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## THE ORGANIZATION OF ENLISTMENTS IN THE ARMY OF THE POLISH KINGDOM IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Researchers dealing with the history of medieval wars usually focus on the political conditions in which a conflict took place and on the course of the events. Less attention is given to issues connected with war preparations. The present article is devoted to the way soldiers were enlisted into forces which were to become part of the Polish army.

### Recruitment

The king was the head of the armed forces and therefore he was the only person to announce enlistment. In practice, the decision was taken after the ruler had consulted with the royal council (as was the case during the preparations for the wars with the Teutonic Order in 1410 and in 1454<sup>1</sup>).

The first step in the formation of an army composed of mercenaries was to issue the so-called muster letters. The document was frequently handed to the candidate for a captain personally by the king. The commanders who had such letters could enlist new soldiers.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes mercenary captains were issued with such documents only after their force had been formed but before it was on active service.

Muster letters were not always given to captains by the ruler himself. When new enlistments were to be announced or when soldiers were being enlisted abroad, the letters were handed to the enlisting captains by special middlemen who were always appointed by the ruler. As an enlistment campaign was an important mission, the king

chose persons he could trust and who were experts on military arts. When Wladislaw Jagiello was getting ready for the war with the Teutonic Order in 1414, he sent the famous Polish knight Zawisza Czarny to enlist soldiers in Bohemia and Moravia.<sup>3</sup> Johannes Hunyady, a personage well known in our circles, was assigned the job of enlisting soldiers when Wladislaw III was preparing for war with Turkey in Hungary in 1443.

The king could appoint a person responsible for enlistments on behalf of the ruler. Casimir Jagiellonian used a representative whenever he did not command his army in person. For example, during the war expedition of 1471 to Hungary, the official commander of the forces was Prince Casimir and this is why it was him who had the right to issue muster letters and take on captains.<sup>4</sup>

The situation was similar when the king made one of his officials commander and appointed him as hetman. While on duty, the *Campiductor* was allowed to enlist soldiers. He could not, however, issue muster letters himself. The documents were still prepared at the king's office. In order not to restrict his actions, the commander was given muster letter forms written by the royal clerks. The forms were delivered by the king's most trustworthy men. For example, Piotr Dunin, who commanded an army composed of enlisted soldiers in Prussia in 1462, was handed 10 muster letter forms.<sup>5</sup> The original forms contained neither the

<sup>3</sup> *Codex epistolaris Vitoldi magni ducis Lithuaniae 1376-1430*, ed. A. Prochaska, vol. 1, Kraków 1882, p. 290, no. XXXV.

<sup>4</sup> In a document issued on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1471, *Casimirus dei gratia serenissimus princeps* takes on Captain Maciej Pławewski, *Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie*, Zbiór Dokumentów Pergaminowych 5119, similarly 5120.

<sup>5</sup> Z. S p i e r a l s k i, *Geneza i początki hetmaństwa w Polsce*, "Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości" 1960, vol. V, p. 312; *Matricularum Regni Poloniae summaria*, part 1, ed. T. Wierzbowski, Warszawa 1905, no. 589.

<sup>1</sup> J. D ł u g o s z, *Annales sue cronicae incliti Regni Poloniae*, ks. (book) XI, Warszawa 1997, p. 9; M. B i - s k u p, *Trzynastoletnia wojna z Zakonem Krzyżackim*, Warszawa 1962, pp. 273-274.

<sup>2</sup> This assumption is supported by muster letters containing information that a captain of horse and his force enlisted into the king's army. The name of the commander is mentioned in the source.

captain's name nor information about the number of soldiers.<sup>6</sup> The hetman filled the forms only when he was enlisting men into his forces. During the Thirteenth Years' War, Casimir Jagiellonian allowed Prussian sates to pass laws regarding the pay of enlisted soldiers, which is evidence of the fact that the king granted them some of his rights.<sup>7</sup>

