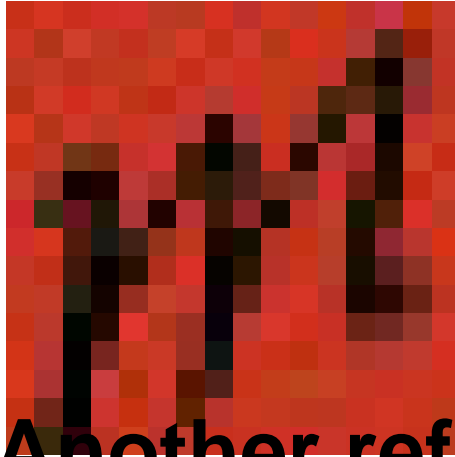


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XXVIII.21 Another reflection on the point of honor among the Germans

- The Spirit of Law - Book XXVIII. On the origin and transformations of the civil laws among the French -

Date de mise en ligne : vendredi 7 septembre 2018

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"It was a great infamy among the Germans," says Tacitus, "to have lost one's shield in battle ; and many, after this misfortune, had put themselves to death." [1] Indeed the ancient Salic law grants a compensation of fifteen sous to a man who to whom it had been said by way of insult that he had lost his shield. [2]

Charlemagne, amending the Salic law, assigns in this case only three sous of compensation. [3] We cannot suspect this prince of intending to weaken military discipline ; it is clear that this change came from the change in weapons, and it is to this change in weapons that we owe the origin of many practices.

[1] *De moribus Germanorum* [ch. vi].

[2] In *Pactus legis Salicæ*.

[3] We have the former law and the one amended by the prince.