the resources of the empire: while other ancient cities relied heavily on their immediate hinterland, Rome could not depend on regional production for feeding its population, and thus surplus from other regions was necessary.⁷ By the end of the Republic, Rome had a greatly increased population, and the material requirements of the city far outstripped available local resources, necessitating imports, especially of grain, on an enormous scale.⁸ Assuming a population of one million at its height⁹, the city likely consumed roughly 40 to 60 million *modii* (250 000 – 375 000 tons) of grain annually.¹⁰ Ensuring that sufficient supplies of grain were available for the city was no small task for the Romans. Disruptions in the grain supply meant hardship and famine, and shortage was frequently accompanied by disease.¹¹ Meeting the minimum needs of the city was a huge burden on the pre-industrial state, with the threat of shortage and famine opening the door for social disturbance and riots. Between 201-31 BC, there were at least 37 incidents of food shortage in Rome stemming from crop failure, piracy, floods¹² and war, the last being the most commonly attested cause of food crisis.¹³

The need to supply Rome with grain “exerted a large gravitational pull” on agricultural regions throughout the Mediterranean.¹⁴ The capital heavily depended on state grain which was requisitioned through tribute or imperial properties.¹⁵ During the Republic, Rome predominantly

⁶ Casson 1980, 26

⁷ *Ibid.* 21; Erdkamp 2005, 260

⁸ Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 171

⁹ Aldrete 2009, 22

¹⁰ Rickman 1980, 262; Casson 1980, 22

¹¹ Casson 1980, 21; Garnsey 1988, 171

¹² Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 174; floods would result in the destruction of grain supplies and were often followed by famine, as expressed in Tacitus, *Histories* 1.86 and Dio Cassius, 39.63.

¹³ Garnsey 1988, 172

¹⁴ Rickman 1980, 262

¹⁵ Casson 1980, 22

acquired grain through rents from Campania as well as tax and grain rent from territories gained during the Punic wars, namely Sardinia, Sicily and Africa.¹⁶ In addition to tithes on its grain exporting provinces, Rome forcibly purchased grain below market value.¹⁷ From the time of Augustus, grain imports from Africa were supplemented by Egyptian grain, with supplies from Campania, Sardinia and Sicily contributing proportionally less to Rome (though grain from these regions likely remained high, due to the sheer demand coming from the capital).¹⁸ Rickman refers to the account of Josephus from the 70s AD claiming that Africa supplied the city with two thirds of its grain while Egypt provided the remaining third¹⁹: though likely an exaggeration, the account emphasizes the importance that Africa and Egypt held in terms of supplying Rome with its daily sustenance. Through its provinces, Rome controlled a vast portion of the Mediterranean's agricultural lands, and extracting taxes in kind was the most reliable way to ensure a relatively stable supply of grain.²⁰ Nonetheless, this did not always guarantee sufficient supplies for the city. Harvest failure in Italy or Rome's grain-exporting provinces could cause sharp price rises and food shortages in Rome, while epidemics and military campaigns disrupted agricultural production, and reduced supplies available to civilians.²¹ Africa and Egypt were primary targets during Rome's incessant civil wars, and conflict in the provinces, including slave revolts, disrupted production, diverted provisions and increased the price of grain in the capital.²² Since the alleviation of Rome's grain shortages depended on surplus from its provinces, having foreign contacts in these regions, as well as finding private shippers to transport grain to the city

¹⁶ Garnsey and Rathbone 1985, 21; Erdkamp 2005, 225

¹⁷ Erdkamp 2005, 236

¹⁸ Garnsey 1988, 191; Rickman 1980, 263

¹⁹ Rickman 1980, 264

²⁰ Erdkamp 2005, 256

²¹ Garnsey 1988, 196; Tacitus, *Histories* 1.73

²² Appian, *The Civil Wars* 1.66-1.70, 1.88; Tacitus, *Histories* 1.89, 3.48, 3.8; Garnsey 1988, 195, 204, 224, 228

once it was acquired, was vital for state authorities.²³ There was a vast enterprise dedicated to the collection and shipping of grain to Rome. The majority of grain that was imported each year to feed Rome was transported by sea²⁴ through a network comprised of thousands of officials, laborers and ships.²⁵ Violent winter storms narrowed the time frame for imports, and piracy, particularly during the late Republic, remained a threat to sea-faring vessels.²⁶ In short, the grain supply of ancient Rome was in a state of constant insecurity, stemming from its utter dependence on foreign grain. Tacitus expresses this dependency by proclaiming that “the life of the Roman nation has been staked upon cargo-boats and the vagaries of seafaring.”²⁷