The sixteenth-century enlistment regulations issued by hetmans stated that mercenaries of unknown origin could not join the army.<sup>8</sup> The situation was more difficult if the commander was a foreigner. In such cases, a candidate was enlisted on a famous person's recommendation. Undoubtedly, it was not accidental that relatives of the king's advisers (Długosz, Jan Długosz, the chronicler's brother) and courtiers (Hynek of Umień) frequently became captains. There were also state officials (Rożnowski, Szafraniec) and civic officials (e.g. Jan Tłustypisarz, the chief officer of Dobrzyń on the Vistula)<sup>9</sup> among the captains. Other captains may have been recruited through personal recommendation from among the relatives and acquaintances of such commanders. If the king did not know a commander who applied for the post of captain, the latter had to show a letter written by a person well known in court or military circles.<sup>10</sup> Several letters of recommendation were given to his captains by Piotr Myszkowski, the commander of the common defence forces, who in fact introduced them to the king. Casimir

Jagiellon invited his captains to arrive at Wawel Castle a few times in 1471. The court went to great expense to provide the guests with wine. Thus it may be assumed that such meetings were used as an occasion for getting to know each other.<sup>11</sup>

Having received the muster letter, a captain could set about forming a force. Analysis of the composition of such forces leads to the conclusion that they were hardly ever composed of inhabitants of one town or even one province. Thus it may be assumed that the commander had to hire men in different places. Announcements about enlistments were probably made in towns, where many people were out of a permanent job. Crowds arrived in towns on holidays and market days and this is why such days were the best occasions for enlistment. In Germany recruitment took place in the marketplace and it was announced by the beating of drums.<sup>12</sup> One can assume that the situation was similar in the case of the Polish army. The captain simply enlisted candidates. He was assisted by his comrades, that is, the most experienced soldiers, whom the commander trusted and who simultaneously recruited soldiers on behalf of the commander. The force formed as a result of this procedure consisted of several or more groups. They gathered together in one place at the time set by the commander. Analysis of the composition of particular forces seems to support the above hypothesis. A force usually consisted of men coming from different parts of the kingdom as well as from the neighbouring countries. The fact that a force took a very short time to form suggests that there were many volunteers willing to join the army.<sup>13</sup>

It seems that in the first half of the fifteenth century enlistments took place mainly in Silesia and Bohemia. Later the majority of the soldiers came from the Kingdom of Poland.<sup>14</sup> Theoretically, if enlistments took place on foreign territory, the ruler of this country allowed his subjects to join the army. When Sigismund of Luxembourg was getting ready for his final campaign against the Hussites in 1424, he approached Władysław Jagiello

<sup>6</sup> *Datae sunt 24 membranae pergaminae in manus domini Joannis Thargowiczky notarii pro expeditione et inscriptionibus stipendiariorum, Matricularum Regni Poloniae summaria*, part 1, no. 1554; *Casimiro rex archiepiscopo Gnesiensi literas indemnitate pro stipendiariorum susceptione dat*; *ibidem*, no. 1664.

<sup>7</sup> A. Radziwiński, J. Tandeci, *Katalog dokumentów i listów królewskich z Archiwum Państwowego w Toruniu (1345-1789)*, Warszawa 1999, no. 68, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> In Article 11, *On Foreigners*, Hetman Krzysztof Myszkowski forbade his men to take in, enlist and take on any strangers of unknown origin without reporting in case they were spies, *Polskie ustawy i artykuły wojskowe od XV do XVIII wieku*, ed. S. Kutrzeba, Kraków 1937, "Archiwum Komisji Historycznej", no. 3, pp. 144-145; Z. Spierałski, *Instrukcje i artykuły hetmańskie Jana Tarnowskiego, "Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości"* 1994, vol. XXXVI, p. 300.

<sup>9</sup> J. Bierniak, *Wójtowie średniowiecznego Dobrzyńa*, [in:] *Czas, przestrzeń, praca w dawnych miastach. Studia ofiarowane Henrykowi Samsonowiczowi w sześćdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, Warszawa 1991, pp. 228-230.

