

Competition 4: Trade in Rome:

From reading and analysing the financial document provided within the second class (volcanic documents & depictions – ‘*Tabulae Pompeianae Sulpiciorum 51*’) documenting the specifics of a 10, 000 sesterces loan filed on the 18th of June in the year 37 C.E (the year Caligula’s reign began) in which a trader or merchant named Gaius Novius Eunus accepted a loan from a presumed affiliate named Evenus Primianus. It is important to note that Primianus was a freedman, a *libertus*. Meaning he used to be a slave belonging to none other than the prior Roman Emperor Tiberius, but had gone through manumission and therefore released. The reason for why this is important to note is because a freedman or ex-slave would have made the abrupt transition from having no money, property, or rights that a citizen would have – to having a grand sum of 10, 000 sesterces to loan a merchant. Now the exact time between the manumission of the Primianus and the 18th of June 37 is unknown, and we can assume that it is quite a gap considering the fact that your average roman legionary (head of a Roman legion) has an annual salary of 900 sesterces. Conversion rates between ancient currency (i.e. Sesterces or Denarii) are problematic at best and virtually unknown. However, most modern estimates put the sesterces as being equivalent to \$0.50 American dollars. Therefore, 10, 000 sesterces would equal: \$5, 000 American dollars! This would pay for the 7, 000 measures of Alexandrian wheat (equal to 61, 110 litres worth of grain) as well as a variety of other products that would have been consumed daily by most Roman citizens. The fact that there is such a high quantity (an overall total of 11, 000 measures – *Modius* – equal to 96, 030 litres worth) of these products suggests that Eunus is shipping these products to be consumed by a large amount of people over a short period of time or by very few people over a longer period of time. however the question mostly focuses on the grain therefore I shall do the same within my answer. Using the Orbis software provided I have shown the most efficient, cheapest, and fastest route possible that Eunus is most likely to take. According to my findings, it would have taken him 16.6 days, to travel the total of 2188 kilometres from Alexandria to Puteoli costing Eunus a total of 10, 000 sesterces/\$5, 000 American dollars. In this case the price of the grain is certainly high, however, probably appropriate for the quantity.

ORBIS The Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World

Route Network Flow

FROM: Alexandria
TO: Neapolis

DEPARTING: MONTH SEASON

PRIORITY: Fastest **Cheapest** Shortest

NETWORK MODES

MODE: ROAD Donkey RIVER Civilian SEA Fast

TRANSFER COST: 0 0

Calculate Route

The Cheapest journey from Alexandria to Neapolis in September takes 16.6 days, covering 2188 kilometers.

Prices in *denarii*, based on the use of a faster sail ship and a civilian river boat (where applicable), and on these road

Per kilogram of wheat (by donkey): 1.66
Per kilogram of wheat (by wagon): 1.66
Per passenger in a carriage: 418.41

Perspective Duration Distance Donkey Wagon Carriage

Longitude
Latitude

38K
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