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## TOWNS AS THE RECRUITMENT BASE TO MERCENARIES DURING THE REIGN OF THE LAST JAGIELLONS

**Summary.** The newest research of mercenary armies at the time of the Jagiellons shows among others the social-territorial structure of these forces' soldiers. In that one knows towns were more important element in the soldiers' recruitment system than one has believed hitherto. However, from wider point of view, the enhancement of the townsfolk's participation in the army instead of the peasants did not imply the growth of the towns' standing in the state structures. The analyse of these questions leads to the conclusion that the standing of the Kingdom of Poland towns was low, what had consequences not only in the military field, but also translate to the economic and politic functioning of the state. These issues were discussed in the connection with the time of the last Jagiellons' reign, using the sources unheralded until now (registers of the Polish Crown army from the Sigismund II Augustus's reign time stored away in the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw).

**Keywords:** late medieval/early modern history of warfare, Kingdom of Poland, mercenaries, towns, state capacity

Research into mercenary armies from the reign of Jagiellons, conducted in particular in the last decade, allows for quite a good recognition of the social and territorial composition of the military.<sup>1</sup> For instance, it has been found that burghesses constituted a much higher percentage of the recruited than it had been suspected. However, not all source materials based on which this phenomenon

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<sup>1</sup> T. GRABARCZYK, *Piechota zaciężna Królestwa Polskiego w XV wieku*, Łódź 2000, pp. 67–97; M. PLEWCZYŃSKI, *Wojny i wojskowość polska w XVI wieku*, vol. 1: *Lata 1500–1548*, Zabrze 2011, pp. 69–86; IDEM, *Wojny i wojskowość polska w XVI wieku*, vol. 2: *Lata 1548–1575*, Zabrze 2012, pp. 53–76; A. BOŁDYREW, *Piechota zaciężna w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XVI wieku*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 113–194.

can be discussed have been used in the same degree. This observation concerns especially the rule of Sigismund II Augustus on the Polish throne. This study takes into consideration the sources created during the reign of the last Jagiellons, namely the following kings: Alexander (1501–1506), Sigismund I the Old (1507–1548) and Sigismund II Augustus (1530/1548–1572). The specificity of the sources used herein determines the method of presentation of the discussed problem (the quantitative method). The sources in question are records concerning treasury and military matters, which constitute a sort of inspection “protocol” for military units as they were presented to the command. These so-called inspection registers are an invaluable kind of source in historical and military research. Multi-dimensional character of the issues included in them compensate for their being fairly difficult to understand and seemingly monotonous in form.

As I have pointed out elsewhere, identification of the territorial and social background of the mercenaries is possible only to a certain degree. And so, for the cavalry, which constituted the vast majority, similarly as in the previous period, such a recognition is possible only with regard to rittmeisters and comrades, that is unit commanders and their NCOs. Owing to the fact that the inspection protocols recorded only their names and surnames, we are unable to collect any information concerning the ordinary soldiers. Instead of their names, only their horses and weaponry were recorded. It was done quite differently in the case of infantry. There, every soldier provided his name, nickname, surname and, usually, the place they came from, and in the case of burgesses, occasionally also even their profession.<sup>2</sup> Despite these inconveniences, it is possible to a certain extent to prepare a summary of territorial background of the soldiers.<sup>3</sup>

The scale of the phenomenon which I am going to discuss is not large in the absolute scale but, at the same time, it must be noted that it is not possible to take a broader approach to this issue. The overall proportion of cavalry to infantry (expressed in percentage), based on a broad selection of sources from the years 1501–1557, clearly shows that infantry constituted at most one fourth to one third of the mercenary army. Of course, there were incidental years when it was

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<sup>2</sup> A. BOŁDYREW, *Horyzont geograficzny żołnierzy zaciężnych w Polsce za ostatnich Jagiellonów. Przyczynek do badań nad mobilnością grupy zawodowej*, “*Studia z Dziejów Wojskowości*” 2017, vol. 6, pp. 54–55.

<sup>3</sup> For the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, these issues were outlined in 2011, *vide*: A. BOŁDYREW, *Piechota...*, pp. 113–158.

more numerous (1502, 1507, 1509, 1514, 1519–1521), but the outlined tendency is a regularity for the remaining recruitment seasons. In other words, the article's title issue may be discussed with reference to the average of 21,62% of mercenary soldiers who served under the rule of the last Jagiellons (on the basis of direct sources). In addition, the study will include data concerning burgesses-recruits who came from crown towns. In other words, the point is to answer the question to what degree the towns of the Polish Kingdom served as a recruitment base for mercenary army.