<sup>10</sup> Piotr Myszkowski, who was a commander of common defence forces, issued his captains of horse with such letters, *Listy i akta Piotra Myszkowskiego, generalnego starosty ziem ruskich króla Jana Olbrachta*, ed. A. Lewicki, "Archiwum Komisji Historycznej" 1898, vol. VIII, no. 38, 49, 68.

<sup>11</sup> *Rachunki wielkorządowe krakowskie z r. 1471*, ed. R. Grodecki, "Archiwum Komisji Historycznej", series 2, vol. IV, no. 7, pp. 385, 390, 399-400, 428.

<sup>12</sup> M. Plewczyski, *Daj nam Boże sto lat wojny. Dzieje niemieckich lancknechtów*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 32-33.

<sup>13</sup> It took about a month and a half to form a force; see below.

<sup>14</sup> T. Grabarczyk, *Piechota zaciężna Królestwa Polskiego w XV w.*, Łódź 2000, pp. 68-91.

about allowing his men to enlist soldiers on his territory. The king agreed and as a result 5.000 volunteers were enlisted.<sup>15</sup>

Of course, the ruler could forbid his men to join a foreign army. For example, Boguslaw IX, Duke of Pomerania, did not allow his subjects to enlist into Teutonic forces when the Teutonic Order was preparing for war in 1431 (the ban was subsequently lifted).<sup>16</sup> In 1433 Wladislaw Jagiello managed to persuade the Silesian dukes Henry IX of Głogów, Jan of Żagań and Konrad the White of Oleśnica and Koźle to allow their subjects to enlist into his army. In addition, the dukes forbade Teutonic commanders to hire soldiers in their countries.<sup>17</sup>

In practice, soldiers often enlisted into foreign armies without their ruler's permission or even against his will. For example, many inhabitants of the Kingdom of Bohemia enlisted into Teutonic forces despite the ban issued by King Wladislaw Jagiellonian in 1454.<sup>18</sup> More spectacular instance of civil disobedience could be observed during the wars of 1471-1474 fought by Casimir Jagiellonian against Maciej Korwin. Many subjects of the King of Poland became soldiers of the enemy army, which was an obvious crime. The men who sent letters of declaration to Casimir Jagiellonian's sons in 1471 and joined the Hungarian army were prosecuted and summoned to appear in court at Piotrków in November 1472.<sup>19</sup> The sanctions, however, were not effective enough, because during Casimir Jagiellonian's war with Maciej Korwin fought in Silesia in 1474, there were Polish soldiers in the Hungarian army again. Długosz complains that they took advantage of the fact that they spoke Polish, laid traps for Polish soldiers and took them captive.

Successful enlistments did not necessarily mean that the soldiers would take part in war. When in 1410 the men enlisted into the Teutonic army were marching towards Prussia, they were stopped by Polish officials and enlisted into Wladislaw Jagiello's army.<sup>20</sup> Sometimes the ruler of a country which was indifferent or on the other side in a war forbade newly enlisted soldiers to cross his country. Such an obstacle was encountered

by the forces enlisted by the Teutonic Order in Thuringia in 1433, when Frederick I, Margrave of Brandenburg, did not allow them to go through his lands.

The time needed to form an enlisted force is an interesting question. The agreement with the Hussite commanders who were to provide troops before the conquest of New Marchia was signed on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1433. The forces were in Wroclaw on 26<sup>th</sup> May.<sup>21</sup> When on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1454, in Brześć Kujawski Casimir Jagiellonian ordered enlistments to be announced, the troops appeared in Kalisz on November 17<sup>th</sup> and they reached Prussia at the end of November and December.<sup>22</sup> On 27<sup>th</sup> May 1471, the Diet of Bohemia elected Casimir Jagiellonian's son King of Bohemia. The news reached Kraków quickly and preparations started to be made for sending Wladislaw to Pargue. As the other candidates for the Bohemian throne were determined to use force not to let the prince become King, Wladislaw was to be accompanied by enlisted troops. This most probably happened at the beginning June. When Wladislaw Jagiellonian was leaving Kraków on 25<sup>th</sup> July, he was being escorted by almost five thousand enlisted soldiers (2.8 thousand men on horseback and two thousand infantrymen).<sup>23</sup> The above instance allows us to assume that it took 1.5-2 months to organize an enlisted force while mass levy forces took 3-4 months to form.

