

Statuty Kazimierza III Wielkiego - wybór - Tekst angielski

Preamble We Casimir III¹, by the grace of God, Polish king, etc. Together with the prelates, barons, the rest of the nobility and our subjects, having observed and considering that in the lands and the country under our authority, court cases are often deliberated, decided and classified not in the same manner, but according to different views, in different ways, and as a result of this variety court cases remain unresolved [even] after repeated vexations and seem to go on indefinitely, therefore, for the glory of God Almighty, of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the entire Heavenly Court, and for the perfect benefit and prosperity of our subjects, we have decided to do away with variety when it comes to court rulings (especially in frequently recurring cases). We therefore express our will and hereby decide that in the future, the same laws and regulations shall be recognised, implemented and complied with at all times by all judges, officials and their subordinates, and by the rest of our subjects inhabiting this land. And let nobody dare oppose them arbitrarily in any way, lest he be gravely threatened with our wrath. [fragments]

Knights and nobles are obliged to go on war expeditions and should be under arms. Since the dignity of the king and the defence of the kingdom depend on military strength, every knight, according to the size and type of his estate and income, is obliged to serve with a certain number of armed men and to be useful to the state, since his estates are free, established under knightly law, and exempt from all dues. We also hereby decide that the barons and nobles of our lands in Poland are obliged to perform military service in our behalf and in that of our successors in the Kingdom of Poland, and to procure weapons for themselves and serve as efficiently and effectively as they can; but outside the Kingdom they are not obliged to serve us unless they receive sufficient remuneration or are specially bidden by us.

¹ Kazimierz III Wielki/Casimir III the Great (1310–70) was the last Polish king of the Piast dynasty. Considered one of the greatest rulers in the country's history, he consolidated the state and considerably expanded its borders. Other achievements to his credit include monetary reform and support for the development of towns, with more than a hundred such hubs incorporated as cities. In his efforts to strengthen the country's defensive potential, Kazimierz had several dozen castles built. In 1356, he established a court in Kraków that applied German law. The Statutes of Wiślica and Piotrków were issued during his reign (in 1357) to impose civil, penal, and procedural law regulations. In 1364 Kazimierz founded an academy in Kraków, later to become the Jagiellonian University. As he left no male child, he was followed as king by Ludwik of Hungary (known in his homeland as Nagy Lajos = Louis the Great), pursuant to the arrangement entered into with the latter in Buda in 1355.

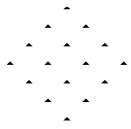


Test of Nobility Noble families always derive their origins from ancestors, from whom descendants prove their descent with trustworthy testimony. Therefore, if a man calls himself a noble and considers himself equal to other noblemen and they deny it, he is to bring six serious men, two of whom come from his family, and these two [shall] testify under oath that he comes from their house and their paternal family.

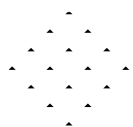
On landowners who cause damages to the peasants when going to war It is for the benefit of Poland that [our] subjects should live in peace, cause no one disturbance, and persevere in virtue. Some, however, neglecting these things, violate the law when going on a war expedition through their own lands; like foes, they do not shy away from inflicting harm on the poor (even greater harm than enemies do), so that our lands are laid waste. Therefore, in order to prevent this danger effectively, we hereby decide that whenever there is a march to war, no one is to stop over in the villages, but only in the field, nor loot horses, cattle or other things but only take moderate amounts of fodder for their horses. And if anyone violates this provision, as a shameless trespasser he is to repair the damage to the lord of the village or to the one to whom the damage was done, and the associated fine of 'fifteen' [grosze] shall go into the royal treasury whenever this provision is violated. By this, however, we do not prohibit [troops] to collect moderate amounts of fodder for their horses and food for themselves, which cannot be avoided during such a march.

On the currency Because a nation should not have different laws under a single prince or ruler, so as to avoid being like a many-headed monster, it is useful for Poland if the same law is followed by the Cracovians and by the inhabitants of Greater Poland and of other lands in the Kingdom, so they can be judged according to it. And since there is one prince and one lord over all, we hereby decide, with the advice and consent of our barons and dignitaries, that there is to be a single coin¹ in the whole Kingdom of Poland, which should have a constant and good value and weight, so as to be more desirable and more willingly accepted than others.

