Hunting in northern Europe until 1500 AD

Old traditions and regional developments, continental sources and continental influences
The 7th century's royal follower's grave at mid-east Swedish Rickeby (Uppland) - the deceased one with his horse, several dogs, several raptor birds, several birds which represent the typical prey of falconry plus food gifts (drawing Ulla Malmsten).
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Hunting in northern Europe until 1500 AD

Old traditions and regional developments, continental sources and continental influences

Edited by
Oliver Grimm und Ulrich Schmöliche

Papers presented at a workshop organized by the Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology (ZBSA)

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Table of Contents

Foreword .................................................................................................................. 11

Introduction
Oliver Grimm and Ulrich Schmöcke
The hunting workshop and its publication ......................................................... 13

The transition from the last hunters to the first farmers
Sönke Hartz and Ulrich Schmöcke
From the Mesolithic to the Neolithic – Hunting strategies
in the south-western Baltic Sea area ............................................................... 21

Hunting in the long run: some chosen aspects (Stone Age to medieval times)
Sveinung Bang-Andersen
Prehistoric reindeer hunting in south-west Norway with emphasis on the
period 1000 BC to AD 1000 – Overview, retrospect and perspectives .................. 41
Svein Indrelid
‘Industrial’ reindeer hunting in the south Norwegian mountains
in the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages ...................................................... 55
Mara-Julia Weber
Late Upper and Late Palaeolithic reindeer hunting in the Ahrensburg tunnel valley –
Differences between Hamburgian and Ahrensburgian hunting tactics .................. 75

Ulrich Schmöcke
A short history of seals and seal populations in northern European waters ........... 91
Aikaterini Glykou
Seal hunting at the Baltic Sea coast – A case study from the Late Mesolithic
and earliest Neolithic Neustadt in Holstein, Germany ........................................ 101
Ulf Ickerodt
Barbed points through time – A hunting weapon between
ethnoarchaeological argumentation and functional analysis ......................... 113

Peter Vang Petersen
Mesolithic Dogs .................................................................................................... 147
Bodil Holm Sørensen
Dogs in the Danish Viking Age – The Ladby Ship and other finds ....................... 163
Ulrich Schmöcke
The evidence for hunting dogs from Mesolithic times up to the Viking Age
from a zoological point of view – A survey .................................................... 175

Harm Paulsen
From Stone Age hunting bow to medieval weapon of war –
Selected examples of bows and arrows in the North ....................................... 185
Late Bronze Age and Hallstatt/Early La Tène hunting

Maria Vretemark
Late Bronze Age hunting in Middle Sweden – Evidence from
"King Björn's mound" in Häga and the surrounding settlements ........................................... 207

Peter Trebsche
Hunting in the Hallstatt and Early La Tène Cultures: the economic and social importance ... 215

Leif Hansen
Hunting in the Hallstatt period – The example of the
Eberdingen-Hochdorf "princely grave"................................................................. 239

Roman and late ancient Germanic hunting

Thomas Fischer
Hunting in the Roman period................................................................. 259

Christoph Reichmann
Late ancient Germanic hunting in Gaul based on selected archaeological examples .......... 267

Bear hunting in the 1st millennium AD

Oliver Grimm
Bear-skins in northern European burials and some remarks on other bear-related
furnishings in the north and middle of Europe in the 1st millennium AD ....................... 277

Sigmund Oehr
Svíþjom věr björnuna á mörkinni norðr – Bear hunting and its ideological
context (as a background for the interpretation of bear claws and other remains
of bears in Germanic graves of the 1st millennium AD)........................................... 297

Hunting in the long run: noble and royal hunt (AD 350–1500)

Oliver Grimm
Wiesbaden-Breckenheim, Tissø and beyond – Some methodological remarks
on bones of wild animals from continental and southern Scandinavian centres
of power in parts of the 1st millennium AD .......................................................... 333

Claus Dobiat
Early falconry in central Europe on the basis of grave finds,
with a discussion of the origin of falconry ............................................................. 343

Wietske Prummel
Falconry in continental settlements as reflected by animal bones
from the 6th to 12th centuries AD................................................................. 357

Maria Vretemark
The Vendel Period royal follower's grave at Swedish Rickaby as
starting point for reflections about falconry in Northern Europe .................................... 379

Martina Giese
Continental royal seats, royal hunting lodges and deer parks
seen in the mirror of medieval written sources ...................................................... 387
Lydia Carstens
On the hunt in Old Norse sources ........................................ 397

Christian Radtke
Lordship and hunting in Schleswig – A sketch .......................... 419

Åsa Ahlbrand
Vert and venison – High status hunting and parks in medieval Sweden .......... 439

Frode Iversen
The name of the game! The changing role of hunting on royal land
in Norway during the Middle Ages ....................................... 465

Hunting in laws, depictions and place names

Martina Giese
Legal regulations on hunting in the barbarian law codes of the Early Middle Ages .......... 485

Sigmund Oehrl
Hunting in the West Norwegian Gulathing Law (Gulathinglag/Gulathingbók) ........... 505

Sigmund Oehrl
Can pictures lie? Hunting the red deer with raptors –
According to visual representations from the Viking Age ....................... 515

Vera Henkelmann
A hunting scene on a late medieval linen embroidery from a convent
in Preetz (northern Germany) – An art-historical perspective ................. 531

Jürgen Udolph
Hunting in continental place and field names ................................ 543

Inge Særheim
Toponyms from south-western Norway referring to hunting and fishing ............. 551

Further perspectives

Algirdas Girininkas and Linas Daugnora
Hunting in the territory of Lithuania from the Late Palaeolithic to the Middle Ages .... 567

Elena A. Nikulina and John Meadows
Ancient DNA and stable isotope analysis – Two innovative scientific methods in the archaeology of hunting .................................... 597

Summary and outlook

Oliver Grimm and Ulrich Schmölecke
Results and future perspectives in relation to an overall concept of hunting-related research ......................................................... 605
Legal regulations on hunting in the barbarian law codes of the Early Middle Ages

By Martina Giese, Tübingen

Keywords: Hunting law, Leges barbarorum, barbarian law codes, trapping, hunting dogs, falconry, tamed stags

Abstract: The Leges (barbarorum) are the most important set of sources for investigating hunting in continental Europe from the 5th to the 8th century. They comprise the customary law of the gentes, but were only written down some time later at the behest of kings and expanded by new statutes partly dictated by kingship. The leges are rooted in archaic conceptions of law and oriented towards specific individual cases. In contrast to Roman law, the leges are based on a system of compositions, which in the event of damage or loss involved the payment of money to the injured party. They include a whole host of hunting-related regulations, especially concerning property offences and in connection with hunting practice. They also pay much attention to hunting techniques and to trained animals used in the hunt, such as tame stags, birds of prey and hunting dogs. The present contribution provides a selective overview of these different regulations.