The long time needed to organize mass levy forces was a serious obstacle to successful war expeditions. When in 1476 preparations were under way for war in Warmia (Ermeland), 2,000 men were enlisted to fight against Tungen, together with court troops and mass levy forces. Unfortunately, noblemen gathered so slowly that the army ran out of money and could not afford to maintain the mercenaries any longer. As a result the forces had to be dismissed.<sup>24</sup> It should be noted that mercenaries, who were notorious for their violence, never looted a place before military operations. They must have been afraid that they

<sup>15</sup> Z. Spierałski, *Geneza i początki ...*, p. 302.

<sup>16</sup> M. Biskup, *Wojny Polski z Zakonem Krzyżackim 1308-1521*, Gdańsk 1993, p. 146.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, p. 164.

<sup>18</sup> M. Biskup, *Trzynastoletnia wojna ...*, p. 302.

<sup>19</sup> A. Prochaska, *Wyprawa Kazimierza na Węgry (1471-1474)*, "Ateneum Wileńskie" 1923, vol. I, no. 1, p. 19.

<sup>20</sup> O. Lasowski, *Grunwald*, London 1943, p. 26.

<sup>21</sup> M. Biskup, *Trzynastoletnia wojna ...*, p. 164.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 273, ref. 30, 300.

<sup>23</sup> K. Bączkowski, *Walki Jagiellonów z maciejem Korwinem o koronę czeską w latach 1471-1479*, Kraków 1980, p. 44.

<sup>24</sup> J. Długosz, *Historiae Polonicae librii XII*, vol. IV-V, [in:] *Opera omnia*, vol. XIII-XIV, Kraków 1877-1878, pp. 603-604; A. Prochaska, *Tungena walki z królem Kazimierzem Jagiellończykiem*, "Ateneum Kapłańskie" 1914, vol. 11, pp. 311-312.

would not be enlisted or that some money would be deducted from their pay as compensation. Noblemen, however, did not feel restricted in this way and looted their own country. When in 1474 Hungarian forces attacked Podkarpacie (the Carpathian region), the king ordered enlistments to be announced and the country's mass levy forces mobilized. The mercenaries did not loot the country on their way, but the noblemen plundered church and peasant properties while traveling to the camp. Even Długosz, who did not favour enlisted troops, criticized Casimir Jagiellonian for not using the enlisted force against the mass levy army.<sup>25</sup>

### Inspection

When mercenaries arrived in camp, their forces were supposed to be ready for fighting. However, each force had to be inspected. If the opinion was satisfactory, the soldiers were enlisted.

Each inspection was carried out on behalf of the king by a royal official. For example, Jan Trnka,<sup>26</sup> who was appointed as Head of the armed forces during the expedition of 1497 to Moldavia, was responsible for the inspection carried out near Sandomierz in 1496.<sup>27</sup> Inspections were not always carried out by commanders holding such a high rank. When Łukasz Luboszwarski's force was enlisted in 1496 near Zawichost, the inspection was made by Mikołaj Piotrowski.<sup>28</sup> Hardly anything is known about him. When forces were getting ready for the expedition to Moldavia, he was probably one of the king's courtiers and was later appointed as Court Esquire Carver.<sup>29</sup> Mikołaj Firlej,<sup>30</sup> who inspected the force commanded by Maciej Polak in Bełż in 1499, was a former courtier and held the post of Standard Keeper of Cracow at that time.<sup>31</sup> Undoubtedly, both Hetman Trnka and

Firlej, who was to hold this post in the future, were military experts. Piotrowski, who belonged to the court banner, must have had a working knowledge of military arts. The above examples suggest that inspections were carried out by competent persons who were the king's personal friends.

The inspector was accompanied by a scribe, who made a list of the soldiers and their weapons.<sup>32</sup> This is where the sixteenth-century term "field scribe" was derived from.