Table 1

**The share of burgesses-soldiers in mercenary infantry  
under the rule of the last Jagiellons, based on inspection registers**

|            | 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter<br>of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century | 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter<br>of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century | 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter<br>of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century | Total  |
|------------|--|--|--|--------|
| Identified | –  | 11 750   | 1 186  | 12 936 |
| Burgesses  | –  | 6 043  | 482  | 6 525  |
| %          | –  | 51,43  | 40,64  | 50,44  |

Source: Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Crown Treasury Archives, Division 85, sign. 16, part V, c. 1–6; sign. 17, c. 85–93; sign. 19, c. 211v–229; sign. 20, part I, c. 1a–18; part III, c. 1–24; part IV, c. 1a–5; sign. 22, c. 128–171; sign. 24, c. 70–78v; sign. 25, c. 77v–88v; sign. 26, c. 108–123; sign. 27, c. 78–94; sign. 32, c. 3–171v; sign. 36, c. 82v–89v; sign. 39, c. 156–163v; sign. 42, c. 236–261v; sign. 51, c. 53–54; sign. 57, c. 45–47v; sign. 58, c. 107–131; sign. 61, c. 74v–76v; Division 86, sign. 12, vol. II, c. 1–6; Division III, sign. 1, c. 612–615; K. GÓRSKI, *Historia piechoty polskiej*, Kraków 1893, pp. 224–225; Z. SPIERAŁSKI, *Kampania obertyńska 1531 roku*, Warszawa 1962, pp. 237–260.

Note: all further analyses will be conducted on the basis of the above data, which is why it was decided to skip quoting the source.

The presented general data (divided into quarters of the century) show that burgesses from the crown towns constituted a significant number of recruits. While it was known with reference to the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>4</sup> for the years 1551–1572 it is a new finding. It is also interesting that the share oscillates around 40%, as this means that using a representative sample (at the level of nearly 1200

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 152.

cases in the absolute scale), a clear decline in popularity of mercenary military service among crown burgesses was calculated. At the same time, throughout the period in question, crown burgesses still constituted almost a half of all infantrymen, which made it the most numerous group, thus contradicting the commonly held opinion of the plebeian (peasant) character of this type of army.

Unfortunately, the sources taken into account in the above summary do not cover the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is impossible due to their temporal distribution (state of preservation), although other sources (not treasury and military in character) indicate that the share of infantry in mercenary army was at a similar level to the second and third quarters of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, it can be assumed that the data collected for the period 1526–1572 are also, to some extent, representative of the first quarter of the century. Thus, the phenomenon of obtaining recruits from crown towns occurred regularly throughout the discussed period. It must be stressed however, that it was by no means a static phenomenon. It was based around certain dynamics, which is difficult to outline without using complex statistical methods. However, in order to avoid excessive density of description, a method was selected which allows to show the phenomenon at a certain level of generality, without losing sight of structural transformations of the process. To this end, the analysed period is divided into quarters, all the more so because it is compatible with the state of preservation of the sources and the periods of reign of individual rulers of the Jagiellon dynasty (it is especially clearly visible in the case of Sigismund II Augustus). As it was mentioned earlier, observing the transformations in two temporal cross-sections (second and third quarters of the 16<sup>th</sup> century) may provide the basis for broader conclusions.

Table 2

**Temporal distribution of the preserved treasury-military sources**

| Ruler                  | Alexander (1501–1506)<br>Sigismund I the Old (1507–1548) |                 | Sigismund II Augustus<br>(1548–1572) |
|------------------------|--|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
|                        | 1 <sup>st</sup>  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 3 <sup>rd</sup>                      |
| Quarter of the century |  |                 |                                      |
| Sources                | –  | 1527–1547       | 1552–1569                            |

The analysed data are abundant and are characterised by a broad distribution not only along the temporal scale, but also across the geographical one. Thus, it is possible to assign them to individual provinces of the Crown.

Table 3

**Percentage of burgesses-soldiers from individual provinces  
in mercenary infantry during the reign of the last Jagiellons**

| Province        | 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century |        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century |        |
|-----------------|---|--------|---|--------|
|                 | Quantity  | %      | Quantity  | %      |
| Royal Prussia   | 48  | 0,79   | 0   | 0,00   |
| Kuyavia         | 41  | 0,68   | 1   | 0,21   |
| Greater Poland  | 765   | 12,66  | 30  | 6,22   |
| Mazovia         | 428   | 7,08   | 26  | 5,39   |
| Lesser Poland   | 3493  | 58,80  | 284   | 58,92  |
| Ruthenian lands | 1268  | 20,98  | 141   | 29,25  |
| Total           | 6043  | 100,00 | 482   | 100,00 |

Source: Based on the author's own calculations.