The Leges (barbarorum) or tribal laws are the legal texts of the Germanic peoples living in continental Europe between the 5th and 8th centuries (for a general overview, cf. SCHOTT 1991, col. 1802–1803; SCHMIDT-WIEGAND 2001, col. 194–200, on the culture-historical importance esp. col. 198–199). This kind of source material began to be written in the 5th century by the Visigoths and continued to the time of Charlemagne († 814), under whom the different legal traditions were brought together in collected manuscripts. While the unified criminal law of the Roman Empire had accorded a central role to physical punishments (corporeal and capital punishments), the system of sanctions of the various leges was based on the so-called composition system or fine system (cf. SCHUMANN 2012). Here, the punishment was carried out through the payment of compensation money to the victim of the crime him- or herself, or to the person’s relevant social group (generally the family). The composition (compositio), in effect the fine, was staggered according to the severity of the crime and the personal standing of the victim1. In the context of a society very much predisposed to violence, the judicial process itself and the payments were designed to curtail – if not to completely prevent – violence regarded as part of one’s right to revenge. The aim was to repress personal retaliation of an unlawful act by the victim himself, an archaic form of conflict which always threatened to escalate into a tit-for-tat spiral.

1 The relevant monetary units were the denarius (or penny, a silver coin), the solidus (or shilling, a gold coin worth 3 tremissis or 12 saeae), the saega (in the vernacular known as sagga, a gold coin; 12 saega = 1 solidus) and the tremissis/tremissus (a gold coin, 3 tremissi = 1 solidus).

485
of violence. Although, the contribution of the various social groups towards the genesis of these texts is still controversial, the leges nevertheless appear to be a consensual form of law, that is to say the result of processes of negotiation between the king and his grandees on the one hand and the general populace on the other. In addition to the conditions surrounding transmission, the problem of dating and text critical questions, current research particularly focuses on how we should see the relationship between written norms and the actual enactment of the laws  

The earliest preserved manuscripts of the leges only date to the second half of the 8th century. Without exception, they were written in the scholarly language of Latin, but they are dotted with vernacular additions. This indicates a tension between oral tradition and writing and clearly reflects the significant fact that the remaining texts are the product of an oral judicial practice. The leges exhibit a casuistic character in their monotonous structure and the individual clauses. Time and again, they reflect the material culture and daily life of the Early Middle Ages. The leges hence provide diverse and very valuable culture-historical information on these aspects. This also applies to hunting, especially to the so-called popular hunt carried out by wider sections of the population, and of which we would otherwise know very little. While the leges do not contain regulations pertaining to hunting law in the narrow sense of the word, i.e. regulations regarding the use of hunting territories, the question of who is entitled to hunt in the first place and which animals may be killed at what time (for a recent general overview, see Kohl 2011, col. 1341–1345), they instead repeatedly address events of damage or loss connected with hunting. That shifts the focus to hunting techniques themselves with their various specially trained animals (hunting dogs, birds of prey and tame stags) used as decoys, which are otherwise mostly known from the much later didactic texts of the period.

TRAPPING

In the following, selected examples of hunting laws in the leges are introduced and their content briefly explained. In the main, these are legal regulations concerning either bodily injuries or property offences. The former comprise various regulations regarding trapping. These aimed to prevent the injury of domestic animals and especially of people through traps. The causative principle applied, whereby the person setting the traps was responsible for the installations he had set up. This is briefly

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2 For overviews see Dilcher/Distler 2006; Siems 2009; Eoers 2011; particularly on transmission and the different editions, see Hartmann 1996. On the question of text inter-dependence, see e.g. Seibold 2010a.
3 The termini/passages in the vernacular occasionally begin with in mallobergio (= 'in the Malberg' = 'in court') or mallobergio (= in legal terminology). The added mnemonic sentences, originally probably marginalia, are known as 'Malbergische Glossen' and are extremely valuable both as culture-historical and as early linguistic sources. See e.g. Seibold 2007a; 2007b; 2008; 2010b; 2011. As a general stock taking, cf. Schmidt-Wiegand 1991; 2006, esp. 149–151 on the 'Malbergische Glossen'; Dalby 1965, esp. introd. XXXVIII–XXXIX.
5 See e.g. von Wagner 1884; Stach 1922/23; Paul 1981, esp. 23–42 and 49–53; Hopfenghoff 1987; Bognion 2005, esp. 19–25; Doriat 2005; not always in tune with the most recent research Krau 2007, an overview for a wider readership provided in Giese 2009.
6 Didactic texts on the art of hunting are only available from the 13th cent. onwards. For the period before the 12th cent., there are only two treatises on falconry. For an overview, see Van den Abee 1996.
7 On the individual texts, see the information (with further literature) given in the repertorium Geschichtsquellen, which for reasons of space can only be generally referred to here.
mentioned in the Thuringian and Saxon codes. In other leges, those setting traps were obliged to secure their location with string or to inform their neighbours about the trap’s position. That was a preventative measure aiming to avoid accidents. Social distinctions are also evident here: if a slave came to harm, this was far less serious than if a freeman was involved. This is how the Burgundian code puts it:

**Gesetze der Burgunden, 66/68**

**Titulus**

XLVI. De his, qui tensuras ad occidentos lupos posuerint.

Oportet ut ea, quae in populo nostro aut contentionem faciunt aut hominibus periculum videntur inferre, interdicto legis rationabiliter corrigitur. Et idcirco invenimus:

[1.] Ut quicumque a praesenti tempore occidentorum luporum studio arcus posuerint, statim hoc ipsum vicini sui, eodem divulgante, cognoscant; ita ut tres lineas ad praenos-cenda positae arcus indicia diligenter extendat, ex quibus duae superiores sint; quae, si aut ab homine per ignorantiam veniente aut ab animali domestico tactae fuerint, sine periculo sagittas arcus emittat.

[2.] Quod si hoc modo provisa res fuerit, ut tensurae factae circumstentibus innoscant, quicumque ingenuus incante veniens casum mortis aut debilitatis incurrerit, nullam ex hoc calumniam is, qui arcus posuerit, sustinebit; sed XXV solidos tantum occisi parentibus curavit inferre.

[3.] Quod si servus fuerit ille, qui est sagittatus, sine aliqua solutione iacebit inultus.

[4.] Verum si is, qui arcus ietenderit, et vicinis non notum fecerit et lineas non illa qua iussimus diligentia et ratione posuerit, quicumque ingenuus aut servus ibidem fuerit interfectus, integram pretium eius, prout persona fuerit, occisi parentibus aut dominis secundum constitutionem priorum legum aindice concellatur exsolvever.

p. 98

**Titulus**

LXXII. De feris pedica

Si quis pedicam feris fecerit extra culturas et in deserto posuerit, et in ea aut homo aut animal fortassis incurrerit, ei, cujus pedica fuerit, nihil penitus calumniar moveatur.

**Gesetze der Burgunden, Transl., 53**

XLVI. Of those who set traps (drawn bows, tensuras) for killing wolves.

1. It is fitting that those who create strife among our people or cause danger to men should be corrected reasonably by the prohibition of law. And therefore we order that from the present time anyone who sets a bow for the purpose of killing wolves should let those living round about know of it forthwith by giving warning on the same day. He should set up three bowstrings carefully so that they may serve as warning signs of the drawn bow, of which two (of the bowstrings) are placed higher up (above the ground). If these shall be touched by men coming upon them ignorantly, or by domestic animals, the bow will discharge the arrow harmlessly.

