
Location privilege of Poznań

Extract: Przemysł and Bolesław, brothers-german, Dukes of Poland, in 1253 grant the burgher Tomasz with the privilege to locate the town of Poznań according to the Magdeburg law. They also strengthen the position of the town with very many privileges and grant it with estates.

In the name of the Lord, Amen! As it has only fallen to God to be infallible and remember everything, the lameness of human nature sought a means in the art, through which the vital force of natural memory has fallen off by the will of the master. Therefore, in order that this what occurs in time, does not escape memory, it is usual to commemorate events in writing. Therefore, we notify everyone, both contemporary and future people, who intend to read this charter, that we Przemysław and Bolesław, brothers-german, by Divine providence Dukes of Poland, of our own free will and having taken advice of our barons and with consent of reverend in Christ father, lord Bishop Bogusław and the entire chapter of the church of Poznań, grant the noble man Tomasz and his descendants with the town commonly called Poznań in order to be located according to the German law, with a guarantee of eight years of exemption. During the time of this exemption we exempt citizens of this town, who come to our land and leave with merchandise and other goods, as well as those who cross the river called Warta, from tolls and payments in coins and from all other taxes, with which they might be burdened, save that after the period of exemption expires, they will have to pay half of the toll. We also perpetually grant citizens of this town with the river called Warta, which flows through the mentioned town, within one mile and on both sides, with all benefits, i.e., fishing and building of mills, with the exception that we will perpetually possess one mill within this distance, and this mill will be built at our own will. Furthermore, we grant the mentioned town with the following villages: Rataje, Piotrowo, Zegrze, Starołęka, Nyenchow, Spytków, both villages called Wierzbice, Jeżyce, Panczlaw, Niestatków, Pątków, Szydłów, both villages of vintners with the exception of vineyards, the village of Boguthe and the village of Unolf. In these villages we grant the mentioned mayor and his descendants

with thirty hides for sowing fields to be possessed perpetually, and we grant these citizens with twenty hides for pastures for animals.

As soon as the mayor calls and settles Germans in the mentioned town and villages, he will be allowed to perpetually take each fifth hide after the exemption expires; with a condition that he will pay half a mark of silver from particular hides at defined time as tithes.

We also want that citizens of the mentioned town freely and perpetually enjoy all the profits in the afore-mentioned villages; both extant profits and such ones which may appear in future, through building of mills, except for the mill of the friars of the Predicant Order, and hunting for game.

We also allow that the mill held by the former mayor Henryk by our donation is taken as hereditary property by the mentioned mayor.

And citizens of the afore-mentioned town, when issuing a judicial verdict after common deliberation, should perpetually enjoy our grant of unharmed and non-curtailed law, according to the pattern of the town of Magdeburg; with a reservation that no German who stays in the territory of our state may neglect it and first attempt at asserting these rights elsewhere beyond the mentioned town.

We also allow that no-one in our name or the name of our castellan or another authority dares to participate in a court, in which the mentioned mayor will sit with his citizens three times a year in a session in order to judicially decide all cases. But by means of receiving these and other laws this town is to enjoy a full possession of liberty.

During the mentioned session the mentioned mayor is to take from each legally sentenced person eight solidi in denars of coins used in this town. The sentenced is to pay four solidi within fourteen days. If a more grave case is heard, the sentenced is to pay thirty solidi, and for each day the sentenced is to pay one solidus. And the sentenced is to pay six denars for an oath.

From particular homesteads built in this town and gardens cultivated outside it and from all stores that citizens of the mentioned town will be allowed to build there, they are to pay half a scotus of silver after the exemption expires.

The mentioned mayor is to take every third denar from the court, both during the period of exemption as well as after the exemption expires.

We grant the mentioned town with all incomes from the mentioned homesteads and stores in the town and from the gardens which are already arranged outside the town and which belong to us, to be freely possessed and as a support. We also exempt foreigners who come there with merchandise for sale from toll and payment in coins.

We also permit citizens with consent of mentioned lord Bogusław Bishop of Poznań to build a church for citizens in this town. The church is to occupy itself with Divine service, and on proper days a procession with a cross is to be held.

In the town itself for the period of the exemption we set up an annual fair, which has already been introduced by us and our predecessors. It is prohibited to assail any people who participate in this fair. We also grant the mentioned mayor and his descendants with a free possession of two shops in a house which we will build in this town for merchants. We and our descendants want to receive rights and incomes from this house, save these two shops.

Citizens are not obliged to participate in military expeditions beyond the borders of the land; however, they are to participate in the defence of the land, so that an enemy invasion can be resisted in a more efficient way.

In order to provide the mentioned town with full care, we have also promised its citizens to establish four guardsmen and two crossbowmen at our expense, whose purpose will be to guard the town.

We also permit to cut trees in forests, both within the district (of the town) and beyond it, for building of houses and other needs, without any fear of punishment.

Furthermore, we forbid any our subjects to sue them (citizens of Poznań) for any debt or guilt beyond the territory of the town, that is, to another court. If anyone dares to judge them, we declare his judgment invalid. We liberate people settled in our land and coming to the mentioned town in order sell various goods in the market and leaving after the purchase from toll and payment in coins. Foreigners, from beyond the borders of our land, are to pay.

We have also permitted the mayor and his burghers to carefully and orderly establish measures which are appropriate for contemporary relations, both for drinks and food and all other things they will use. And whatever may be judicially taken from gain resulting from using false measures, we want the town to receive half of this gain.

Furthermore, we grant the mentioned mayor and his successors with the power to decide and pass judgements in all judicial cases, such as those concerning quarrels, battery, hanging and in any other litigation which would arise between a German and a Pole in the town itself and in the territory beyond it.

In order to underline the longevity of our grant and confirmation for contemporary and future people, we deem it proper to corroborate this privilege with a suspension of our seals. Acted in Poznań in the year of the Lord 1253 from the incarnation of the Lord, in the presence of the following witnesses: Przedpełk Palatine of Poznań, Dzierżykraj Palatine of Gniezno, Domarat Court Judge, Boguchwał Chancellor of Poznań, Eustachy, son of Jan, Pakosław, son of Cedryk and very many others.