Even a cursory examination of the presented data reveals a complete disappearance of recruits from Royal Prussia. It may only be suspected that in the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century this involvement was greater, especially in the years of the so-called "Prussian war" (1519–1521).<sup>5</sup> Such a thesis may be formulated even on the basis of a simple extrapolation of data. If the number of soldiers from Royal Prussia fell to zero from the second to the third quarter, transferring the tendency to the system of first– second quarter should also reveal a decrease (thus, there should be more burgesses-soldiers from Royal Prussia in the first quarter than in the second one). A similar observation could also be

<sup>5</sup> For more detail *vide*: M. BISKUP, "Wojna pruska" czyli wojna Polski z zakonem krzyżackim z lat 1519–1521: u źródeł sekularyzacji Prus Krzyżackich, Olsztyn 1991; J. TYSZKIEWICZ, *Ostatnia wojna z Zakonem Krzyżackim 1519–1521*, Warszawa 1991.

attributed to Kuyavia. Decreases were also observed for Greater Poland and Mazovia, although the share of burgesses-soldiers from these provinces was visible in both the second and the third quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The situation was reverse in Lesser Poland and in the Ruthenian lands of the Crown. In these two provinces the share of soldiers from towns increased, with a considerable rise for the Ruthenian lands (from approximately 20% to nearly 30%).

Thus, it is interesting to see how this growth tendency was shaped for individual voivodeships of the Lesser Poland province and the Ruthenian lands.

Table 4

**Share of burgesses-soldiers from Lesser Poland and Ruthenian lands  
in the mercenary infantry during the reign of the last Jagiellons**

| Province        | Voivodeship | 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century |       | 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century |       |
|-----------------|-------------|---|-------|---|-------|
|                 |             | Number  | %     | Number  | %     |
| Lesser Poland   | Kraków      | 2054  | 33,99 | 191   | 39,63 |
|                 | Sandomierz  | 1070  | 17,71 | 60  | 12,45 |
|                 | Lublin      | 369   | 6,11  | 33  | 6,85  |
| Ruthenian lands | Ruthenian   | 927   | 15,34 | 118   | 24,48 |
|                 | Podole      | 40  | 0,66  | 6   | 1,24  |
|                 | Bełz Land   | 169   | 2,80  | 9   | 1,87  |
|                 | Chełm Land  | 132   | 2,18  | 8   | 1,66  |

Source: Based on the author's own calculations.

Since data for towns of the Podole Voivodeship and the Bełz and Chełm lands are relatively modest, especially with reference to the third quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the minor noted fluctuations may be erroneous. However, it is worth focusing on the towns of the Lesser Poland voivodeships and the Ruthenian Voivodeship. Significant increases are visible for the Kraków and Ruthenian voivodeships, an increasing share of towns of the Lublin Voivodeship and a lower participation of towns of the Sandomierz Voivodeship. This means that the increased involvement of Lesser Poland and Ruthenian towns in the temporal perspective was

in fact a result of outstanding role of the following voivodeships: Ruthenian, Kraków and Lublin (from 15,34 to 24,48%, from 33,99 to 39,63% and from 6,11 to 6,85%, respectively). The share of towns of the Ruthenian voivodeship is particularly important, as the increase there amounts to nearly 10%. Of course, in the absolute scale this did not translate to large numbers of soldiers, but it must be kept in mind that the degree of urbanisation and population density for Ruthenian lands and Lesser Poland were different.

The two presented perspectives (temporal and geographical) are not the only ones possible to be taken into account. A useful format for analysing the activity of towns and their inhabitants on different planes is the so-called categorisation of towns. This model was introduced into scientific literature by Henryk Samsonowicz.<sup>6</sup> The basis for his theoretical assumption is the division into four categories of crown towns, where the first category is the highest and includes the biggest centres, some of them being conurbations or even – as is the case of Kraków – agglomerations. This category includes Kraków, Poznań, Lviv, Gdańsk, Elbląg and Toruń. It must be noted that a half of these towns were found in Royal Prussia, the zone which did not function as recruitment areas or centres in the discussed context.

