

# Law of Ine

I, Ine, by the grace of God king of Wessex, with the advice and instruction of Cenred, my father, of Hedde, my bishop, and of Erconwald, my bishop, and with all my ealdormen and the chief councillors of my people, and with a great concourse of the servants of Gods as well, have been taking counsel for the salvation of our souls and the security of our realm, in order that just law and just decrees may be established and ensured throughout our nation, so that no ealdorman nor subject of ours may from henceforth pervert these our decrees.

1. In the first place, we command that the servants of God heed, and duly observe, their proper 'rule.'

§1. After this we command that the lawand decrees affecting the whole nation be observed as follows.

2. A child shall be baptised within 30 days. If this is not done, [the guardian] shall pay 30 shillings compensation.

§ 1. If, however, it dies without being baptised, he shall pay as compensation all he possesses.

3. If a slave works on Sunday by his lord's command, he shall become free, and the lord shall pay a fine of 30 shillings.

§ 1. If, however, the slave works without the cognisance of his master, he shall undergo the lash or pay the fine in lieu thereof.

§ 2. If, however, a freeman works on that day, except by his lord's command, he shall be reduced to slavery, or [pay a fine of] 60 shillings. A priest shall pay a double fine.

4. Church dues shall be rendered at Martinmas. If anyone fails to do so, he shall forfeit 60 shillings and render 12 times the church dues [in addition].

5. If anyone is liable to the death penalty, and he flees to a church, his life shall be spared and he shall pay such compensation as he is directed [to pay] by legal decision.

§1. If anyone renders himself liable to the lash and flees. to the church, he shall be immune from scourging.

6. If anyone fights in the king's house, he shall forfeit all his property, and it shall be for the king to decide whether he shall be put to death or not.

§1. If anyone fights in a monastery, he shall pay 120 shillings compensation.

§ 2. If anyone fights in the house of an ealdorman, or of any other distinguished councillor, he shall pay 60 shillings compensation [to the householder] and he shall pay another 60 shillings as a fine.

§3. If, however, he fights in the house of a taxpayer or of a gebur, he shall pay 120 shillings as a fine, and 6 shillings to the gebur.

§ 4. And even if it [the fight] takes place in the open, a fine of 120 shillings shall be paid.

§ 5. If, however, two men quarrel over their cups and one endures it patiently, the other [who has recourse to violence] shall pay a fine of 30 shillings.

7. If anyone steals without the cognisance of his wife and children, he shall pay a fine of 60 shillings.

§ 1. If, however, he steals with the cognisance of all his household, they shall all go into slavery.

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

8. If anyone demands justice in the presence of any 'shireman' or of another judge and cannot obtain it, since [the accused] will not give him security, he [the accused] shall pay 30 shillings compensation, and within 7 days do him such justice as he is entitled to.

9. If anyone exacts redress, before he pleads for justice, he shall give up what he has taken, and pay as much again, and 30 shillings compensation.

10. If anyone within the borders of our kingdom commits an act of robbery or seizes anything with violence, he shall restore the plunder and pay a fine of 60 shillings.

11. If anyone sells one of his own countrymen, bond or free, over the sea, even though he be guilty, he shall pay for him with his wergeld and make full atonement with God [for his crime].

12. If a thief is taken he shall die the death, or his life shall be redeemed by the payment of his wergeld.

13. If anyone bears false witness in the presence of a bishop, or repudiates a pledge which he has given in his presence, he shall pay 120 shillings compensation.

§ 1. We use the term 'thieves' if the number of men does not exceed seven, 'band of marauders' for a number between seven and thirty-five. Anything beyond this is a 'raid.'

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

15. He who is accused of taking part in a raid shall redeem himself with his wergeld, or clear himself by [an oath equal in value to] his wergeld.

§1. An oath equal in value to half the amount shall be sufficient in the case of communicants.

§ 2. A thief shall not have the right of clearing himself by oath after he is in the king's power.

16. He who kills a thief shall be allowed to declare on oath that the man he slew was guilty. The associates of the slain man shall not be allowed to proceed to an oath.

17. He who finds meat which has been stolen and hidden shall be allowed, if he dare, to declare on oath that it is his property. He who traces it shall have the reward to which an informer is entitled.

18. If a commoner, who has often been accused, is at last caught [in the act], his hand or foot shall be cut off.

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.

20. If a man from afar, or a stranger, travels through a wood off the highway 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.

21. If, however, anyone claims the slain man's wergeld, he [who slew him] shall be allowed to declare that he slew him, presuming him to be a thief; and neither the associates of the slain man, nor his lord, shall be allowed to proceed to an oath.

§1. If, however, he [who slew him] conceals the fact, but long afterwards it comes to light-by such conduct he affords an opportunity to the dead man' to obtain an oath, by which his relatives may exculpate him.

