

Table 3.01: Early Anglo-Saxon Law

A. Æthelberht's code includes:

10: *If a man lies with a maiden belonging to the king, he shall pay 50 shillings compensation.*

14: *If a man lies with a nobleman's serving maid, [he shall pay] 12 shillings compensation.*

16: *If a man lies with a commoner's serving maid, [he shall pay] 6 shillings compensation; if he lies with a slave of the second class, [he shall pay] 50 sceattas [compensation]; if one of the third class, 30 sceattas.*

54: *If a thumb is struck off, 20 shillings (§1-5 list compensation for each finger)*

55: *For the nail, 1 shillings*

58, §1: *If the blow is received with uplifted hand, a shilling shall be paid.*

59: *If [the blow] leaves a black bruise outside the clothes, 30 sceattas shall be paid as compensation.*

70: *If a big toe is struck off, 10 shillings*

71: *For each of the other toes, [a sum] equal to half that laid down for the corresponding fingers shall be paid.*

72: *If a big toe nail is knocked off, 30 sceattas.*

73: *If a freeborn woman, with long hair, misconducts herself, she shall pay 30 shillings as compensation.*

75: *The compensation to be paid for the violation of the mund¹ of a widow of the best class, [that is, a widow of the nobility] shall be 50 shillings.*

§1. *For violation of the mund of a widow of the second class, 20 shillings; of the third class, 12 shillings; of the fourth class, 6 shillings.*

77: *If a man buys a maiden, the bargain shall stand, if there is no dishonesty.*

§1. *If however there is dishonesty, she will be taken back to her home, and the money returned to him.*

B. Wihtréd's code include:

27: *If a slave steals, and is released, 70 shillings...*

28 *If a man from afar, or a stranger, quits the road, and neither shouts, nor blows a horn, he shall be assumed to be a thief, and as such may be either slain or put to ransom. (Same as Ine 20)*

C. There are numerous laws enacted by Ine deserving of comment:

7. §2: *A ten year old child can be [regarded as] accessory to a theft.*

4: *[Be ciricsceatte] Church dues shall be rendered at Martinmas.*

14: *He who is accused of belonging to a band of marauders shall clear himself with an oath of 120 hides, or pay corresponding compensation.*

¹ Attenborough interprets this as guardianship or possibly, the marriage price of a widow.

19: *A member of the king's household, if his wergeld is 1200 shillings, shall be allowed to swear for 60 hides, if he is a communicant.*

25: *If a trader [makes his way into] the interior of the country and [proceeds to] traffic, he shall do so before witnesses.*

37: *If a commoner has often been accused of theft and is at last proved guilty, either in the ordeal or by being caught in the act of committing an offence, his hand or foot shall be struck off.*

49. §3: *If pannage is paid in pigs, every third pig shall be taken when the bacon is three fingers thick...*

59. §1: *For every labourer a man has he shall pay six weys [of barley] as 'barley-rent'.*

55: *An ewe with her lamb is worth a shilling until a fortnight after Easter.*

58: *The horn of an ox is worth 10 pence.* Here, and in Ine 59 & 69, unusually, value is denominated in *pæninga*.

60: allows for hire of a yoke of oxen to be recompensed in fodder.

70. §1: specifies the payment for every 10 hides, to be paid as food rent, on the death of one of the lord's men: *10 vats of honey, 300 loaves, 12 ambers of Welsh ale, 30 ambers of clear ale, 2 full-grown calves or 10 wethers, 10 geese, 20 hens, 10 cheeses, a full amber of butter, 5 salmon, 20 pounds of fodder and 100 eels.*

Sources

Attenborough (2012, 1-61)

Oliver (2002)

Roebuck (2008, 1-126).