

Book XI.
Title LI. (L)

Concerning the serfs (coloni) of Palestine.
(De colonis palaestinis.)

11.51.1. Emperors Valentinian, Theodosius and Arcadius to Cynegius, Praetorian Prefect.

Since a law passed by our predecessors binds serfs (coloni) throughout the other provinces of our empire by, so to speak, an eternal bond, so that they are not permitted to depart from places by the fruits of which they are sustained, or desert the estate which they have once undertaken to cultivate, but since this provision has not been extended for the benefit of landowners of the province of Palestine, we ordain, that throughout Palestine also no serfs shall wander about as though his own master and free, but he is bound to the owner of the estate as in other provinces, and he cannot depart without punishment being visited upon the person who receives him. We add also, that the owner of the estate has full power to recall him.