The issue of price is also necessary for understanding the problems associated with grain in antiquity. Drawing from Tacitus²⁸, Erdkamp argues that “the masses of Rome were particularly vulnerable to sudden price rises ... because they saw to their sustenance on a day-to-day basis.”²⁹ The buying power of most Romans was extremely low, and since most of their income was spent on food, food prices were a major concern. When grain prices rose there was little else that urban dwellers could afford to consume.³⁰ The price of grain fluctuated with variations in supply, which resulted from the issues mentioned above, as well as profiteering.³¹ Moreover, the nature of the agricultural cycle meant that seasonal price changes were a normal feature of the grain market, and that the “price volatility [of grain] remained a fact of life in the

²³ Garnsey and Rathbone, 1985, 24

²⁴ Aldrete 2009, 198; land transport was not viable simply because the animals necessary for transport would need to be fed almost equivalent to what was being transported. According to Diocletian’s Edict on Maximum Prices, it was cheaper to ship grain across the Mediterranean than to haul it over land for 75 miles. Rickman 1980, 262.

²⁵ Rickman 1980, 262-264; Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 181

²⁶ Aldrete 2009, 199; these issues, combined with primitive shipping technology, meant that overseas trade carried substantial capital risk. Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 184.

²⁷ Tacitus, *Annals* 12.43

²⁸ Tacitus, *Histories* 4.38

²⁹ Erdkamp 2005, 239

³⁰ *Ibid.* 259

³¹ Garnsey 1988, 214

Roman world.”³² By and large, speculative activities (e.g., hoarding grain or selling it in external markets) were likely responses to disturbances in supply rather their cause³³. Nonetheless, the suspicion towards merchants and farmers amongst the authorities and the masses was prevalent. Under normal circumstances the market functioned along supply and demand, but, in face of shortage, profiteering necessitated state intervention.³⁴ The market itself was not held in high esteem and authorities sought to protect the populace (with fear of riots in mind) from the market’s vagaries.³⁵

Due to its integral role in the daily reproduction of the masses in the ancient world, grain had become a political lever. Tacitus tells us that the condition of the grain supply was arguably the sole public interest of the common people.³⁶ Therefore, the endemic shortages that were a part of the grain supply of antiquity required attention and response from the political elite, lest social grievances turn into turmoil and upheaval. Tacitus illustrates how on multiple occasions the shortage or excessive pricing of grain would engender the mobilization of uncontrollable and hostile mobs of urbanites that demanded responses from the emperors and state authorities.³⁷ The severity of these cases, as well as the emperors’ willingness to respond, reflect how vital a steady flow of grain was for political stability. Similarly, Shelton refers to the ancient source Fronto who writes that the emperor “knew that the Roman people are held in control principally by two things – free grain and shows.”³⁸ This passage exemplifies the primacy of grain to urban life in Rome. The urban populace was not passive and, even if shortage was not severe, price hikes

³² Erdkamp 2005, 259-260

³³ Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 174; Erdkamp 2005, 264

³⁴ Erdkamp 2005, 285, 288

³⁵ *Ibid.* 313; still, a moderate degree of speculation was tolerated in order to attract merchants to the Roman market. Garnsey 1988, 239.

³⁶ Tacitus, *Histories* 4.38

³⁷ Tacitus, *Annals* 6.13, 12.43

³⁸ Shelton 1998, 334; Fronto, *Elements of History* 18

threatened their daily lives enough to provoke demands to authorities to secure their source of sustenance.³⁹ Selling cheap grain became a political ploy for popularity, but it also became an expectation held by the populace by the mid-second century BC.⁴⁰ Furthermore, the assurance of access to grain became linked to the duties of the state, particularly during imperial times. In his praise of the emperor, the ancient source Velleius Paterculus asks rhetorically, “When was the price of grain more reasonable?”⁴¹, implying that food security was a criterion of the emperor’s legitimacy. Indeed, it seems that responding to the grievances of the people, which often centered on the issue of grain, was key to building the emperor’s standing amongst the urban populace⁴².

