

Book XII.  
Title XXVI.

Concerning the Decanis (palace servitors of women).  
(De decanis.)

12.26.1. Emperors Honorius and Theodosius to Helio, Count and Master of Offices.

The four who from the corporation of the decani arrive at the first grade of the service, shall fill the office of chief (primiceratus) for the period of two years, and no one shall be permitted to remain in that position longer, so that all favoritism and unlawful desire shall cease and those next in grade shall succeed those who precede them, after the completion of two years.

Given at New Constantinople November 4 (416).

C. Th. 6.33.1.

Note.

The decani here mentioned were servitors of a low rank, acting as doorkeepers and messengers in the service of the women of the imperial household. They were evidently divided into four separate bureaus, each with a chief (primicerius), who served for the period of two years. See Boak, Master of Office, 37; 4 Pauly-Wissowa 2246. As other bureau-officials, they could not again serve in the same capacity. C. 12.23.5; C. 12.25.1. As noted in the next law, they were under the jurisdiction of the Master of Offices.

12.26.2. Emperors Theodosius and Valentinian to Nomus, Master of Offices.

It is improper that the decani who belong to our household, should be dragged into other tribunals, by those that want to sue them. They should need to appear only before the tribunal of the illustrious master of offices. 1. In this manner the service of Our Clemency will not be neglected, and the right to have them answer is given to those who sue them. So we direct that, in accordance with the example established for the imperial palace troops (scholares), no one shall be permitted to drag the above mentioned persons to any other tribunal, and that those of them who are sued shall be committed to the care of the primates of their department (for the appearance).

About 443-444.