At the same time, the largest cities were the most densely populated centres and, consequently, the lower the town's category, the more modest the recruitment potential. Meanwhile, the most numerous enlistments took place in centres of category II and III, with a slightly increased recruitment effort for those of the third category.

The share of category I towns also slightly rose. As regards category IV towns, their burgesses joined the mercenary army less frequently in the third quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This information is important inasmuch as the number of these towns was estimated to be slightly over 350, that is more than a half of all those identified and categorised.<sup>7</sup> To sum up this thread, it is worth adding that the share of towns of individual categories, and in fact their citizens, in recruitment did not undergo any major changes with time. Thus, a thesis may be formulated that towns constituted a fairly stable environment as regards military enlistment.

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<sup>6</sup> H. SAMSONOWICZ, *Liczba i wielkość miast późnego średniowiecza Polski*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny" 1979, vol. 86, No. 4, pp. 917–931.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*.

Table 5

## Category I-IV crown towns as recruitment centres

| Town category | 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century |        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century |        |
|---------------|---|--------|---|--------|
|               | Number  | %      | Number  | %      |
| I             | 894   | 14,79  | 81  | 16,80  |
| II            | 2030  | 33,59  | 155   | 32,16  |
| III           | 1887  | 31,23  | 165   | 34,23  |
| IV            | 1232  | 20,39  | 81  | 16,80  |
| Total         | 6043  | 100,00 | 482   | 100,00 |

Source: Based on the author's own calculations.

These observations (in general scale) are additionally confirmed by a juxtaposition of the number of recruits coming from towns of all four categories with the estimated numbers of their inhabitants. Of course, the latter value was given only as an approximation.

Table 6

## The number of burgesses-recruits in comparison with the population of towns of individual categories

| Town category | Population | Percentage of town population | Recruits in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century (in percent) | Recruits in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century (in percent) |
|---------------|------------|-------------------------------|--|--|
| I             | 89 000     | 13,88                         | 14,79  | 16,80  |
| II            | 176 000    | 27,44                         | 33,59  | 32,16  |
| III           | 236 000    | 36,79                         | 31,23  | 34,23  |
| IV            | 140 400    | 21,89                         | 20,39  | 16,80  |
| Total         | 641 400    | 100,00                        | 100,00   | 100,00   |

Source: Based on the author's own calculations.



The above comparison shows that the share of burgesses from towns of category I and III increased. What was different though, was that recruits from category I towns in both quarters of the century were overrepresented with respect to the percentage of these towns' population. Even an increase of the percentage of burgesses from centres of category III in the third quarter did not equalise the kind of deficit which characterised this category of towns. Despite this observation, the phenomenon can be regarded as a manifestation of a positive tendency, since these urban centres were the most densely populated in the Crown and, as a result, they might automatically constitute a broad recruitment base. It is also worth taking a look at category II burgesses, because they were overrepresented in both the second and the third quarters of the century. The index, calculated for the second quarter, remained at such a high level (33,59%) that even its decrease to 32,16% in the third quarter still meant overrepresentation of burgesses from such centres as Łęczycza, Wieluń or Łowicz.

Another interesting indicator is the share of recruits from specific urban centres. They were distinguished by selecting the towns which provided at least 100 soldiers in the second quarter of the century, and then their indicative "efficiency" was traced in the third quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Because the most efficient provinces in this respect were Lesser Poland and Ruthenian lands, the selected towns were located in these territories.

The first thing to be noticed is that the percentage of inhabitants of the selected centres is at the level of 29,22% in the second quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and 28,22% in the next. This means that nearly one-third of burgesses-soldiers came from 8 crown towns (from Lesser Poland and Ruthenia). What is interesting is that their percentage was almost identical irrespective of the period taken into consideration. Thus, it could be said that these towns constituted the foundation for the infantry recruitment, by constantly providing a similar number of people for the service. Eight towns stood out as strongly against the others as Lesser Poland and Ruthenian lands against the remaining lands of the Polish Kingdom. It is worth risking the statement that, in principle, Lesser Poland and Ruthenian lands as well as the selected towns had relatively the greatest share in military actions of the Crown, as regards both the defence of the country and its aggressive foreign policy.

