

Courtiers of Foreign Origin amongst the Horse Courtiers of King Sigismund I the Old in 1518–1526. Part Two: Significance of “Other” Courtiers in Military Activities of the Royal Court in 1519–1521 in the Light of Signature Registers of the Horse Courtiers*

Key words: horse courtiers, King Sigismund I, military activities, foreign origin, court at war

Słowa kluczowe: dworzenie konni, król Zygmunt I, aktywność militarna, obce pochodzenie, dwór na wojnie

The most important task of the prestigious service of horse courtiers, who were close to King Sigismund I, was to provide security for the monarch. This could be put into practice directly through constant presence by the king. In this case, the court detachment was a distinctive nucleus of the royal guards, which developed — in its modern understanding — in the period of elective kings. Simultaneously, a banner composed in whole or in part of horse courtiers and their retinues came to be used for the purpose of ensuring security to the state and, consequently, the *curiensis* subordinated to the king were arbitrarily put into use depending on specific needs deriving from the military situation.

This article is an analysis of a group of horse courtiers of the penultimate Jagiellon king on the Polish throne, courtiers who are distinguished by their origin. As a consequence of this origin they are nowadays considered as “foreigners” at the then royal court, even though it is difficult to state unequivocally whether they were perceived as such by their contemporaries, an issue addressed more broadly by Agnieszka Januszek-Sieradzka in her article. The analysis of the abovementioned problem is difficult and raises many doubts, but it is still possible to carry it out — even if the results might be undermined by the margin of error — on the basis of the registers of the horse courtiers, preserved in the Central Archives of Historical

* The article was written as part of the project 0469/NPRH5/H30/2017: “The Jagiellonian Era and Its Heritage in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth until 1795. Sources on the History of Polish Military in the Era of the Jagiellonian Dynasty”.

Records in Warsaw, courtiers who served in the heavy-armoured cavalry (*in equos magnos*) and light-armoured (*in eunuchis*) fellowships.¹

The earliest records from the pages of the registers analysed here come from 3 February 1518.² On the other hand the term *ante que* is more difficult to determine unambiguously, because the annotations concerning a number of courtiers are not continued, although the latest date mentioned in the registry is 21 March 1526.³ There were a few military campaigns included in the presented timeframe in which the court fellowships of Sigismund I the Old took part, i.e. fighting against the Turks and Tatars in 1519 and 1524,⁴ and the Polish-Teutonic War of 1520–1521.⁵

The *Books* include private details of a given person (a courtier in charge of the fellowship),⁶ list of horses (taking into account their type, colour, characteristics, brands and purpose). Importantly, the order of entries in the book is neither chronological nor alphabetical. The courtiers were indexed on spare paper sheets together with the description of the fellowship in which they had started their service. There are cases in which the same courtier, for the lack of free space, was described in a completely different — often earlier — fragment of the source. The internal continuity of specific entries concerned especially horses which were exchanged throughout the service due to the injuries they had suffered, death and theft; sometimes other animals were better suited to representative and military tasks. While analysing the cards in detail, the author put in order the data on time of service as well as fellowship composition of all the courtiers who appeared in the books.

Book 13, which is a list of horse courtiers in the heavy-armoured fellowships, contains a description of 151 heavy-armoured cavalry fellowships (*poczty kopijnicze*), amongst which 29 people can be assumed to have belonged to the group of “others”. For Book 14, these numbers are, respectively, 115 fellowships and 26 individuals who potentially meet the criterion. In the case of some of the surnames or nicknames, allocating them in accordance to the phonetic sound of the language raises doubts — i.e. Sandex sounds German-like but it may as well refer to a Pole from the Land of Sącz. Similarly, Mikołaj Skorutha, a deputy of the Land of Chełm, has a surname with a German overtone, even though he was a resident of the Crown. On the other hand, Rachember (more precisely — Rathemberger), which sounds German, does not suggest Silesian roots of the family. Captain Iskrzycki — having a completely familiar name — who was indirectly associated with the royal court also came from this region. Similar problem

¹ AGAD, ASK, 85, caption 13: *Regestrum equorum magnorum*, and 14: *Regestrum equorum levis armaturae aliis eunuchorum*.

² AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, *passim*; cap. 14, *passim*.

³ AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, f. 8.

⁴ So far the conflicts have not been dealt with in a separate and detailed monograph. They can be studied thanks to PLEWCZYŃSKI 2011, pp. 142–148, 291–294, 316–318.

⁵ The dates concern the participation of organised court units and not the entire conflict. More broadly on this matter BISKUP 1991.

⁶ Although very rarely are they complete and detailed.

is suggested by the figure of Jan Kempa, who came from Silesia but in other sources for the period in question he is listed with an Italian-sounding surname of Campa. The examples can be multiplied, as is demonstrated by the following compilation.