All the soldiers belonging to a force had to be present during the inspection. They were supposed to show their arms and armour to the official. It may be assumed that they were lined up in battle array. Thus it was possible for the inspector to decide whether the force was big enough and whether there were enough lancers and shielded warriors. Sometimes not all the soldiers belonging to a force turned up. In such cases, the commander promised that they would arrive as soon as possible and get ready for inspection. For example, during the inspection of Maciej Polak's force in 1496, the scribe wrote, "Gecz desatnyk, za teho Matiey Polak slubuje, ze ukaze se ma ze swym desatkem" (Matiey promises that Gecz and his ten soldiers will arrive). Below there is a later description of the ten soldiers commanded by Gecz.<sup>33</sup> The captain must have kept his word and the missing soldiers arrived on time.

Besides writing down the names of the soldiers the scribe made a list of their weapons if they had any. As the information contained in the registers provided a basis for recompensing them for arms and armour lost on campaign, the condition the weapons were in had to be precisely described. A new arbalest was worth more than an old, damaged one.<sup>34</sup> The registers also contained information about the missing parts of equipment. Lancers were expected to be dressed in full armour, but a part of their gear was sometimes missing. If this was the case, the scribe recorded the fact in the register and wrote, for example: "Andrzych z Wracyzlawia w kopinyczy szbroj bez bartha"

<sup>25</sup> J. Długosz, *Historiae Polonicae* ..., vol. 5, 12, p. 568.

<sup>26</sup> Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie, Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 2, pp. 50, 64, 70. According to J. Wimmer, (*Historia piechoty polskiej do roku 1864*, Warszawa 1978, p. 90, table 3, ref. 61), Jan Trnka was the captain of the two forces mentioned in the text. The writer, however, clearly states that the captains were Hubaty and Kałusz while Trnka inspected the forces.

<sup>27</sup> Z. Spierałski, *Geneza i początki* ..., p. 326.

<sup>28</sup> Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 2, p. 78.

<sup>29</sup> *Urzednicy centralni i nadworni Polski XIV-XVIII wieku. Spisy*, ed. K. Chłapowski, S. Ciara, Ł. Kądziela, T. Nowakowski, E. Opaliński, G. Rutkowska, T. Zielińska, Kórnik 1992, p. 150.

<sup>30</sup> Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 3, p. 131.

<sup>31</sup> *Urzednicy centralni*..., pp. 42, 167.

<sup>32</sup> In the sixteenth century inspections were made by field scribes. Sometimes courtiers were delegated by the king to accompany them; M. Plewczyński, *Żołnierz jazdy obrony potocznej za panowania Zygmunta Augusta. Studia nad zawodem wojskowym w XV w.*, Warszawa 1985, p. 33.

<sup>33</sup> Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 2, p. 61.

<sup>34</sup> Surviving sources do not allow the researcher to establish whether damages awarded for an old arbalest were lower than compensation paid for a new weapon.

(Andrzych of Wracyslaw in lancer's armour without a bevor).<sup>35</sup> Similarly, Kacper *s Nerberku* (of Nerberk) did not have a kettle-hat.<sup>36</sup> The scribe describing Szolc's force mentions that some of the soldiers did not have any gunpowder or balls.<sup>37</sup> If some parts of the equipment were in very bad condition, the soldier had to replace them. If he refused to do it, he was not enlisted. Of course, a soldier without a helmet was not dis-qualified from service but a mercenary who did not own an arbalest was considered as useless. This is why in 1477 Skórski promised that two of his soldiers will have had their arbalests repaired by the time of their departure for the battlefield (*ante exitum*).<sup>38</sup> Several soldiers enlisted in 1498 were ordered to replace their crossbows.<sup>39</sup> Others needed new harquebuses.<sup>40</sup>

One can assume that the inspectors not only examined the soldiers' equipment but also made

<sup>35</sup> Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 2, p. 110v. A similar note concerns Wojciech of Piasek; Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 2, p. 111.

<sup>36</sup> Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 2, p. 111.