Table 7

## The largest recruitment centres in the Polish Kingdom

| Province        | Town       | 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century |       | 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of the 16 <sup>th</sup> century |       |
|-----------------|------------|---|-------|---|-------|
|                 |            | Number  | %     | Number  | %     |
| Lesser Poland   | Kraków     | 576   | 9,53  | 58  | 12,03 |
|                 | Kazimierz  | 267   | 4,42  | 8   | 1,66  |
|                 | Lublin     | 188   | 3,11  | 8   | 1,66  |
|                 | Bochnia    | 166   | 2,75  | 24  | 4,98  |
|                 | Tarnów     | 128   | 2,12  | 5   | 1,04  |
|                 | Sandomierz | 111   | 1,84  | 10  | 2,07  |
| Ruthenian lands | Lviv       | 228   | 3,77  | 21  | 4,36  |
|                 | Busk       | 102   | 1,69  | 2   | 0,41  |
| Total           |            | 1766  | 29,22 | 136   | 28,22 |

Source: Based on the author's own calculations.

It must also be noted that only Kraków, Bochnia and Lviv had a larger contribution to enlistment in the third quarter of the century than in the previous discussed period. The remaining 5 towns provided fewer recruits than in the previous period. The greatest decrease took place in Kazimierz (from 4,42 to 1,66% in the scale of all burgesses-soldiers taken into account). The Kraków agglomeration alone, represented in the collected material by Kraków, Kazimierz, Stradom and Kleparz, was an area among the citizens of which 14,45% and 14,32% of infantrymen respectively were recruited. Bearing in mind that the largest recruitment centres supplied on average about 29% of infantrymen, the Kraków agglomeration provided approximately a half of this number. A slightly smaller centre of this type was Lviv along with Busk. Sandomierz and Lublin formed "separate islands" on the map of Lesser Poland.

The recruitment activity of the discussed centres cannot be presented in any way using methods included in geographical information system (GIS). The collected data, despite referring to more than 6000 individual cases, are too skimpy, and their point distribution is characterised by a huge concentration over a small area (8 towns in Lesser Poland and Ruthenia) on the one hand, and on the other, a very loose point distribution in the scale of the entire Kingdom of Poland. The methods of spatial point patterns also cannot be applied, because the significant (quantitatively) recruitment centres cannot be assigned to either point or linear regular system. An attempt at extracting a hierarchical hexagonal network (Christaller's hexagons) or a network of Thiessen's polygons also did not succeed.<sup>8</sup> The only element of those discussed above which might possibly be treated as a peculiar dependency network is the Kraków agglomeration. However, this observation does not contribute anything new, as it will be true for many aspects of the functioning of this urban centre, unique in the scale of the Crown.

The possibility of regular distributing of significant locations in the geographical space (towns in this context) should indicate a certain degree of civilisational development of the region, or in a broader sense – the country. The sparse findings presented above seem to prove that the impossibility of conducting such an analysis, despite collecting extensive source material, is also significant. It might suggest that crown towns were marginally involved in the military aspect of the operation of the state. Observing more than 6000 cases in the territory of the entire country within half a century should result in more reliable results, distributed in a more regular manner in the geographical space. Meanwhile, it was proved that great involvement characterised the largest and, at the same time, few urban centres, which were located only in one zone of the country. In other words, recruiting soldiers was not based on any system and depended, essentially, on chance. Other factors, lying outside the military, must have decided about the possibility to find candidates for military service. Even taking into

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<sup>8</sup> Z. KOBYLIŃSKI, *Podstawowe metody analizy punktowych układów przestrzennych*, "Archeologia Polski" 1987, vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 34, 39; M. KUSTRA, *Aplikacja metody sześcioboków Christallera do refleksji nad średniowieczną Wielkopolską w kontekście roli Pobiedzisk*, "Studia Lednickie" 2010, vol. 10, pp. 90–100. *Vide*: E. SIEMIANOWSKA, *O zastosowaniu niektórych modeli teoretycznych w badaniach nad ośrodkami miejskimi w średniowieczu*, "Archaeologia Historica Polona" 2014, vol. 22, pp. 28–35.

account the fact that mercenary infantry constituted a small percentage of mercenary army, it must still be remembered that thousands of soldiers were gathered in its ranks. However, it was done in a non-systemic way, drawing upon a reservoir which was not in any way recognised and defined in quantitative categories by the authorities. Consequently, in the face of a sudden potential change of the extra-military factors which influenced its “efficiency”, a crisis would have emerged, the threat of which was either nonconscious or its obviation remained beyond the power of the authorities. Spontaneous treatment of certain supplies, including human resources, as unlimited or at least always excessive in relation to current needs, does not put the organisational system of the army in the best light.