2. But if this has been done in the manner provided so that the set traps are known to those living round about, let him who set the bow sustain no criminal charges (calumniar)

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8 Lex Thuringorum, p. 66, LIX. Si homo laqueum vel pedicam vel quodlibet machinamentum ad capiendas ferar in silva posuerit, ubique pecus vel inimicium alterius captum vel mortuum fuerit, qui machinamentum fecit, dampnum emendas.

Lex Saxonum, p. 31, LVI. Qui laqueum fossamque ad feras capiendas fecerit, et haec dampnum calumniat fecerint, qui eas fecit nullam solvat; p. 32, LVIII. Si fossa vel laqueus ad feras capiendas praeparata dampnum quodlibet fecerint, a quo parata sunt conponatur.
in the case of any native freeman who incautiously incurs death or injury from this cause; but he will take care to pay twenty-five solidi to the relatives of the man killed.

3. But if it is a slave who has been struck by the arrow, let him lie unavenged without any payment (i.e. uncompensated).

4. But if he who set the bow has not made it known to those living near by, and if the bowstrings were not placed with that care or in that manner which we ordered, and if any native freeman or slave has been killed, let him (who set the bow) be compelled by the judge to pay the entire wergeld according to the rank of the person to the relatives or master of him slain, according to the enactment of former laws.

p. 69
LXXII
Of traps for animals
If anyone sets a trap for wild animals outside the cultivated land, and places it in a deserted spot, and by chance, a man or animal runs into it, no blame shall be attributed to him who owned the trap on this account.

A clear distinction is drawn between setting traps far from human habitations (extra culturas et in deserto) and setting traps in the neighbourhood of settlements, with the latter necessitating additional measures to minimise risk. The Visigothic law of the Liber Judiciorum (‘Book of judgements’/Visigothic code, the laws issued in 654 in the Visigothic Kingdom and including 319 [out of a total of 500] clauses classified as antiqua [‘ancient’], which are attributed to King Liuvigild († 568)) adds a further dimension to this division by distinguishing trapping on one’s own land from the other variants. In addition, in this case (l. VIII, 4, 23) non-local persons are taken into account, as they might come across a trap without having been warned. In this case, after due consideration, the causative principle applies again, as the person having set the trap must pay a third of the fine usually required by law in the case of injury or death.

Liber Judiciorum, 340–341
l. VIII, 4, 22–23
XXII. Antiqua. Si fraudulenter quis ambulans in laqueos feris preparatos incidat.
Si quis sudes in vinea posuerit sive in campo propter feras, et ibi aliquis, dum furtum facere temptat, inciderit, culpae eius aportet adscribi, qui vulner excepit, quod in rem alienam fraudulenter ingressus est.

XXIII. Antiqua. Ut, qui laqueos feris ponit, et loca discernat, in quibus ponat, et vicinos admoneat.
Si quis in terris suis foveas fecerit, ut feras in eisdem foveis comprehendet, aut laqueos vel arcos pretenderit seu ballistas in locis secretis vel desertis, ubi via nulla est, quae non consueverat frequentari, nec ubi pecudum possit esse accessus; si aliquid animal per banc occasionem, quae ad feras adparatur, extinguat aut occidatur, pecus, quod periiit, incustus venator exovat; quia quadrupes sibi ea cabere non potui. Homines vero proximos vel vicinos venator ante commoneat; et si post monitionem quisquam hec incautus innuerit, nihil ex hoc calumnie venatori aportet opponi, quia se ille percui, quo commotionem audire necexit, obiect. Si quis vero de locis longinquioribus veniens, qui non fuerat ante communit, ignorans inciderit et fuerit debilitatus aut mortuos, is, qui feris insidias vel laqueos preparavit, tertiam partem compositionis exolvat, que fuerat hactenus debilitatus hominibus vel occasio in legibus comprehensa, quia in itinere hominum hoc periculum nescientibus applicare non debuit.
XXII. Where a Trespasser Falls into a Trap set for Wild Animals.
Where a person sets traps for wild animals in his vineyard or field, and anyone, while attempting to commit a theft, should be caught in any of said traps, the party injured shall alone be to blame, for the reason that he was trespassing on the premises of another. Ancient law.

XXIII. He who sets Snares or Traps for Wild Beasts, must Inform his Neighbors of the Places where said Snares are Set.
Where anyone, in order to catch wild beasts, digs pits in his fields or vineyards, or sets snares, or fixes bows and ballistas in retired or deserted places, remote from any highway, which are not often visited by man, and where cattle have not easy access, and an animal belonging to any person should be injured or killed by the contrivances placed for wild beasts, as aforesaid, the negligent hunter, through whose act the animal was killed, shall pay the value of the same to the owner, because he did not use a proper degree of care. Said hunter should previously give notice to all the neighbors; and if, after such notification, anyone is injured by the traps aforesaid, he who set them shall not be liable, because the party injured subjected himself to danger, in disregard of the warning he had received. If, however, anyone coming from a distance, and who had not been previously notified, should ignorantly fall into any of said snares, and should be injured or killed thereby, he who set said snares or traps for wild beasts shall pay the third part of the compensation prescribed by law, for persons injured or killed; for the reason that men, while on a journey, should not, without their knowledge, be exposed to such dangers.

In regard to trapping, the Lombard laws of Rothar's Edict ("The edict of the Lombard King Rothar"), promulgated in 643, put a special emphasis on property rights. On the one hand, the causative principle is extended to animals either shot by the hunter, pursued by his dogs or caught in one of his traps which then cause damage (Edictus Rothari, § 309–310), on the other hand, the legal right of the marksman/successful hunter to the hit, killed or trapped animal is protected (§ 311, 313). This right of appropriation accorded to the hunter covers a period of up to 24 hours after the shot has been fired (§ 314). Anyone who finds an animal wounded by another person (either shot, caught in a trap or tracked down by dogs) and kills it, but does not take the meat and instead notifies the hunter who wounded the animal, is entitled to the right front leg and seven ribs (§ 312). However, anyone who secretly takes meat from a game animal belonging to someone else must pay a fine of six solidi to the hunter who wounded the animal (§ 313).

Edictus Rothari, 72–73

309. De fera. Si qua fera ab homine plagata fuerit et in ipso furore hominem occiderit, aut quodlibet damnum fecerit, tunc ipse qui plagavit ipsum homicidium aut damnum conponat, sub ea videlicet observatione, ut tamdiu intellegatur culpa venatoris, quamdiu eam secutus fuerit, aut canis ipsius. Nam si ipsa fera postposuerit et se ab ea turnaverit, posteaque fera ipsa damnum fecerit, non requiratur ab eo qui plagavit aut incitavit.

310. De pedica. Si in pedica aut in taliola fera tenta fuerit et in hominem aut in peculium damnum fecerit, ipsa conponat qui pedica misit.