<sup>37</sup> For example: Phona Michał did not have *prochu any kulek* (any gunpowder nor balls), Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 2, p. 109; Jan *Szerperszka kulky miał alyc prochu nyemy* (Jan Szerperszka had some balls but he did not have any gunpowder), *ibidem*; Jan of Zator *kulek nyemyal* (did not have any balls), Bartosz and Girzyk of Paczków did not have any gunpowder, *ibidem*.

<sup>38</sup> *Item Sta(nislau)us Grzegorzolka balista z namozowym rogyem debet reformare ante exitu(m) p(ro) quo fideiussit Skorkowsky and Petrus de Lanczuth cum ballista se promissit haberemelioram ante exitum p(ro) quo fideiussit Skorkowsky*, Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 1, p. 10v, 11; H. S a m s o n o w i c z, *Rota Piotra Skorkowskiego z 1477r.*, "Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici". 1992, Historia XXVI, Nauki Humanistyczno-Społeczne, fasc. 240, pp. 157-164.

<sup>39</sup> The register of Florian and Jan's force mentions a few soldiers who had to replace parts of their equipment: *Philip skusza stara ma yną posthawycz, Jan ma yna kusza ukazacz, Szatawsky skusza ma yna kusza ukazacz nyą sluszby nyemyecz* (Philip with an old crossbow is to show a new one, Jan is to show a different crossbow, Szatawsky is to show a different crossbow or he will not be enlisted), Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 3, p. 58v. A similar mention is to be found in the register of Jakub Rożnowski's force: *Vyaczek ma dobra ukaszacz kusza* (Vyaczek is to show a good crossbow), Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 3, p. 94v.

<sup>40</sup> *Pawel rusznica, ma inną rusznice ukazacz* (Pawel with a harquebus is to show a different harquebus), Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 3, p. 75v.

sure that they could use the weapons effectively. Mentions found in the register of Szolc's unit seem to support this hypothesis. Two of his soldiers had harquebuses but could not load them.<sup>41</sup>

In the sixteenth century the commander of an enlisted unit swore an oath of loyalty. The oldest text of such an oath known to us dates back to 1525.<sup>42</sup> Therefore we do not know whether the commanders took an oath in the fifteenth century. It should, however, be noted that a medieval army was organized according to the knightly law and the commander was considered his knights' overlord. In the case of mercenaries, the soldiers did not serve under terms of feudal obligation and had to take a formal oath instead. One can assume that a captain swore an oath in the name of his unit as early as the fifteenth century but it may not have had a fixed formula then and this is why it has not survived in written form. Individual soldiers may have taken an oath too.<sup>43</sup>

A unit which had gone through the inspection successfully was enlisted. Then the captains and soldiers had to learn the service regulations.<sup>44</sup> This practice was regarded as indispensable, because according to some studies into the length of service in mercenary forces, the majority of enlisted soldiers did not have any military experience. It was only after a soldier had been enlisted that he started to be paid. If he had not been paid an

<sup>41</sup> Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 2, p. 109v., 111.

<sup>42</sup> The text of the oath of 1525 is as follows: "Ja N. przysięgam iż będąc porucznikiem [tj. rotmistrzem] Jego Królewskiej Mości, wiernie a sprawiedliwie służyć chce i strzec Jego Królewskiej Mości upadków i szkód, Jego Królewskiej Mości poddanych bronić, i też radami swemi, czemubych rozmiął, podpierać pana hetmana, to co by było ku dobremu, podciwemu, sławnemu i pożytecznemu Jego Królewskiej Mości i Rzeczypospolitej, a w tym żadnemu towarzyszewi nie folgować. Tak mi Bóg pomagaj, panna Marya i wszyscy Święci" (I, N., swear that being a lieutenant of His Royal Highness the King of Poland, I will serve and protect His Royal Highness the King of Poland against all falls and losses, protect his Royal Highness' subjects. I also swear to advise Mr Hetman whenever I can and to do good, just, famous and useful things that will work to His Royal Highness' and the Polish Commonwealth's benefit as well as not to be lenient with any of my comrades. So help me God, the Virgin Mary and All Saints), *M. P l e w c z y Ń s k i, Żołnierz jazdy ...*, p. 33.