In addition to calming social uncertainty, the state likely sought to uphold Rome’s cultural order. The measures taken by Rome’s state authorities, particularly during the Principate, were guided by a sense of duty⁴³ owing to cultural ideals of beneficence. During the Principate, the emperor saw himself as the *paterfamilias* of the city, and the Roman government was possibly “organized on the model of the Roman family.”⁴⁴ Moreover, public calamities seemed to be a genuine concern for the emperors, who personally donated millions of sesterces to regions in the wake of natural disasters.⁴⁵ Thus, ensuring that cheap grain was available to keep the capital fed would have likely been an object of deliberate imperial intervention.

³⁹ Erdkamp 2005, 312

⁴⁰ Garnsey 1988, 208; Erdkamp 2005, 241

⁴¹ Velleius Paterculus, *The Roman History* 2.126

⁴² Shelton 1998, 333

⁴³ Erdkamp 2005, 316

⁴⁴ Scramuzza and MacKendrick 1961, 633

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 633

The key development in Rome's state management of the grain supply can be traced to the law of Gaius Gracchus in 123 BC.⁴⁶ The Lex Sempronia of Gracchus took measures to ensure the regular sale of grain to Rome's citizens at a reduced, fixed price on a monthly basis.⁴⁷ It also proposed the construction of state granaries to ensure that the government would keep grain supplies at Ostia from which it could distribute the rations.⁴⁸ The law achieved a degree of consistency and regularity to the city's grain supply: the state storage in particular enabled the state to respond more effectively to bad harvests or other disruptions and crises.⁴⁹ However, while ordinary, the grain dole begun under the Gracchan law was limited in scope. There was a de facto exclusion of poor freedmen due to the cost of grain, and the additional costs of milling and baking which would need to be accomplished through others in exchange for services or a cut of the grain.⁵⁰ The most significant changes to the dole came in 58 BC under Clodius who took measures as tribune to make free grain available to recipients of the dole.⁵¹ Clodius' reform expanded the dole to include freedmen citizens and decreased the age requirement for recipients from fourteen to ten (non-citizens were still excluded).⁵² The dole may have distributed grain to as many as 360 000 Romans at a rate of five *modii* every month.⁵³

Even after the reforms of Clodius, the grain dole did not account for all of Rome's population. Not every family had a right to the dole, and the dole itself is likely to have provided

⁴⁶ Garnsey and Rathbone 1985, 24; the law may have been prompted by the diversion of provisions away from Rome due to the massive growth of legions from 128 to 124 BC. Garnsey 1988, 195-196. However, Erdkamp does not regard the law as a response to a particular crisis but rather a formalization of common political practice. Erdkamp 2005, 241.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 20; Garnsey 1988, 212; Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 177

⁴⁸ Garnsey and Rathbone 1985, 20; Shelton 1998, 133

⁴⁹ Garnsey and Rathbone 1985, 24

⁵⁰ Garnsey 1988, 213

⁵¹ Shelton 1998, 133

⁵² Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 178; Garnsey 1988, 213

⁵³ Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 178

only half the required sustenance for those that did receive it.⁵⁴ The freed poor continued to rely on employment (through the state or private individuals) and patronage to survive.⁵⁵ However, despite its restricted scope, Shelton asserts that the grain dole kept many unemployed families from starvation.⁵⁶ Furthermore, while the number of recipients likely reached its peak during the tribuneship of Clodius, the dole continued to provide for a significant number of Rome's inhabitants over the years. Throughout the Principate, there were still up to 250 000 recipients of the dole, with twice as many fed by it.⁵⁷ The institution of the grain dole was the major contribution of the Republican period to the development of the grain supply system of ancient Rome. It became a standing institution which engendered dependence on, and expectations from, the authorities in terms of supplying the urban populace with food, and effectively constituted a "point of no return" for the Roman state.⁵⁸

The scale of the grain supply system of Rome necessitated administrative intervention on the state's behalf. In Republican times, consuls would send *frumentarii* (probably private grain merchants) as agents to neighboring areas to purchase grain⁵⁹; the *quaestor ostiensis* oversaw the transport and storage of grain in Ostia⁶⁰; and aediles, who were in charge of various urban affairs, regulated market transactions to enforce standard weights and measures.⁶¹ During the Principate, state administration in Rome, while still far from a modern bureaucracy, became more developed and comprehensive.⁶² With respect to grain, Augustus created an administrative

⁵⁴ Casson 1980, 22; since five *modii* of grain could only provide for the sustenance of two people, the monthly rations were largely insufficient for a family, unless there were multiple recipients of the dole within one household. Garnsey 1988, 214.