311. Si quis super fera ab alio plagata aut in taliola tenta, aut a canibus circumdata, iter sumum postponens, volens eam lucrari, super ipsam se miseret, et ab ipsa plagatus fuerit aut occisus, non requiratur ab eo qui plagavit aut incitavit, sed suae culpa et audaciae repottit, qui cum auctoritate lucrandi animo se super eam misit.
312. De fera inventa ab alio vulnerata. Si quis fera ab alio vulnerata aut in taliola tenta aut a canibus circumdata invenerat, aut forsitans mortua aut ipse occiderit et salvaverit, et bono animo manefestaverit, liceat eum de ipsa fera tollere dextra arno cum septem costas [1].

313. De fera celata. Si quis fera ab alio plagata, aut forsitans mortua invenerit et celaverit, conponat solidos sex illi qui eam plagavit.

314. Quamdiu fera intellegatur esse senatoris. Si cervus aut qualebit fera ab alio hominem [!] sagittata fuerit, tamdiu illius esse intellegatur, qui eam sagittavit, usque ad aliam talem horam diei aut noctis, id est oras viginti quattuor, quo eam posse posse [!] et se turnavit. Nam qui eam post transactas predictas horas invenerit, non sit culpavels, sed habeat sibi ipsa fera.

EDICTUS ROTHARI, TRANSL., 113–114
[On wild animals.] 309. On wild animals. If a wild animal has been hit by one man and in its agony it kills another man or does other damage, then he who struck it shall pay composition for the death or for the damage according to this provision, namely, that the liability of the hunter shall be recognized to last so long as he or his dog follow the animal. But if he has abandoned the animal and has turned away from it, and afterwards the animal causes damage, nothing shall be required from him who struck or incited the beast.

[On animal traps.] 310. On traps. If a wild animal caught in a trap or in a cage causes damage to some man or domestic animal, he who set the trap shall pay the composition.

[Concerning men killed by trapped animals.] 311. If a man interrupts his journey in order to pick up an animal struck by another man or held in a cage trap or surrounded by dogs and the man is struck or killed by that animal, nothing shall be required from him who had hit or trapped it, but rather the blame shall be imputed to him who had the audacity to attempt to take it for his own.

[On finding wounded animals.] 312. On finding wounded animals. He who finds an animal which has been wounded by another man or held in a cage trap or surrounded by dogs, or which is dead, and he kills the animal himself and leaves it, may take the right foreleg of the animal together with seven ribs if he makes it clear that he has done it with good intent.

[On hiding found animals.] 313. On hiding animals that have been found. He who finds and hides an animal wounded or killed by someone else shall pay six solidi as composition to him who wounded it.

[How long animals belong to the hunter.] 314. On how long animals belong to a hunter. If a stag or other animal is shot [and killed] with an arrow by any man, it belongs to the one who shot it up until the next same hour of the day or night, that is, for twenty-four hours after he set it aside and went away. Anyone who finds the animal after the prescribed number of hours has passed shall not be liable but may have the animal for himself.
In terms of hunting techniques, too, trapping, alongside hunting with bow and arrow (sagitta, sagittare) is described in greater detail. Pit traps (foveae), sometimes with trapping stakes acting as snap traps (sudes), as well as hunting with snares (laquei), pedica traps (equated with tagliola in Lombard law, these are probably folding traps or twitch-ups), box traps (trappa) and weapon traps (either a trap with a bow [arcus] as spring trap or a spear trap [balistula]) are all mentioned (on trapping with reference to the leges, see Lindner 1940, esp. 302–338; see also Lindner 1975). The game animals explicitly listed are deer (cerusus, Edictus Rothari), wild boar (especially males, aper), wolf (lupus, Lex Burgundionum) and turtle dove (turtur). In addition, game animals such as European bison, bear, beaver, hare, crane and goose, are also mentioned in the context of trained animals helping in the hunt, namely dogs and birds of prey.

Animals in the Hunt: Stags, Wild Cattle, Birds of Prey and Dogs

The frequent discussion of trapping in the leges leads to the general question of hunting techniques in the light of the leges. One practice noteworthy is the hunting of hoofed game using a tame animal of the same species. This method is also documented archaeologically (in the cemeteries of Rullsдорf near Lüneburg in Lower Saxony and of Sindelsdorf in Bavaria; cf. Grimm/Schmolcke in this vol., Summary) and in pictorial sources (the mosaic of Lillebonne, dép. Seine-Maritime, France, 3rd cent. AD). It appears to have fallen out of fashion in central Europe in the High Middle Ages, as written references are absent from the 10th century onwards (see Höfinghoff 1987; independently also Doiati 2005, 82–85). The Edictus Rothari distinguishes the value of a tame stag before and after it reached sexual maturity. A ‘roaring’ (bellowing) male deer was capable of attracting rivals in the rutting season in autumn, and was therefore twice as valuable as a domesticated but not yet bellowing animal. However, in both cases a thief had to pay the so-called Achtgeld, i.e., an eightfold counter-value, as in both cases the offense was theft.

9 In Bavarian law, hunting with bow and arrow is described as follows: Lex Baiwarkorum, p. 456–457, Tit. XIX. De mortuis et eorum causis. V. Si vulturaverit mortuam. Et si, ut sepe contigit, aquæ vel ceteri aves cadaver repereint et super ad lacerandum conscriberint, et alquis sagittam eicerit et cadaver vulturaverit et repertiur fuerit, sam XII solidos [!] conponatur. Lex Baiwarkorum, transl., p. 168, XIX. 5. And if, as often happens, eagles and other birds find the corpse, and because of this it is lacerated, and someone shoots an arrow at the bird and injures the corpse instead, and this is discovered, let him compensate with twelve solidi.


11 Pactus legis Salicai, 41, § 10. Si quis uncellum de trappa furauerit, malleburgero ascella, solidos IIII culpabilis indicetur. Pactus legis Salicai, transl., p. 50, 10. If anyone steals a small bird from the snare (known in the malberg as ‘ascella’), let him be held liable for three solidi.

12 Pactus legis Salicai, [text groups A and C (in case of inconsistencies I am following C) without the secondary additions, which Eckhardt has put in square brackets] p. 125, Tit. XXXIII. De secessionibus. § 5. Si quis agrum iussim, quem canes moverunt, occiderit, malleburgero harossina, sunt DC denarii qui faciunt solidos XV culpabilis indictor. Pactus legis Salicai, transl., p. 77, 33. Concerning the theft of animals taken from the hunt. 5. If anyone kills a boar, rendered exhausted, that dogs have frightened (known in the malberg as ‘harossina’), let him be held liable for 600 denarii, which make fifteen solidi.

13 Pactus legis Salicai, p. 41, only as secondary addition: § 9. Si quis turrum ex de re aliena furauerit, solidos IIII culpabilis indictor. Pactus legis Salicai, transl., p. 50, 9. If anyone steals a turtle-dove from another’s net, let him be held liable for three solidi.