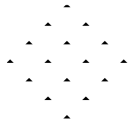
¹ Casimir the Great began to mint his own coin, the Cracow grosz, which was to replace the grosz praski, widespread since the beginning of the fourteenth century. 48 grosze made up one 1 grzywna, which remained a unit of measure until the introduction of the Polish złoty in 1528.



An arsonist is to be burned The imperial law instructs us that an arsonist is to be burned in the fire. Therefore, it is our desire that when a person has committed such an act, even if he shelters in a temple, he must receive no assistance and must be judged according to the law. Sometimes, however, such evildoers settle in cities or villages under German law, where they can use German law to defend themselves. In this fashion they often use their cunning to escape death. We do not want the criminal to enjoy privileges anywhere, but to be condemned before a court. We [therefore] decide: when such a one has been accused, whether in the city or in the countryside, under Polish or German law, he shall be adjudicated according to no other law but the Polish law, and by an appropriate judge. If he is proven guilty, he is to be punished with the death proper to him. On the rape of a virgin or maiden It is right for every good man to avoid evil. Some wicked or impure ones are neither afraid of God, nor of temporal suffering, depriving others' wives or maidens of their honour by raping them. When they are accused, they cunningly hide behind German law to avoid justice more easily. That is why we decide and order for all time to come that such rapists be tried under Polish law. No one shall take another's possessions without permission Idzik accused Falko that when he was travelling on the road and fell asleep along the way, Falko found him sleeping and took away his sword and a bundle with three golden coins. Although he eventually returned the sword and bundle, he did not give up the three golden coins. Falko admitted that he had taken the sword and the bundle, but denied taking the money. Having established that nobody can take another's possessions without permission, we ordered Idzik in this case to swear that he had suffered his loss.



A law on defamation All impurity and ugliness of speech causes people to quarrel. Therefore, those who do not guard their tongue shall be removed from the company of righteous people. If someone fails to hold their tongue, and if a nobleman calls a [fellow] nobleman, his peer, a 'whoreson', should he fail to take this back immediately or prove the truthfulness of his words, he shall pay a penalty of sixty grzywny, as though he had killed a man. Likewise, if someone calls somebody's mother a 'whore' and does not take it back or does not immediately produce proof, we condemn him to the same punishment. And revoking his words, he should say 'In saying so, I lied like a dog'. A law on killing a nobleman or a leaseholder farmer Although by law, when someone kills another he pays for it with his head, to soften this rule, we [hereby] decide that when someone kills a knight, he is to give his father and mother 30 grzywny, and 60 grzywny to his children or friends. The penalty for cutting off a hand, leg or nose is 15 grzywny, and 3 grzywny for a finger, eight grzywny for a thumb, and for each injury to these members, the fine of fifteen [grosze] shall be paid to the injured party. And if someone kills a leaseholder farmer, he shall pay three grzywny for the man's head to the lord he belonged to, and six grzywny to his wife and children. And if the murderer and victim are subjected to different lords, let these lords divide the said fine of three grzywny between themselves. Whosoever shall injure a leaseholder farmer shall pay one grzywna to the farmer, and one grzywna to his lord. And if the one who inflicted the wound and the one who was wounded are subjected to different lords, then these lords shall share the fine between them.



The son is not to be punished for the transgressions of his father Already Scripture testifies that a son is not to suffer for the sins of his father, nor a father for those of his son. Therefore, we do not want the father to suffer on account of his evil son, or the son on account of the father, a brother on account of a brother, a friend on account of a friend, unless the father and son or brother and brother were involved in the same evil deed. In that case everyone is to be punished according to their guilt. And if anyone does commit a crime, then the part of the profits that he was to receive shall be handed over to our table.

Source: 'Statut czwarty wiślicki powszechny z roku 1368', in: *Starodawne prawa polskiego pomniki*, ed. Antoni Zygmunt Helcel, vol. 1, Warsaw 1856, pp. 199-206.