

Guild Charter

An example of a Guild Charter; Written in 1231

John and Otto, by the grace of God, margraves of Brandenburg.... We make known this day of 1231 ... that we, ... desiring to provide properly for our city of Stendal, have changed, and do change, for the better, the laws of the gild brethren, and of those who are called cloth-cutters, so that they might have the same laws in this craft as their guild brethren the garment-cutters in Magdeburg have been accustomed to observe in the past. These are the laws:

1. No one shall presume to cut cloth, except he be of our craft; those who break this rule will amend to the guild with three talents.
2. Thrice a year there ought to be a meeting of the brethren, and whoever does not come to it will amend according to justice.
3. Whoever wishes to enter the fraternity whose father was a brother and cut cloth will come with his friends to the meeting of the brethren, and if he conduct himself honestly, he will be able to join the guild at the first request on payment of five solidi, and he will give six denarii to the master. And if he be dishonest and should not conduct himself well, he should be put off until the second or third meeting. But any of our citizens who wish to enter the guild, if he be an honest man, and worthy, will give a talent to the brethren on entry into the guild, and will present a solidus to the master. But if a guest who is an honest man should decide to join our fraternity, he will give thirty solidi to the guild on his entry, and eighteen denarii to the master.
4. But in the time of the fairs, that is of the annual fair, any guest, even if he be not of the craft, will be able to cut cloth during the whole fair.
5. If any of our burgesses holding office wish to enter the craft he will abjure his office, and, on entrance to the guild, will present one mark of gold freely to the brethren, and to the master eighteen denarii.
6. If any brother has been accustomed to prepare cloth in his house and is wont to cut or sell it at the wish of others, he will either cease or have no part in his fraternity.
7. Whatever two parts of the brethren have decreed to do the third part ought to consent to do; but if that third be unwilling, each will amend with three solidi, and will pay them at the next meeting.
8. Every year a master and four other good men who shall preside over the affairs of the guild will be faithfully chosen.
9. Moreover whoever goes contrary to these decrees and is unwilling to obey the master and brethren according to justice, his contumacy ought to be referred to the judgment of his superior....

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