14 See below. Lex Alamannorum, p. 154–155, XCV, 1–16, lists further game animals (mammals and birds). However, these are not animals hunted in the wild, but wild animals held in captivity.
315. De cervo domesticlo. Si quis cervum domesticum, qui tempore suo rugire solit, fragiaverit, conponat domino eius solidis duodecim; nam si furaverit, in actogild reddat.
316. Si quis cervum domesticum alienum, qui non rugierit, intrigaverit, conponat domino eius solidos sex; nam si eum furaverit, reddat in actogild.

[On domesticated stags.]
315. On domesticated stags. He who strikes a domesticated stag which has reached maturity (is "able to roar in its season") shall pay twelve solidi as composition to its owner. He who steals it shall return it eightfold.
316. He who ensnares another's domesticated stag which is not yet mature shall pay six solidi as composition to its owner. He who steals it shall return it eightfold.

The laws of the Alamans differentiate even more closely on the subject of male and female deer or wild cattle used to attract their conspecifics than Rothar's Edict, or the laws of the Salic Franks and the derived laws of the Ripuarian Franks (for the Franks in Ripuaria = the area around Cologne, recorded in the 2nd quarter of the 7th cent.)

PACTUS LEGIS ALAMANNORUM, [after manuscr. group A] 28–29
(fsitulus) XXIII
(1) Si quis vesontum bubalum si [sicl. sive] cervum, quod brugit, furaverit aut occiderit, 12 solidos conponat.
(2) Et cervus ille treudis non habet, medio solido conponat.
(3) Si treudis habet et cum ipso nihil sagittatum est, solvat solido uno.
(4) Si revetus feramus cum ipso sagittatus est, 3 solidos solvat.
(5) Si niger, solidos 6 conponat.
(6) Si involutus fuerit, novemgeldos conponat.
(fsitulus) XIV
(1) Si cervia indomita fuerit occisa, tremisse solvat.

[15 PACTUS LEGIS SALICAE, [text groups A and C (in case of inconsistencies I am following C) without the secondary additions, which Eckhardt has put in square brackets], p. 124–125, XXXIII. De senationibus. § 2. Si quis cervum domesticum signum habentem furaverit aut occiderit, qui ad senationem mansuetus est, et hoc per testibus [sic] fuerit adprobatum, quod cum domine et in senationem habnisset et cum ipso duas aut tres feras occidisset, mallobergv trounidio hoc est, MDCC denarios qui faciant solidos XIV culpabili indicietur. § 3. Aliam aereo domesticum cervum, qui in senatione adhibec non fuit, [qui eum] involuerit aut occiderit, mallobergv trounidio hoc est, MCC denarios qui faciant solidos XXX culpabili indicietur. PACTUS LEGIS SALICAE, TRANS., p. 76–77, 33 Concerning the theft of animals taken from the hunt. 2. If anyone steals or kills a domesticated and clearly marked stag that is trained for hunting, and the fact is proven through witnesses that its owner had it for hunting and that he had killed two or three wild animals with the stag (known in the malberg as 'trowuido'), let him be held liable for 1800 denarii, which make forty-five solidi. 3. But regarding another domesticated stag that is not ready for the hunt, he who steals or kills it (known in the malberg as 'trowuido chamsel'), and it can be proven that he did this, let him be held liable for 1200 denarii, which make thirty solidi. – Lex Ribavia, p. 97–98, Tit. 46 [De senationibus] 2. Si quis cervum domiciitum vel cum truis occiderit aut furaverit, non sicut de reliquis animalibus texaga exagatur, sed tamto 45 solidi multae. 3. Sin autem in senationem non fuit, 30 solid. multe. Lex Ribavia, TRANS., p. 187–188, 46 [Concerning (the theft) of animals taken from the hunt] 2. If anyone kills or steals a domesticated or a shackled [truis] stag, let [the payment] for the theft [texaga] not be exacted as for other types of animals, but let him be fined as much as forty-five solidi. 3. But if it was not taken from the hunt, let him be fined thirty solidi.]
(2) Si trudis habuit, medio solido.
(3) Si cum ipsum ruriam fera sagittata fuerit, 3 solidos solvat.
(4) Si nigra, 6 solidos solvat.
(5) Si involata fuerit, novemgeldos conponat.

PACTUS LEGIS ALAMANNORUM, TRANSL., 53–54
XXIII.
1. If anyone steals or kills a bison, a buffalo, [or] a stag that bellows, let him compensate with twelve solidi.
2. And [if] that stag does not have shackles, let him [the perpetrator] compensate with one-half solidus.
3. If it has a shackle and nothing has been killed by arrows with its help, let him [the perpetrator] pay one solidus.
4. If a red deer has been killed by arrows with its help, let him pay three solidi.
5. If a black [deer] is, let him compensate with six solidi.
6. If it is stolen, let him compensate ninefold.

XXIV.
1. If a wild doe is killed, let him [the perpetrator] pay a trimissis.
2. If it has a shackle, one-half solidus.
3. If a red doe is killed] by arrows, let him pay three solidi.
4. If a black [dove], let him pay six solidi.
5. If it is stolen, let him compensate ninefold.

The sign of a tame animal is the wearing of fetters (triuiis, trendis) which prevented escape (cf. LEX ALAMANNORUM, [following manuscr. group A] p. 154–155, XCV. 1–10). Once again, the staggered amounts of the fines show the relative worth of the animals. The crucial point is whether the tame animal has already been successful in the hunt or not, and which kinds of game had been killed.

Even from a purely quantitative point of view, birds of prey and hunting dogs play a much more important role in the leges than domesticated stags. A fundamental problem in this respect, which will be impossible to solve with certainty, is the zoological determination of the birds used, since the Latin terminology does not allow an unambiguous identification. The terms acceptor, accipiter and spavariarus were not consistently used for just one species (it is therefore confusing when modern translations render e.g. accipiter as ‘falcon’; cf. shortly Giese in press and W. Prummel in this vol.). The term falco does not occur at all. However, the vernacular commentaries do offer some orientation (Hofinghoff 1987, 160–171). How one came to own a bird of prey in the first place is revealed by the Edictus Rothari. To obtain a bird, one had to rely on capturing it in the wild, normally by taking a chick from its nest. During the developmental stage from cyas to passager, it was necessary to constrain the fledgling with a string, so that it was not then able to avoid being handled by people.

The leges give us the earliest known evidence from the Middle Ages for the practice of taking chicks from their nests (cf. on later sources van den Abeele 1994, 94–95). It has to be remembered that

17 Rivers makes a factual error in his transl. of this paragraph: ‘3. If it has a shackle and is not [killed] by arrows, let him pay one solidus’.
18 Rivers makes a factual error in his transl. of this paragraph: ‘4. If a red deer [is killed] by arrows, let him pay three solidi’.
19 This rather refers to wild cattle as big game. See Lex Baiwariorum, p. 463, Tit. XX. De canibus et eorum compositione. VII. Item alia. De his canibus, qui aris vel bubiis id est maiorbus, quod suarzwild dicimus, persecutant, si de his occiderit, cum simile et VI solidos conponat. Lex Baiwariorum, transl., p. 169, XX. Concerning dogs and their compensation. 7. Concerning dogs that chase bears or buffaloes, that is, large wild animals (which they call ‘suarzwild’), if he kills one of these, let him compensate with one equal in value and six solidi.

