

Book XI.  
Title LVII. (LVI)

That no villager is responsible for the debts of other villagers.  
(Ut nullus ex vicinis pro alienis debitis vicinorum teneatur.)

11.57.1. Emperor Zeno.

It is burdensome, and not only contrary to law but also contrary to natural equity, that any persons should be held responsible for the debts of others. We therefore forbid such iniquities to be perpetrated against any villagers.

Note.

This law forbade one villager to be held for the debt of another. Later Justinian was compelled to enact another law on the same subject, as shown by Novel 52, c. 1, showing that the practice had been kept up.

A similar principle was announced as to taxes. Thus C. 11.59.16 provides that one curial should not be held for the tax of another, but only for his own. C. 12.60.4 provides that no land should be held for the public or private debts of another. See to a similar effect Novel 128, c. 14, and Novel 134, c. 4. So far as taxes were concerned, these provisions simply meant that every one should pay his proportionate share of the taxes and not be compelled to pay the taxes of another. They did not apparently take away the joint responsibility of curials and of villagers therefor. See, Abbott & Johnson, Mun. Adm. in the Roman Empire. Clausen, The Roman Colonate 314, and see C. 11.59.