22. If a member of your household commits a theft and escapes from you, and if you have a surety [for the thief], you shall claim the value of the stolen property from him. If the thief has no surety, you shall pay the value [of the property], but he shall not thereby become immune from punishment.

23. If anyone slays a foreigner, the king shall have two-thirds of his wergeld, and his son or relatives one-third.

§ 1. If he has no relatives, the king shall have one- half and the magnate shall have the other.

§ 2. If, however, the person [under whose protection he has been] is an abbot or an abbess, he [or she] shall share [the wergeld] with the king in the same proportion [as the magnate does].

§3. [The wergeld of] a Welsh taxpayer [ is] 120 shillings; of his son 100 shillings. [The amount to be paid for killing] a slave [is normally] 60 [shillings], but in somecases 50 [shillings]. A Welshman may compound for a scourging by the payment of 12 shillings.

24. If an Englishman [living] in penal slavery absconds, he shall be hanged, and nothing shall be paid to his lord.

§1. If he is slain, nothing shall be paid for him to his kinsmen if they have left him unransomed for twelve months.

§ 2. The wergeld of a Welshman who holds five hides of land shall be 600 shillings.

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

§ 1. If stolen property in the hands of a trader is attached, and he has not bought it in the presence of trustworthy witnesses, he shall declare with an oath equal to the penalty [involved] that he has been neither an accessory nor an accomplice [to the theft], or pay a fine of 36 shillings.

26. For the maintenance of a foundling 6 shillings shall be given in the first year, 12 shillings in the second, 30 shillings in the third, and afterwards [sums] according to his appearance.

27. He who begets an illegitimate child and disowns it shall not have the wergeld at its death, but its lord and the king shall [have it].

28. He who captures a thief shall have 10 shillings. The thief shall be given up to the king, and his kinsmen shall swear that they will carry on no vendetta against him.

§ 1. If, however, the thief escapes and is lost to sight, then he shall forfeit a fine.

§ 2. If he [the captor] wishes to deny his culpability, he must render an oath equivalent to the value of the stolen goods and the fine.

29. If anyone lends a sword to the servant of another man, and he makes off, he [the lender] shall pay him [the owner of the servant] a third [of his value]. If he provides [the servant] with a spear, [ he shall pay the owner] half [the value of the servant]. If he lends [the servant] a horse, he shall pay him [the owner] the full value [of the servant].

30. If anyone accuses a commoner of harbouring a fugitive he shall clear himself by [an oath] equal in value to his own wergeld. If he cannot do so he shall pay for [harbouring] him [the

fugitive], [a sum equal to] his own wergeld. A nobleman also shall pay according to the amount of his own wergeld.

31. If anyone buys a wife and the marriage does not take place, he [the bride's guardian] shall return the bridal price and pay [the bridegroom] as much again, and he shall compensate the trustee of the marriage according to the amount he is entitled to for infraction of his surety.

32. If a Welshman possesses a hide of land, his wergeld shall be 120 shillings. If, however, he possesses half a hide, his wergeld shall be 80 shillings; if he possesses no land—60 shillings.

33. The wergeld of a Welsh horseman who is in the king's service and can ride on his errands shall be 200 shillings.

34. He who has been on a foray, which has resulted in a man being slain, must clear himself of the homicide and pay compensation for his participation in the foray, in proportion to the wergeld of the slain man.

§ 1. If his [the slain man's] wergeld is 200 shillings, he must pay 50 shillings compensation; and in the case of a man of nobler birth the proportion [between the compensation and the wergeld] shall be the same.

35. He who kills a thief shall be allowed to declare with an oath that he whom he killed was a thief trying to escape, and the kinsmen of the dead man shall swear an oath to carry on no vendetta against him. If, however, he keeps it [the homicide] secret, and it afterwards comes to light, then he shall pay for him.

§ 1. If a man is vouched to warranty for livestock and he has previously disowned the transaction and wishes again to disown it, the oath required of him shall be equal to the amount of the fine involved and the value of the stock. If he does not wish to disown the transaction [a second time], he shall pay double compensation for his false oath.

36. He who captures a thief or has a captured thief given into his custody, and allows him to escape, or suppresses knowledge of the theft, shall pay for the thief according to his wergeld.

§1. If he is an ealdorman he shall forfeit his 'shire', unless the king is willing to pardon him.

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.

38. If a husband has a child by his wife and the husband dies, the mother shall have her child and rear it, and [every year] 6 shillings shall be given for its maintenance—a cow in summer and an ox in winter; the relatives shall keep the family home until the child reaches maturity.

39. If anyone moves away without permission from his lord and steals into another district, if he is discovered he shall return to where he was before, and give his lord 60 shillings.