493
breeding birds of prey in captivity is a 20th century phenomenon, so that previously one had to necessarily rely on a juvenile or adult supply from the wild (cf. Giessen: 2010a, 359). The right to own the chicks was already acquired by marking out the tree on which their nest was located. The mention of a hunting territory reserved for the king is notable in this context.

Edictus Rothari, 74

321. Si quis de arbores signato in silva alterius acceptures de nido tulerit, conponat solidos sex.

Edictus Rothari, Transl., 114–115

[On falcons.]

320. On falcons. He who takes a falcon from someone else’s wood may have it, except in the king’s preserve. But if the lord of the forest comes along, he may take the falcon and no further blame will be imputed to him [who found the falcon]. We order, however, that he who takes a falcon from the king’s preserve shall pay twelve solidi as composition.

[On taking falcons from a marked tree.]

321. He who takes falcons from a nest in a marked tree in someone else’s wood shall pay six solidi as composition.

The regulations concerning the trees on which birds are nesting leads to what the Lex Salica (the ‘Salic laws’ of the Franks), dating to the last years of the reign of King Clovis I († 511), has to say about the theft of birds of prey. Under the heading of ‘The theft of birds’, birds of prey are mentioned before chickens, ducks and the like, i.e. hierarchically ranked according to their value. Within the bird of prey category, the decisive factor is whether the bird was taken from its nest (de arbore), i.e. was still untamed, or whether it was in possession of people as a bird already abraded/to be abraded. In the latter case (‘garden bird’), a theft from the perch (pertica, at the same time the only mention of a training aid in the leges) in the garden, that is to say outside of a locked room, is distinguished from the theft of a bird kept under lock and key and hence taken by breaking into a building.

Pactus leges Salicae

[text groups A and C (in case of inconsistencies I am following C) without the secondary additions, which Eckhardt has put in square brackets], 39–41

VII. De furitis auctum

§ 1. Si quis accipitrem de arbore furauerit et ei fuerit adprobatum, mallobergo ortfocla sunt, CXX denarios qui faciunt solidos III culpabilis indicetur excepto capitale et dilatura.20

§ 2. Si quis accipitrem de pertica furauerit et ei fuerit adprobatum, mallobergo uueiape boc est, DC denarios qui faciunt solidos XV culpabilis indicetur.

§ 3. Si quis accipitrem deintro clauen furauerit et ei fuerit adprobatum mallobergo ortfocla [su]eiano antedio boc est, MDCCCC denarios qui faciunt solidos XLV culpabilis indicetur excepto capitale et dilatura.

20 Value and fine for loss of use = reimbursement value (intrinsic value, capitale) and compensation for loss of use (delatura/dilatura, old High German ‘wirdira’), the interpretation of delatura remains controversial. It is a kind of fine to be paid for offences against property, in addition to the value and the fine for the offence.
§ 4. Si quis sparuarium furauerit, mallobergo socelino, sunt denarii CXX qui faciunt solidos III culpabilis iudicetur excepto capitale et dilatura.

PACTUS LEGIS SALICAE, Transl. 49–50
7. Concerning the theft of birds
1. If anyone steals a hawk from a tree (known in the malberg as 'ortfocla'), and it can be proven that he did this, let him be held liable for 120 denarii, which make three solidi, in addition to its value and a fine for the loss of its use.
2. If anyone steals a hawk from a perch (known in the malberg as 'uuciape ortfocla'), and it can be proven that he did this, let him be held liable for 600 denarii, which make fifteen solidi, in addition to its value and a fine for the loss of its use.
3. But if anyone steals a hawk that is locked up (known in the malberg as 'ortfocla' or 'uuciano antedio'), and it can be proven that he did this, let him be held liable for 1800 denarii, which make forty-five solidi, in addition to its value and a fine for the loss of its use.
4. If anyone steals a sparrow hawk (known in the malberg as 'socelino'), let him be held liable for 120 denarii, which make three solidi, in addition to its value and a fine for the loss of its use.

In addition to differentiating birds of prey by their degree of taming, as in the Salic laws, the leges also categorise birds according to the prey they are specialised on. This aspect is most detailed in the Bavarian laws (see Fig. 1), whose text existed in written form at the very latest after the Synod of Aschheim in 756.

Fig. 1. Lex Baierniorum (manuscript from Ingolstadt), oldest manuscript of the text, here titulus XX, 9 and XXI, 1–4, written down in south-eastern Bavaria around 800–825 AD (Munich, Universitätshbibl., Clm. 7 [= Cod. ms. 132], fol. 830, online: http://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/1092/ [visited 3.6.2012]).
LEX BAIWARIORUM, 465–466
Titulus XXI. De accipitribus.
I. De accipitribus. Si accipitrem occiderit, quem chranohari dicunt, cum VI solidis et simile conponat; et cum I sacramentale iuret, ut ad volare et capere similis sit.
II. Item alia. De eo qui dicitur canshapuh qui anseres capit, cum III solidis conponat et similem reddat.
III. Illum quem anothapuh dicimus, cum solido et similis conponat.
III. Item alia. De sparawaris vero pari sententia subiaceat cum solido et similis restitueendi et cum sacramento, ut tales sint, quales interfectione damnavit.
V. Item alia. Si vero furtu ablati fuerint, per omnia furtivum cogantur solvere, ut lex compellit.21

LEX BAIWARIORUM, TRANSL., 170
XXI. Concerning hawks.
1. If someone kills a hawk, which they call ‘crano hari’, let him compensate with six solidi and one equal in value, and let him swear with one oath-taker that it is of equal value in flying and seizing.
2. For one that is called ‘canshapuh’, which seizes geese, let him compensate with three solidi and return one equal in value.
3. For the one that we call ‘an othapuh’, let him compensate with one solidus and one equal in value.
4. Concerning ‘sparawaris’, however, let him be liable for an equal fine, that is, one solidus, and let him give compensation of equal value and take an oath, saying that they are of equal value to those killed.
5. If, however, they are carried off in theft, let him be compelled to pay for all things as if stolen, as the law requires.