Of course, such conclusions may be regarded as too far-reaching, and the source base as too limited to decide on the general condition of the military potential of the Crown under the rule of the last Jagiellons. However, the quantitative data discussed in brief may provide the grounds for another observation. As it is known, some of the soldiers followed a given rittmeister during successive enlistments. In some cases, such relations have already been proven, while enlisting recruits from a given land, voivodeship or even town, which the rittmeister came from can be traced in specific cases.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the statement that there was a certain correspondence between the place where the rittmeister came from (in fact the place he lived in) and the origin of the recruits is not without a good reason.

Based on the data presented above and the information concerning the place of activity of specific rittmeisters, an attempt can be made at estimating the recruitment activity in towns of individual lands in the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (with particular emphasis on Lesser Poland and Ruthenian lands), for which there is no sufficient direct information. This line of thought assumes that a known origin of a rittmeister from a given land might have attracted veterans who also lived there to his unit (in the discussed context, inhabitants of towns in this land).

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<sup>9</sup> A. BÓLDYREW, *Mikołaj Iskrzycki et consortes*, [in:] *Na wojnie i w szlacheckim dworcu. Studia i materiały*, eds. K. MAKSYMUK, D. WĘREDA, R. ROGUSKI, Siedlce 2016, pp. 53–65.

Table 8

## Relation between rittmeisters and soldiers coming from the same land

|  | Rittmeisters from Lesser Poland and Ruthenian lands | : | Burgesses-soldiers from Lesser Poland and Ruthenian lands | = | Ratio |
|--|---|---|---|---|-------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> quarter of the century | 40,32%  | : | 29,86%  | = | 1,35  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter of the century | 78,78%  | : | 61,02%  | = | 1,29  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter of the century | 88,87%  | : | 63,64%  | = | 1,40  |

Source: Based on the author's own calculations.

The above pattern takes into account the percentage of burgesses-soldiers from Lesser Poland and Ruthenian lands, precisely determined for the years 1527–1569, that is for the second and third quarters of the century, as well as information on the place of residence for a total of 315 rittmeisters who served in infantry in the years 1501–1569.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, the biggest number of rittmeister services was recorded in the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century – as many as 186, but only 65,59% (122 cases) were identified as regards the place of residence of specific commanders. Several rittmeisters must be deducted from this number: one who was active in the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Witański, who served in 1509<sup>11</sup>), one Moravian (Jan Žirotinski from Žirotin and Stražnica, who served in 1520<sup>12</sup>) and two inhabitants of Silesia, who took five terms of service altogether (Maciej Bublo from Oświęcim, who served in 1519<sup>13</sup> and 1520,<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Based on “Indeks rotmistrzów koronnych z lat 1506–1573”, *vide*: M. PLEWCZYŃSKI, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 320–360.

<sup>11</sup> *Matricularum Regni Poloniae summaria, excussis codicibus, qui in Chartophylacio Maximo Varsoviensi asservantur*, part 4, ed. T. WIERZBOWSKI, Varsoviae 1910–1917, No. 8858; M. PLEWCZYŃSKI, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 357.

<sup>12</sup> *Matricularum...*, part 4, No. 3302, 3325, 3362; M. PLEWCZYŃSKI, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 359.

<sup>13</sup> Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw, Crown Treasury Archives, Division 86, sign. 8, c. 11; *Matricularum...*, part 4, No. 3104; M. PLEWCZYŃSKI, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 322.

<sup>14</sup> *Matricularum...*, part 4, No. 3247, 3336, 3363; M. PLEWCZYŃSKI, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 322.

Noskowski, who served in 1509<sup>15</sup>). The remaining 115 cases of crown rittmeister services constitute 61,83% of the 186 analysed services. At the same time, 29,57% of services were done by rittmeisters living in Lesser Poland, whereas another 10,75% by those from Ruthenian lands. Rittmeister services from the two lands constituted 40,32%.

The proportion of rittmeister services from Lesser Poland and Ruthenian lands (expressed in percentage) to the percentage of burgesses-soldiers from these lands in the second and third quarters of the century was 1,29 and 1,40 respectively. Therefore, I assume that this proportion for the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century remained at a similar level (their arithmetic mean is 1,35). By applying the reversal principle (dividing the rittmeister services (40,32%) by the estimated ratio index (1,35)), it is possible to estimate the percentage share of burgesses-soldiers from Lesser Poland and Ruthenian lands in the years 1501–1525. The result of this operation is the value of 29,86% (in bold type in the table). This retrogressive extrapolation of a certain dependency offers merely a general idea of the involvement of towns from individual provinces in the recruitment process, but it may be an indirect argument in favour of the thesis of the initially increasing and finally definite predominance of towns from southern and south-eastern Crown as regards military enlistment.<sup>16</sup> Another interesting fact is that the position of Lesser Poland was special in this respect also in the earlier period. Suffice it to quote Tadeusz Grabarczyk who wrote that “it is rather surprising that Lesser Poland should be the first among the most important recruitment areas”<sup>17</sup> and added: “The second most important recruitment area was Greater Poland”.<sup>18</sup> Of course, the words concern recruitment areas within the borders of the Polish Kingdom in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, it is possible to propose a thesis that the role of the Lesser Poland province was predominant, whereas at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and in the

