



Debt in Ancient Mediterranean Societies
A Documentary Approach
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Lending and borrowing are the two sides of what is probably the most ordinary and widespread legal act in all times. Yet, such a common situation raises a lot of legal questions that are still on the agenda in many modern legal systems.

The practice of credit has been studied at length, especially for ancient societies: specific loans connected with commercial law, rates of interest and the problem of usury, debt cancellations and their implications, have been the subject of many interesting and enlightening publications in the realm of social and legal sciences.

The purpose of the conference held in Paris in 2015 was rather to focus on the contract itself, as attested in the deeds or in the opinions of the ancient jurists. Paying attention to the wording of the documents helps to pinpoint the lexical variations and evolutions within a given period, in relation to the types of loans or to the local traditions.

The legal nature of the contract, which is still a matter of debate nowadays, was also discussed in the past. The formulary of the documents related to debts, as well as the words and concepts used by the jurists to analyze them, reveal their own ideas about the multiple ramifications of an apparently basic and mundane act, that eventually became a template for all kinds of legal or administrative operations.

These are the main lines of research addressed by the contributions gathered in this volume, based on the primary documentation of the various legal cultures in Antiquity.