It was not only a purely financial reparation that was awarded, but it was also ensured that the wronged owner of the stolen bird would receive an animal of equivalent hunting skill as compensation (this aspect is especially stressed in Tit. XXI, 1). The vernacular composite terms provide a welcome glimpse of the kinds of prey animals and therefore also the species of birds of prey that were in use (cf. Höflinghoff 1987, 164–168 with factual errors e.g. „Kranichadler“, ‘crane eagle’; Lindner 1976, 166–167). Accordingly, the ‘crano hari’ is a peregrine falcon trained to hunt cranes, and with a fine of six solidi the most valuable bird of prey. There is a considerable drop in the amount of the fine for the next most valuable animals, the ‘canshapuh’ (a female hawk trained to hunt wild geese) and the ‘an othapuh’ (a male hawk trained to hunt wild ducks). This distinction is based on the physical differences between terecel and female, still evident today. The sexual dimorphism of the species given, the female is physically stronger and can therefore kill larger game animals. Crane hunting makes reference to the so-called ‘high flight’, the mention of hawk and sparrowhawk to their hunting technique in the so-called ‘low flight’22. That birds of prey were highly valued and seen as symbols of noble status is also shown by a listing in the Ripuarian Laws. Following a catalogue of wergeld amounts (Lex Ribvaria, p. 92–94, Tit. 40) (the highest sum, 200 solidi, applies to the killing

21 This refers to the Neunpfund, or ninefold fine, in Lex Baiwariorum, p. 366, Tit. IX De furto. I. [Si quis liber furtum fecerit] Si quis liber aliquid furaverit, qualemque rem viuenda conponat, hoc est novum capita restitutum.
22 Hawk (Accipiter gentilis L.) and sparrowhawk (Accipiter nisus L.) are grip killers who hunt a short way from the ground and over short distances (‘low flight’), while falcons are bite killers and hunt over long distances and high up in the air (‘high flight’). On hunting techniques and the classification of birds of prey, cf. Van den Abeele 1994, 45–91.

496
of a freeman), there is a list of standardised equivalent values which were accepted instead of cash for the wergeld payment. Alongside status attributes such as swords and armour, this 'conversion table' also features birds of prey with their equivalent monetary value.

Hunting dogs are treated in the leges in a way quite analogous to birds of prey (cf. von Wagner 1884; Stach 1922/23; Lindner 1940, 246–286; Paul 1981, 23–42 and 49–53; Hopinghoff 1987, 210–236; Schwenk 1991; Bugnion 2005, esp. 19–25). The dog was (and is) a hunter’s most important helper (for an overview in monograph form, see Bugnion 2005; with further lit. Giese 2010b; cf. also the sample entry „Hund“ in: Animaliter; Vang Petersen and Schmolcke on dogs in this vol.), as is evident from the detailed consideration given to dogs in the leges. A direct connection between hawking and hunting dogs is provided by the mention of the canis acceptorius in the Frisian Laws, essentially a ‘hawking dog’ who provided support for birds of prey on the ground by flushing out small game. This animal also appears in the Bavarian laws as a hawk-dog (‘hapuhund’). Just like in the case of the birds of prey, the staggered compensation catalogues are an indicator of the value accorded to hunting dogs. Almost exclusively, monetary fines are mentioned, but in the Burgundian laws we come across the exceptional case of a degrading punishment for thieves: to encourage payment morale, as it were, in the event of someone’s stealing a hunting dog, he was threatened with a public shaming ritual. If a bird of prey was stolen, the laws envisaged the obligation, associated with a high risk of injury, to allow the bird to consume a fixed amount of six ounces of meat on the perpetrator’s naked breast.

GESETZE DER BURGUNDEN, 124
Titulus
XCVII. De canibus veltravis aut septugis aut petrunculis.

Si quis canem veltravum aut septugium vel petrunculum praesumpserit involare, iubemus, ut in conventu coram omni populo posteriorem ipsius canis osculetur; aut sex solidos illi, cuius canem involavit, cogatur exsolvere, et multae nomine solidos II.

Titulus XCVIII. De acceptoribus.

Si quis acceptorem alienum involare praesumpserit, aut VI uncias carnium acceptor ipse

23 Lex Ribarv, p. 94–95, Tit. 40 [De diversis interfectionibus] 11 Si quis wergeldum solvere cooperit, bovem cornuam videntem et sanam pro duo solidi tribiunt. Vaccam cornuam videntem et sanam pro uno solido tribiunt. Equum videntem et sanum pro septem solidi tribiunt. Equam videntem et sanam pro tres solidi tribiunt. Equum ab eo scugligo pro tres solidi tribiunt. Bruna bona pro duodecim solidi tribiunt. Helmo condercito pro sex solidi tribiunt. Scuto cum lancea pro duo solidi tribiunt. Bagnergas bonas pro sex solidi tribiunt. Acceperum indomica [II] pro 3 solidi tribiunt. Cornuorum graum pro sex solidi tribiunt. Acceperum mutam pro 12 solidi tribiunt. Lex Ribarv, Transl., p. 185–186, 40 [concerning different (categories of) homicide] 11. If anyone begins to pay a wergeld, let him give a horned ox, able to see and healthy, for two solidi. Let him give a horned cow, able to see and healthy, for one solidus. Let him give a stallion, able to see and healthy, for seven solidi. Let him give a mare, able to see and healthy, for three solidi. Let him give a sword with a sheath [sculiglum] for seven solidi. Let him give a sword without a sheath [sculiglum] for three solidi. Let him give a metal tunic [brumia] in good condition for twelve solidi. Let him give a helmet [helma] in good condition for six solidi. Let him give a shield with a lance for two solidi. Let him give [a pair of] leggings [bagnerga] in good condition for six solidi. Let him give an untrained hawk for three solidi. Let him give a craneselzing hawk for six solidi. Let him give a trained hawk for twelve solidi. — The Carolingian royal laws turn against this possibility, indicated in the Ripuarian laws, of using birds of prey and swords as composition, ’since because of these two an injustice is sometimes perpetrated, as they are accorded a higher value than they actually have’. Capitula legibus addenda of the year 818/19, in: Capitularia Regum Francorum, no. 136, p. 280–285, here c. 8, p. 282, l. 28–31 Quid in compositione irreglidi datur non debeat. In compositione irreglido volumus ut ea dentur quae in legem continentur, expeo accipere et spata, quia propter illa duo aliquotes perturbation commititur, quando majoris pretii quam illa sint esse inventur.


25 Lex Badwarum, p. 462, Tit. XX. De canibus et eorum compositione. VI. De eo cane qui dictur hapuhunt pari sententiis subiacet.
super testones ipsius comedat, aut certe, si noluerit, VI solidos illi, cuius acceptor est, cogatur exsolvere, multae autem nomine solidos II.

GESETZE DER BURGUNDEN, TRANSL. 84

XCVII
Of hounds (canes veltravi), hunting dogs (segatii), or running dogs (petrunculi)
If anyone shall presume to steal a hound, or a hunting dog, or a running dog, we order that he be compelled to kiss the posterior of that dog publicly in the presence (in conven-tu) of all the people, or let him be compelled to pay five solidi to him whose dog he took, and a fine of two solidi.

XCVIII
Of falcons
If anyone presumes to steal another’s falcon, either let the falcon eat six ounces of meat from his breast (super testones), or if he does not wish, let him be compelled to pay six solidi to the owner of the falcon; moreover, let the fine be two solidi.