⁵⁵ Garnsey 1988, 214

⁵⁶ Shelton 1998, 133

⁵⁷ Aldrete 2009, 21, 197; Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 178

⁵⁸ Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 173; Casson 1980, 22; Rostovzeff 1926, 264

⁵⁹ Rickman 1980, 268

⁶⁰ Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 188

⁶¹ Aldrete 2009, 45

⁶² Rostovzeff 1926, 259

system that oversaw and held substantial control over Rome's grain supply referred to as the *annona*⁶³, headed by the prefect of the grain supply, or *praefectus annonae*.⁶⁴ The inauguration and maintenance of the *annona* can be viewed as a reflection of the emperors' perceived duty to the residents of the capital.⁶⁵ The *annona* included officials that were positioned at various levels in Rome's supply system: in the city, the ports and the provinces.⁶⁶ Agents would be sent by the prefect to the provinces to encourage production, collect grain tithes, purchase wholesale lots at farms and markets, and to arrange transport.⁶⁷ The state, via the administration headed by the *praefectus annonae*, was likely responsible for procuring the 12 million *modii* of annual grain needed to cover the state dole.⁶⁸ However, the needs of Rome's non-citizen poor could not be ignored, and the dole was not the sole aspect of *annona*. The *annona* also sought to ensure that sufficient supplies of grain reached on schedule to the city, and that they were available at reasonable prices. To deal with deficiencies, the prefect would release some of the state's surplus grain into the market at a fixed rate.⁶⁹ The prefect would also have been responsible for making contact with shippers and grain merchants: issuing contracts and making special arrangements for grain when required was integral to the *annona*.⁷⁰ The scope of the *annona* illustrates a significant degree of deliberate planning undertaken by state authorities to bring grain into the city.

⁶³ The *annona* came under a larger state apparatus involved in urban development, sanitation, policing, water infrastructure, etc. Rostovzeff 1926, 264; Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 172.

⁶⁴ Casson 1980, 21; Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 173

⁶⁵ Garnsey 1988, 238

⁶⁶ Aldrete 2009, 201; the *annona* may have been supplemented by the emperor's men of business, the *procuratores*. These officials were responsible for not only the emperor's wealth, but also the growth of the economy and the finances of the state. Many were posted in the ports and provinces, with there having been a significant presence of *procuratores* in Egypt. Rostovzeff 1926, 260-261. It is possible that the *procuratores* interacted with the *praefectus annonae* and his subordinates, particularly in the provinces, to aid in the supply of grain to Rome.

⁶⁷ Scramuzza and MacKendrick 1961, 567; Garnsey 1988, 233

⁶⁸ Casson 1980, 22

⁶⁹ Scramuzza and MacKendrick 1961, 567; Garnsey 1988, 238; Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 179

⁷⁰ Garnsey 1988, 233; Rickman 269

While the establishment of the *annona* is a clear example of deliberate state planning in Rome's grain supply, Rome's emperors also took a variety of measures to deal with crises. In AD 6-7 Augustus enforced the temporary emigration of certain classes of the city, a cutback of expensive celebrations and a doubling of the grain dole.⁷¹ Facing outrage amidst high grain prices in AD 19, Tiberius offered grain merchants a subsidy of 2 sesterces per *modius* of grain to lower the price for consumption while ensuring that grain was kept on the market. Nero also resorted to price fixing in AD 64 when the Great Fire had burned down the granaries, but this strategy was less common than beneficence in the form of free grain or money given by the emperors.⁷² In order to secure continuity of grain shipments, Claudius and Nero offered privileges to traders and shippers who dedicated their ships to the grain supply for a given number of years.⁷³ Claudius also sought to secure year-round grain shipments by offering traders compensation for losses incurred during winter journeys.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the emperors contributed to infrastructural development to facilitate grain imports. The construction of a harbor at Ostia was begun by Claudius and continued by Trajan, which enabled the relatively safe unloading and storage of grain.⁷⁵ From the time of Augustus, employment in state-funded construction projects also became a means for the urban poor to earn their daily bread.⁷⁶ Casson asserts that many of these responses to crises in the grain supply were ad hoc and inconsistent with measures taken by predecessors.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, territorial expansion, the development of an

