

# An Analysis of Transportation Burden Sharing in Roman Egypt as Evidenced through Papyri

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## Background

- Large amounts of transportation occurring over land and water in a highly contractual society
- Animal maintenance is costly, but used for both transportation and farm labor

## Contracts were used to reduce an individual's transportation burden

- Explicit cost sharing of animals and animal infrastructure, splitting of farm work and revenues, and usage of 3<sup>rd</sup> party transporters
  - “[...] I have [...] covenanted with you to **share with you in the arbour of the camel-shed**, [...] and **to pay you yearly** on account of rent one thousand myriads of silver drachmae, total 1000 myriads of silver [...]” P. Oxy X 1280 (fourth century CE, Oxyrhynchos)

## Relationships and trust played into transportation burden and risk

- Often difficult to distinguish between personal and professional relationships because high level of trust and personal connection in relationships
  - “**Herennius to Satornilus his dearest, greetings**. [...] **Concerning the cats**, Ourses is taking care of them in accordance with what **I also wrote to you on another occasion**. And now look again, what do you think about the roses for 200 dr. and 180 dr., inquiring also about the transport costs? **If [your] she-donkey has got better**, come by night, so that you may go down to get the transport money.” O. Ber II 195 (50-75 CE, Berenike)

## Leases explicitly assigned responsibility of transportation

- Allowed either the landlord or tenant to pass transportation responsibility to other party
  - “[...] **I have rented** the five arouras of crown land for only the twelfth year, the rent for the total being thirty-seven and a half artabas, **the transport costs being the responsibility of me**.” SB. XIV 12192 (92 or 108 CE, Tebtynis Arsinoites)
- Transportation burden apparently linked with farm labor burden