40. A commoner's premises shall be fenced both winter and summer. If they are not enclosed, and a beast belonging to his neighbour strays in through the opening he himself has left, he shall have no claim on that beast, [but] he shall drive it out and suffer the damage.

41. It is permissible for one to repudiate bail [that he has given for another], if he knows he is acting justly.

42. If commoners have a common meadow or other—partible—land to fence, and some have fenced their portion and some have not, [and cattle get in] and eat up their common crops or their grass, then those who are responsible for the opening shall go and pay compensation for the damage which has been done to the others, who have enclosed their portion. They [the latter] shall demand from [the owners of] the cattle such amends as are fitting.

§ 1. If, however, any beast breaks hedges and wanders at large within, since its owner will not or cannot keep it under control, he who finds it on his cornland shall take it and kill it. The owner [of the beast] shall take its hide and flesh and suffer the loss of the remainder.

43. If anyone destroys a tree in a wood by fire, and it becomes known who did it, he shall pay a full fine. He shall pay 60 shillings, because fire is a thief.

§1. If anyone fells a large number of trees in a wood, and it afterwards becomes known, he shall pay 30 shillings for each of three trees. He need not pay for more, however many there may be, because the axe is an informer and not a thief.

44. If, however, anyone cuts down a tree that can shelter thirty swine, and it becomes known, he shall pay 60 shillings.

§ 1. The blanket paid as rent from each 'household' shall be worth sixpence.

45. 120 shillings compensation shall be paid for breaking into the fortified premises of the king or [those of] a bishop within his sphere of jurisdiction; [for breaking into those] of an ealdorman 80 shillings; into those of a king's thegn 60 shillings; into those of a nobleman who holds land 35 shillings. The accusation may be denied by oaths corresponding to these amounts.

46. When one man charges another with stealing cattle, or harbouring stolen cattle, he shall deny [the charge of] theft by [an oath of] 60 hides, if he is allowed to produce an oath.

§1. If an Englishman brings the accusation, then he shall deny [the charge] by an oath of double [this] value; on the other hand, if the accusation is brought by a Welshman, the [value of] the oath shall not be increased.

§ 2. Every man may clear himself from the charge of harbouring [stolen goods] or of homicide, if he can and dare do so.

47. If a stolen chattel is attached, a slave may not be vouched to warranty for it.

48. If any man, who has recently been reduced to penal slavery, is accused of having committed theft before he was reduced to slavery, the accuser shall have the right to scourge him he shall compel him to submit to a scourging by [an oath equivalent to the value of] the goods [stolen from him].

49. If anyone finds swine intruding in his mast pasture, he may take security to the value of 6 shillings.

§1. If, however, they have not been there more than once, the owner [of the swine] shall pay a shilling and declare [by an oath equivalent to the value of] the pigs, that they have not been there before.

§2 . If they have been there twice, he shall pay 2 shillings.

§3. If pannage is paid in pigs, every third pig shall be taken when the bacon is three fingers thick, every fourth when the bacon is two fingers thick, and every fifth when it is a thumb thick.

50. If a nobleman comes to terms with the king, or with the king's ealdorman, or with his lord, on behalf of his dependants, free or unfree, he, the nobleman, shall not have any portion of the fines, because he has not previously taken care at home to restrain them [his men] from evil doing.

51. If a nobleman who holds land neglects military service, he shall pay 120 shillings and forfeit his land; a nobleman who holds no land shall pay 60 shillings; a commoner shall pay a fine of 30 shillings for neglecting military service.

52. He who is accused of making an illicit compact shall clear himself from the charge with [an oath worth] 120 hides, or pay 120 shillings.

53. If a stolen slave is attached [by the law] in the possession of another, and if the man is dead who has sold him to the man in whose possession he is attached, he shall vouch the dead man's grave to warranty for the slave - just as for any other property, whatever it may be—and declare in his oath—[which shall be of the value] of sixty hides—that the dead man sold the slave to him; then he shall have freed himself from the fine by the oath, and he shall give back the slave to [his] owner.

§1. If, however, he knows who has succeeded to the estate of the dead man, he shall vouch the estate to warranty, and demand of the man who holds the estate that he shall make [his title to] the chattel incontestable, or declare that the dead man never owned the property.

54. If anyone is accused of homicide and he wishes to deny the deed with an oath, there shall be in the 100 hides one entitled to give a king's oath of 30 hides, both in the case of the noble and the commoner-whichever he may be.

§ 1. If payment is made for the dead man, then he [the slayer] may, if need be, include a man [i.e. a slave] and a coat of mail, and a sword, in each hundred shillings of the wergeld.

§ 2. A Welshman, who has been reduced to penal slavery, shall be compelled to submit to a scourging, as a slave, by [an oath of] 12 hides; an Englishman, by [an oath of] 34 hides.