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<sup>15</sup> M. PŁEWczyński, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 342–343.

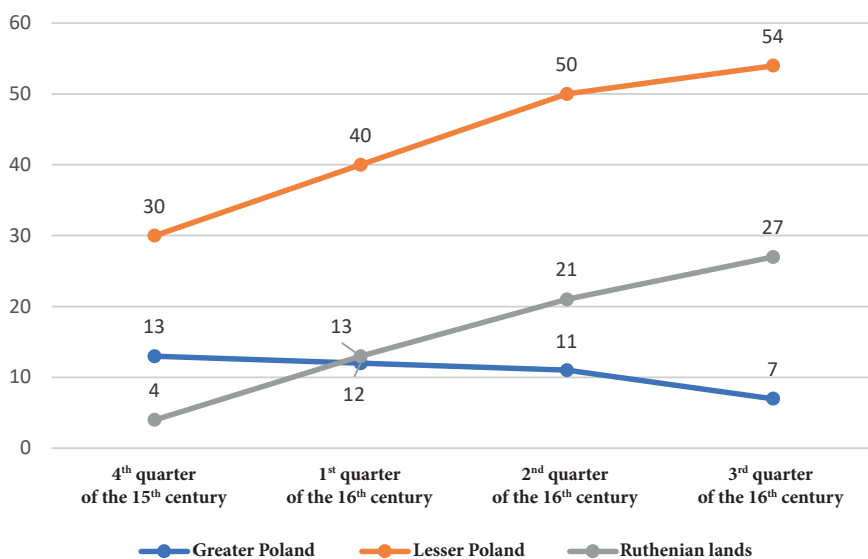
<sup>16</sup> Applying the retrogressive method here does not involve the risk of incorrect projection of findings concerning the latter period (second and third quarters of the 16<sup>th</sup> century) onto the former one (first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century), because the very phenomenon of recruitment from towns and recruitment in general is obvious and additionally certified in sources, only in a form which does not allow for direct estimation of statistical indicators. For more information on the retrogressive method (the chronological version of the comparative method) *vide*: J. TOPÓLSKI, *Metodologia historii*, Warszawa 1984, pp. 397–399 (particularly pp. 398–399 and footnote 42).

<sup>17</sup> T. GRABARCZYK, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 76.

first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the role of the second most active district in recruitment was taken over from Greater Poland by the Ruthenian lands, which would correspond with the gradual reorientation of the Polish foreign policy, and in particular the policy practiced through war, towards the southern and eastern directions. This is illustrated by a partial comparison of data (for the three listed provinces) presented in diagram 1. It must also be noted that the data on which the diagram was based for the first quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (with the lack of preserved sources) are estimated (extrapolation of mean values, calculated on the basis of data for the fourth quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> and the second quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century).

**The share of burgesses from selected provinces  
in recruitment for mercenary infantry in the years 1471–1569**



Source: Division 85, sign. 57, c. 45–47v; sign. 58, c. 107–131; sign. 61, c. 74v–76v; Division III, sign. 1, c. 612–615; T. GRABARCZYK, *Piechota zaciężna Królestwa Polskiego w XV wieku*, Łódź 2000, p. 82, diagram 3; A. BOŁDYREW, *Piechota zaciężna w Polsce w pierwszej połowie XVI wieku*, Warszawa 2011, p. 149, table 51).

Of course, this still concerns infantry. On the basis of the previously discussed dependency between the background of rittmeisters and that of the soldiers, a similar verification may be conducted for cavalry. A comparison of the

places of origin of crown cavalry rittmeisters who participated in great military campaigns (the Gwoździec–Obertyn campaign in 1531 and the Khotyn campaign in 1538) clearly indicates that they coincide with those concerning infantry. Cavalry rittmeisters from Lesser Poland and Ruthenian lands who served under Jan Tarnowski in 1531 (21 services) constituted 76,19% of all the cavalry commanders enlisted at the time, whereas in 1538 the group was 79,25% (53 services). Thus, it may be assumed with great probability that the data calculated on the basis of sources concerning infantry turn out to be representative to a certain degree also for the broader context.