⁷¹ Garnsey 1988, 229; Erdkamp 2005, 243

⁷² Casson 1980, 24; Garnsey 1988, 230

⁷³ Rickman 1980, 271; these appeals to merchants are reminiscent of the efforts of Pompey during the late Republic. Pompey had offered small ship-owners Roman citizenship if they served the city's food supply, and encouraged larger ship-owners through political networking. However, Pompey's measures were short-lived due to the political turmoil of the period. Garnsey 1988, 217.

⁷⁴ Casson 1980, 25; Garnsey 1988, 230

⁷⁵ Garnsey 1988, 233; Rickman 1980, 267

⁷⁶ Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 173

⁷⁷ Casson 1980, 24

administration specialized towards the grain supply, the incorporation of traders into service of the *annona* and the improvement of port facilities are all characteristic of long run strategies to facilitate the collection and distribution of grain to the city.⁷⁸

Though the grain supply of ancient Rome was an object of significant state intervention and planning, private interests were nonetheless crucial to its operations. Since the dole did not cover all of Rome's requirements, a significant portion of the city's grain was provided by *negotiatores* and *frumentarii*, or private grain dealers.⁷⁹ Moreover, while the state assumed the responsibility for ensuring the availability of food at reasonable prices, the state's collection, transport and distribution of food was only a proportion of what was required to keep the city fed⁸⁰: the sheer number of officials required to wholly account for the city's grain supply system simply exceeded the capacity of the state apparatus.⁸¹ Therefore, the greater portion of Rome's grain requirements were likely fulfilled by private dealers, which, Casson argues, the government could not command, but solicited for aid.⁸² Thus, while the supply of grain to the city was heavily influenced by the state, the trade itself remained in the hands of private interests⁸³: "whenever there was a crisis in the grain supply of Rome in the late Republic or early Empire, whoever tried to solve it was immediately involved in contracts with private grain merchants."⁸⁴ However, as Erdkamp stresses, one "should be careful not to identify the involvement of private enterprise in the supply system of Rome with private enterprise supplying Rome."⁸⁵ As demonstrated above, the grain supply of Rome was very much a product of

⁷⁸ Garnsey 1988, 231

⁷⁹ Casson 1980, 22

⁸⁰ Aldrete and Mattingly 1999, 173

⁸¹ Rickman 1980, 269

⁸² Casson 1980, 29

⁸³ Garnsey 1988, 235

⁸⁴ Rickman 1980, 269

⁸⁵ Erdkamp 2005, 245

deliberate state coordination aimed at fulfilling the needs of the populace, rather than a development of the market and private interests.

It has been made clear that the grain supply of ancient Rome was in a state of chronic insecurity. Crises in the grain supply had become a source of socio-political instability which forced state authorities to get involved in the city's supply system. This essay has demonstrated that the state took deliberate measures to best secure the city's access to grain: this included ad hoc measures, particularly during times of dearth and unrest, but also significant long term innovations in the grain supply. One of the key developments of state intervention in the grain supply can be traced to the Republic and the Gracchan law of 123 BC, which inaugurated the grain dole. The dole was periodically reformed but continued to provide grain throughout the years to a significant portion of the city's population. In addition, the establishment and expansion of the *annona* demonstrates the degree of state planning in the city's grain supply. The presence of both state officials and private grain merchants at various levels of the supply system of Rome has been illustrated. Furthermore, while state efforts may have relied on private interests, this essay has shown that "free trade in the empire's capital operated in the margins of a system that was characterised by public supply channels."⁸⁶ While private dealers may have been responsible for supplying much of Rome's grain, it is the state that impelled them to do so. If left to its own devices, it is unlikely that the market would have been able to keep the city sufficiently fed. Thus, the grain supply of ancient Rome depended on a relationship between state and private interests.

⁸⁶ Erdkamp 2005, 256

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