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

56. If anyone buys any sort of beast, and then finds any manner of blemish in it within thirty days, he shall send it back to [its former] owner...or [the former owner] shall swear that he knew of no blemish in it when he sold it him.

57. If a husband steals a beast and carries it into his house, and it is seized therein, he shall forfeit his share [of the household property]—his wife only being exempt, since she must obey her lord. If she dare declare, with an oath, that she has not tasted the stolen [meat], she shall retain her third of the [household] property.

58. The horn of an ox is worth 10 pence.

59. A cow's horn is worth 2 pence, the tail of an ox is worth a shilling, a cow's tail 5 pence. The eye of an ox is worth 5 pence and a cow's is worth a shilling.

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

60. If a commoner, who has hired another's yoke of oxen, is able to pay all the hire in fodder, care should be taken that he does pay it all [in this form]. If he is not able to do so, he shall pay half [the hire] in fodder, and half in other goods.

61. Church dues shall be paid from the estate and the house where a man is residing at midwinter.

62. If anyone is accused, and trial by ordeal is being forced upon him, and he has nothing to pay with, in order to escape the ordeal; and if another man goes and, on whatsoever terms he may be able to arrange, gives his goods instead, on condition that he [the accused] surrenders himself into his surety's hands, until he can restore to him the goods he has pledged; and then if he is accused a second time, and trial by ordeal is forced upon him, and he who had pledged goods for him will not continue to stand for him, and the accuser arrests him—he who had given [a pledge] for him shall lose his goods.

63. If a nobleman moves his residence he may take with him his reeve, his smith, and his children's nurse.

64. He who has [a holding of] 20 hides shall show 12 hides of land under cultivation when he means to leave.

65. He who has [a holding of ] 10 hides shall show 6 hides under cultivation.

66. He who has [a holding of] 3 hides shall show one hide and a half under cultivation.

67. If a man takes a yard of land or more, at a fixed rent, and ploughs it, [and] if the lord requires service as well as rent, he [the tenant] need not take the land if the lord does not give him a dwelling; but [in that case] he must forfeit the crops.

68. If a nobleman is evicted, he may be expelled from his house, but not from the cultivated land.

69. A sheep shall retain its fleece until midsummer. [If it is sheared before then], 2 pence shall be paid for the fleece.

70. When a wergeld of 200 shillings has to be paid, a compensation of 30 shillings shall be paid to the man's lord; when a wergeld of 600 shillings has to be paid, the compensation shall be 80 shillings; when a wergeld of 1200 shillings has to be paid, the compensation shall be 120 shillings.

§ 1. 10 vats of honey, 300 loaves, 12 ambers of Welsh ale, 30 ambers of clear ale, 2 full-grown cows or 10 wethers, 10 geese, 20 hens, 10 cheeses, a full amber of butter, 5 salmon, 20 pounds of fodder, and 100 eels shall be paid as food rent from every 10 hides.

71. If a man is accused on a charge involving the payment of wergeld, and [if], when he is required to give an oath, he confesses the act, which he has previously denied, no proceedings shall be taken to secure the fine until the wergeld has been paid.

72. If a thief, who has forfeited his wergeld, is caught, and if he escapes the same day from his captors, yet is [re]captured before the night is passed, no more than the full fine shall be exacted from them.

73. If a night has elapsed since the theft, those who caught him [and allowed him to escape] shall make compensation for their offence, according to such terms as they can arrange with the king and his reeve.

74. If a Welsh slave slays an Englishman, his owner shall hand him over to the dead man's lord and kinsmen, or purchase his life for 60 shillings.

§ 1. If, however, the lord will not pay this price for him, he must liberate him; afterwards his kinsmen must pay the wergeld, if he has a free kindred; if he has not [a free kindred], then his enemies may deal with him.

§2. A freeman need not associate himself with a relative who is a slave, unless he wishes to ransom him from a vendetta; nor need a slave associate himself with a relative who is a freeman.

75. If a stolen chattel is attached, and the person in whose possession it is attached vouches it to another man, and if the man will not admit it, and says that he never sold him that, but that he sold him some other thing, he who vouched the man to warranty may declare that he [the witness] sold him none other but that same thing.

76. If anyone slays the godson or the godfather of another, the sum to be paid as compensation to a man who has entered into a relationship of this kind shall be equal to the amount paid to the dead man's lord. The amount of compensation shall increase according to the wergeld, just as is the case with compensation due to a man's lord.

§ 1. If, however, it is the godson of a king [who is slain], a compensation equivalent to the wergeld shall be paid to the king, as well as [the wergeld itself] to the kindred.

§ 2. If, however, he was engaged in a struggle with him who slew him, the godfather shall lose his compensation, just as [in similar circumstances] the lord loses his fine.

§3. In the case of the godson of a bishop, [the sum] shall be half [the amount paid for the godson of a king].