Summing up, it is worth stressing once again not only the poor involvement of burgesses with the country's defence system, but also the "intuitive" utilisation of recruitment resources of crown towns by the rulers. Because, according to current knowledge, there never was a shortage of recruits from towns, it was most probably assumed that towns as such supplied and, more importantly, would continue to supply sufficient numbers of potential soldiers. In a broader perspective, the relatively low participation of towns in the mobilisation action of the Crown resulted indirectly from their marginal position in the country. Meanwhile, as was proven in 2013 by Kivanç K. Karaman and Şevket Pamuk, the urbanisation level (as one of the components of the economic structure of the state) forms, in combination with political structure and military action, a specific triangle of relations which have the biggest influence on constituting the structure of modern state (in both temporal and qualitative sense).<sup>19</sup> Thus it may be assumed that the low involvement of crown towns with the war was a manifestation of the scarce possibilities in this area which, in turn, were a consequence of the fairly low level of urbanisation, which had an unfavourable impact on the potential to form the modern structure of the country.<sup>20</sup> The nobility, who dominated the Crown in political and economic terms, set themselves completely different goals, which was visible in such things as maintaining economic and political backwardness of towns. Although such a state of affairs

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<sup>19</sup> K.K. KARAMAN, Ş. PAMUK, *Different Path to the Modern State in Europe. The Interaction Between Warfare, Economic Structure, and Political Regime*, "American Political Science Review" 2013, vol. 107, No. 3, p. 603.

<sup>20</sup> H. SAMSONOWICZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 930–931: the statement "weakness of the bourgeoisie, particularly in southern and eastern Poland", which, combined with the observation that "on the map of European towns, only Prussia in the borders of the Republic of Poland belonged to strongly urbanised areas. Other Polish lands belonged to much less developed" distinctly confirms the presented thesis.



was in a way favourable for the so-called domestic elite, its maintenance did not support the agency of the state apparatus (for instance an efficient tax collection system, especially in the face of the threat of war) and indirectly also the state itself.<sup>21</sup> Data on the power of the authority and the ruler and the degree of sophistication of durable and multidimensional economy, analysed by Charles Tilly, leaves no doubt as to the position of the Crown among seven other European countries. Poland, as the only one of the analysed countries, moved away from this path.<sup>22</sup> On the basis of Lewis Mumford's findings,<sup>23</sup> Tilly also developed a model of the growth of urbanisation, in which the crucial role is played by two factors: concentration of production and concentration of political influences.<sup>24</sup> As regards the level of concentration of production, it must be noted that large scale research, which covered almost four centuries (13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>25</sup>), revealed higher productivity and proliferation of urban armaments industry than it had been assumed previously (tremendously important in the face of military threat, that is in the event of one of three fundamental factors distinguished by Karaman and Pamuk). Therefore, while we can argue about the level of the former of the crucial factors, the latter one – concentration of political influences – was practically non-existent within the context of crown towns. The group of factors listed (relatively low participation of crown towns in the military action, being a manifestation of a low level of urbanisation, lack of possibilities for political interactions, and monocultural orientation of farming, which impaired the economic structure of the country) seems to form the correct context for the analysed issue. All the presented statistical comparisons are arguments in favour of the researchers' theses of the state's capacity for rebuilding its own structure in order to take effective decisions and actions in the field of both internal and foreign policy in the reality of the transition from the Middle Ages to Early modern period, that is in the period of transformation of the state structure from medieval into modern.

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<sup>21</sup> T. ERTMAN, *Birth of the Leviathan. Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge 1997, pp. 293–300, 319, 324.

<sup>22</sup> CH. TILLY, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992*, Oxford 1992, p. 60, Fig. 2.7.

<sup>23</sup> L. MUMFORD, *The Myth of the Machine. The Pentagon of Power*, New York 1970.

<sup>24</sup> CH. TILLY, *op. cit.*, p. 13, Fig. 1.2.

<sup>25</sup> J. SZYMCAK, *Produkcja i koszty uzbrojenia rycerskiego w Polsce XIII–XV w.*, Łódź 1989; IDEM, *Początki broni palnej w Polsce (1383–1533)*, Łódź 2004; A. BOŁDYREW, *Produkcja i koszty uzbrojenia w Polsce XVI wieku*, Warszawa 2005.

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