<sup>43</sup> In a lancknetcht unit all the soldiers took an oath individually; *M. P l e w c z y Ń s k i, Daj nam Boże ...*, p. 34.

<sup>44</sup> This was the case with German infantry – *M. P l e w c z y Ń s k i, Daj nam Boże ...*, p. 33; the situation was similar in the Polish army in the sixteenth century – J. Tarnowski, *Consilium rationis bellicae*, ed. T. Nowak, Warszawa 1987, p. 115.

advance earlier, he was given part of the money after the inspection.

An advance was absolutely essential as mercenaries had to cover all the expenses themselves. It should also be noted that they had to purchase all their weapons before enlistment. The fact that they were often short of money resulted in violence and plundering civilians. Moreover, soldiers who received part of their pay were more willing to take part in battle and apt to respect their new sovereign. According to royal account book, the infantrymen preparing for the war of 1474 against Maciej Korwin were usually advanced 1 florin and 12 groses or sometimes 1.5 florin and the cavalymen received 2-3 florins each.<sup>45</sup> Sometimes the advances were higher and amounted to 2.5 florins for a foot soldier and 5 florins for a mounted soldier.<sup>46</sup>

The infantrymen preparing for the expeditions of 1496 and 1497 to Moldavia were given more money. The soldiers who gathered in Sandomierz, Lublin and Lwów were paid 3 florins each.<sup>47</sup> However, this was not a typical advance. These mercenaries received their pay for the previous

quarter and an advance. This means that an advance was 20-50 percent of a soldier's quarterly pay.

### Entering a war

On entering a war the captains would send the other side the so-called letters of declaration (documents of this type were known in the time of the "hunger" war and Jan Olbracht's campaigns for the Hungarian throne in 1491).<sup>48</sup> A letter of declaration began with the name of the person or the names of the persons who issued the document (a letter was sometimes signed by several commanders).<sup>49</sup> Further the authors declared that they will fight against a concrete enemy and specified who the enemy was (the opponent was a ruler – a king or grand master – and his subjects, not a country). The captains also specified whose side they were on.<sup>50</sup> Some documents contain information about the number of soldiers in the unit commanded by the captain issuing the letter.<sup>51</sup>

Sending the letter of declaration was the final declaration of war on the part of the mercenaries.

*Translated by Zuzanna Poklewska-Parra*

<sup>45</sup> Rachunki Królewskie, vol. 18, p. 27, 78, 83, 107-107v, 117-133. The advances may have been higher. The Teutonic mercenaries inspected near Chojnice in 1431 were advanced half of their quarterly pay – M. B i s k u p, *Wojny Polski...* p. 167.

<sup>46</sup> The soldiers of Marcin Charzemda and Dąbrowa were paid such an advance in Danków; Rachunki Królewskie, vol. 18, p. 114v.

<sup>47</sup> Archiwum Główne ..., Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, section 85, vol. 2, p. 172-173.

<sup>48</sup> *Středověkové listy ze Slovenska. Sbirka listů a listin psaných jazykem národním z let 1426-1490*, ed. V. Chaloupecký, Bratislava-Praha 1937, p. 163, no. 198; p. 164, no. 199; pp. 162-163, no. 197; p. 161, no. 195; pp. 164-165, no. 200; *Bártfa szabad királyi város. Levéltára 1319-1526*, ed. B. Ivantyi, vol. I, Budapest 1910, p. 436, no. 2960.

<sup>49</sup> Letters of this type were also sent by royal officials. In 1414 some documents signed by the castellan of Łąd (?) and the governor of Bydgoszcz; M. B i s k u p, *Wojny Polski...* p. 126.

<sup>50</sup> See the letter of Bohemian mercenaries who served in Wladislaw Jagiello's army issued in 1410 and 1414; M. B i s k u p, *Miscellanea archiwalne z okresu wojen polsko-krzyżackich z lat 1410-1414*, "Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie" 1960, no. 2, p. 160.

<sup>51</sup> *Bártfa szabad ...*, p. 436.