The catalogue of fines in the Lex Baiwariorum is particularly informative regarding the different functions of dogs during the hunt. This source also illustrates that clearly differentiated breeds of dogs in the modern sense did not yet exist in the Early Middle Ages (cf. Giuse 2010b, 121–123). Three kinds of scenthounds are distinguished. First, there is the ‘leithunt’ leading the pack, then the ‘trip-hunt’ – both are the best pack dogs for pursuing the scent of game. The third is the ‘spurihunt’, who follows a scent on a leash. These terms accordingly stress either the dogs’ running capacity or their good nose. However, that does not provide a precise statement about the appearance of these animals. Most likely, these were medium-sized foxhound-like dogs. One exception is the beaver hound, for which it is mentioned that he hunts underground, so we may deduce a necessarily small stature. He, too, commands the highest possible fine, most likely because of his special training to hunt inside a burrow. His primary target were beavers and otters, which were prized as a Lenten food and for their pelts (Blaschitz 1998). The text becomes more precise for veltris, certainly a tall and slim greyhound, which is capable – as is explicitly stated – of chasing hares on sight, catching up with them and killing them. The dogs in Tit. XX, 7 should probably be thought of as similar to mastiffs, as they were sent out against bears and wild cattle. The last to be mentioned is the sheepdog, which must also possess some hunting skills if it is to protect the flock from wolves.

LEX BAIWARIORUM, 460–464

Titulus XX. De canibus et corum compositione.

I. Si quis canem secum quem leithunt dicunt, furaverit vel occiderit, aut similem aut ipsum reddat et cum VI solidis conponat; et si negare voluerit, cum III sacramentalibus iuret secundum legem suam.

II. Alia. Si autem secum ductum quem triphunt vocant, furaverit, cum III solidis conponat aut cum sacramentale iuret.

III. Alia. Si autem secum qui in ligamine vestigium tenet, quem spurihunt dicunt, furaverit, cum VI solidis conponat et similium aut ipsum reddat.

III. Item alia. De eo cane quem bibahunt vocant, qui sub terra venatur, qui occiderit, alium similium reddat et cum VI solidis conponat.

V. Item alia. De canibus veltricibus qui leporem non persecutum sed sua velocitate comprehenderit, cum similis et III solidis conponat.

VI. De eo cane qui dictur hapshunt pari sententia subiaceat.

VII. Item alia. De bis canibus, qui urris vel bubulis id est maioribus, quod suarzuwild
dicimus, persecutur, si de bis occiderit, cum simile et VI solidis conponat.

VIII. Item alia. Qui vero pastoralem qui lupum mordet, occidit, cum III solidis conponat.

LEX BATAVARIORUM, TRANSL., 169
XX. Concerning dogs and their compensation.
1. If anyone steals or kills a hunting dog, which they call 'leitihunt', let him return that one or one equal in value and compensate with six solidi. And if he wishes to deny it, let him swear according to his law with three oath-takers.
2. If, however, he steals a trained hunting dog, which they call 'tripihunt', let him compensate with three solidi or swear with one oath-taker.
3. Whoever steals [a dog] which tracks footprints while being led by a leash, which they call 'spurihunt', let him compensate with six solidi and return one equal in value or that one.
4. Concerning dogs, which they call 'piparhunt', which hunt game under the ground, let him return, if he kills it, one equal in value and compensate with six solidi.
5. Concerning greyhounds that not only chase a rabbit but catch it through swiftness, let him compensate with one equal in value and three solidi.
6. Concerning a dog which is called 'hapuhunt', let him be liable for an equal fine.
7. Concerning dogs that chase bears or buffaloes, that is, large wild animals (which they call 'suarzwild'), if he kills one of these, let him compensate with one equal in value and six solidi.
8. However, let whoever kills a sheep dog that catches the wolf compensate with three solidi.

While several of the leges mention tamed wild birds, probably used as decoy birds or for training birds of prey (such as cranes), the texts are almost entirely silent on the topic of fowling, apart from in connection to hunting techniques, see the overviews in Schwenk 1967; Lindner 1973; Feldner 1997; Gasser 2005. The leges contain no information on the trapping of birds with various glues, so popular in Roman Antiquity (Bohr 1992; Vendries 2009), and which was at least known at the Carolingian court, as attested by an advisory letter of the mid-9th century. Neither hunting corvids with the decoy owl, also already practised in Antiquity, nor hunting rabbits with a tame polecat (ferret) (cf. Reichstein 1995; van Damme/Ervenck 1992, without detailed references), are mentioned in the leges. The almost total silence on hunting with nets is also striking.

26 With references to songbirds/caged birds, cf. Lex Batavariorum, p. 466–467, Tit. XXI, 6 [De avibus.] De bis avibus quae de silvisecum per documenta humana domestecentur industria et per curtes nobilium manussecum voluntare atque cantare, cum solido uno et simili conponat atque insuper ad sacramentum. Lex Batavariorum, Transl., p. 170, Tit. XXI, 6; concerning the birds that are domesticated from wild birds by human effort and are tamed so that they can fly and sing in the courtyards of nobles, let him compensate with one solidus and one equal in value, and, in addition, let him take an oath. Cf. Ortalli 1997, 1409–1410; also e.g. Pactus leges Alamannorum, [following manuscr. group A] p. 30 (tit. XXVI) (1) Si gruis fuerit involata aut occisa, 3 solidos conponat. (2) Si acua fuerit furata aut occisa, novigildus solvat. (3) Anite, gariola, cicania, corvo, cornsca, columba et cuchcra, alla similia requiescatur. Pactus leges Alamannorum, Transl., p. 54 XXVI. 1. If a crane is stolen or killed, let him compensate with three solidi. 2. If a goose is stolen or killed, let him pay ninefold. 3. For a duck, jay, stork, raven, crow, dove, and cuckoo, let [compensation] be required as for other similar [birds].
28 See previous note and cf. van Wijngaarden-Bakker 2010.
29 See above, note 13.
The codified laws in the *leges* are a remarkable document of how diverse hunting practice already was in the Early Middle Ages. The comparatively high level of detail and especially the frequency with which hunting is mentioned in the *leges* are a conclusive measure for how widespread hunting and fowling have been since the 6th century. From the Lombard laws (*Editus Rothari*, § 320–321) of the mid-7th century, it becomes clear that even the rights of ownership and usage of certain forests had to be regulated for certain individuals (the king or individuals below the level of the king)\(^{30}\). By setting fines which are staggered according to specifically defined quality criteria, the *leges* create hierarchies according to social criteria of evaluation. These passages, mostly concerned with the trained animals involved in the hunt and their co-operation with people, illustrate the differentiation and variety of early medieval hunting much more clearly than any other set of contemporary sources. As such, this also touches on the question of the chronological and geographical origins of hawking, but without being able to provide a definite answer (for a summary of these issues, see Georges 2008, 16–18). It is clear, however, that the treatment of hawking in the *leges* presupposes that this practice was already widespread. As written sources, the *leges* complement and expand the picture we can derive from imagery (e.g. mosaics such as that from Argos, dated to around 500, or the one from the Musée national du Bardo, Tunis, that shows a hare hunt and dates back to the second half of the 5th century plus the mosaic from Lillebonne depicting hunting with a tame stag) and from archaeological evidence\(^{31}\).

**SOURCES**

*Capitularia regnum Francorum:* A. Boretius (Hrsg.), Capitularia regum Francorum 1. MGH Capit. 1 (Hannover 1883).


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