The most numerous group (23 courtiers) has German-sounding surnames: Rospanth, Jurga Zodlycz, Kazimierz Lithaer, Silvester Felsnoff, Spergald, Humburgh, Czetrycz, Mikołaj Nipszyc, Sebastianus Sandex, Mikołaj Storc, Humburg Mlodsszi, Mikołaj Skorutha, Myklas Rachemberger, Jan Dantyszek (Flachsbindler), Leopold von Mambergli, Cristoff von Turn, Marcin Ffeystzicz, Rachembergh, Tonkyel, Jan Schyndik, Humburk, Ghocz and Friedrich Sopia. There were at least five horse courtiers from the region of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia: Morawiec, Jan Morawiec, Andrzych Slesita, Mykulasz Mnysek, and Bernard Morawiczky.⁷ On the other hand, four *curienses* can be regarded as Italians: Mercuri, Placidus Włoch, Alexander Italus and Vespasianus Italus.⁸ There are many inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (11 people)⁹: Leopold Wiesztormidi Jan Koritko, Hryczko, Slawutha Jursky, Olechno Kyssyel, Jan Narbortt, Pyotro Kyerdey, Juchno Litvanus, Jassman, Fyedor xyandz Wysnyowsky and Michal Zwolynsky. The list is complemented by representatives of the Balkan countries and Hungary (11 courtiers): Jan Lanczky Thurek, Jurek Hungarus, Iwan, Mihal, Lenard, Thurczin, Thomacz, Wylk, Mietek, Radoslaw, Marchus and Philippus Harvat. A rare and interesting exception is Dmieter Moskviczin from the Duchy of Moscow.¹⁰

The compilation shows horse courtiers in the case of whom it is possible to assume foreign origin on the basis of an onomastic analysis of surnames and nicknames, and — less often — names. It can be noticed that only a few records directly suggest another nationality or background from lands outside of the borders of the Kingdom of Poland (Philipus Harvat, Aleksander Italus, Jan Morawiec, Andrzych Slesita, Vespasianus Italus, Dmieter Moskviczin, etc.). However, even then it should be considered in some of the cases whether we are dealing with infor-

⁷ See also: PLEWCZYŃSKI 2004, pp. 51–75; PLEWCZYŃSKI 2001, pp. 23–35.

⁸ Cf.: PLEWCZYŃSKI 1993, pp. 301–309; QUIRINI-POPLAWSKA 1973.

⁹ Apart from Lithuanians who belonged to the Polish royal court, during the conflict the king had at his disposal also the *hospodar* courtiers who were brought in November 1520 by a horse courtier, Jan Boratyński. Under the command of Zbigniew Słupecki, they took part in the fighting in Warmia, i.e. in Nowe Miasto (PLEWCZYŃSKI 1995, p. 11). Sigismund I resorted to an already proven method of using his private military reserve in the face of the refusal of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to participate, similarly to the 1509 Moldovan campaign (GŁADYSZ 2011, pp. 93–103). More broadly on Lithuanians and Ruthenians in the Polish army in the 16th century, PLEWCZYŃSKI 1995, pp. 9–27, 43–67. The significance of the inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania at the royal court increased remarkably during the reign of Sigismund Augustus, FERENC 2006, pp. 547–548.

¹⁰ This figure is noteworthy since in 1530 Dymitr Moskwiczin became a commander of the unit of *pobrzeżnicy* (“costal-fronts”) — a cavalry guarding the border by the Dniester River, and thus a very important, front-ended post for defending the south-eastern borderlands, responsible for intelligence and preparations for potential attacks by the Tartars and Moldavians, PLEWCZYŃSKI 1995, pp. 28–42.

mation about a person's background or perhaps about the nature of fellowship with which the courtier in question was recorded.¹¹

Registers of fellowships written by individual courtiers and recorded are not different from the information written down in the case of Poles, which allows to say that — from the perspective of service to the group of horse courtiers at the royal court of Sigismund the Old — nationality was not a particularly significant criterion. Presumably this was an element of the royal court's everyday life and, as such, it did not require extensive comments by a notary making the list.

The following are examples of entries to illustrate the nature of information presented on the pages of the analysed source.¹²

Wanczlaw Proczek 4

W Krakovie w dzien swiathego Blazeia [3 II] latha bozego 1518 wypowiedziano yemv s sluszyby koyn yeden, a na czthirzech zostavion, ktore po zaplaczennyv skothnych kony thi popysal:

koyn gnyady, besz wsey gynsey odmyany, tholko s takovym pyathnem [rys.], kopinyczy dobri,

koyn gnyady, besz wsego gynszego znakv, strzelczy dobri,

koyn s brudna schivi s takovym piathnem [rys.], strzelczy dobri,

koyn innochodnyk biali, strzelczy dobri.¹³

Cracovie 1519 v ta sillaba Ci I Que Post Hec [14 XT]¹⁴ przepisano yemv yeden koyn na slusba then:

koyn sivi wsisczek, strzelczy dobri.

Solutus in loco in die sancti Gregorii [12 III] 1520 recessit a curia.

Humburg miles Iherosolimitanus [...]

Turonie 1520 znovu dzyevyancz koyny porzand popisal:

koyn cziszavy kopinyczy dobri

¹¹ In 16th-centuries registries of mercenary units we can come across information about the nature of service of the fellowship in Hungarian, Serbian, Cossack, Lithuanian etc. This also concerned the courtiers, the evidence of which can be found in the chronicles by Maciej Strykowski, who wrote on some of the court fellowships which entered Cracow in 1507: "Lituanico ritu instructa, Lithuanian or Cossack clothing, decorated at a great cost: and today we can see this with three kings, that depending on a king and land, such is our clothing, they wear as *simiae*" and Marcin Bielski: "They left in very decorated and numerous fellowships — and those of Cossack-like were the most numerous, accommodating in this way to Lithuania". STRYKOWSKI 1846, p. 341; BIELSKI 1856, pp. 935–936.

¹² The cited content is a result of the abovementioned work on the critical edition of the registers of the horse courtiers on the heavy-armoured cavalry horses and the registers of the horse courtiers on light-armoured horses in the collection in the Central Archives of Historical Records (Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych; later as: AGAD), analysed by Agnieszka Januszek-Sieradzka and the author of this article, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, 14.

¹³ AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, ff. 18v–19.

¹⁴ I am grateful to Agnieszka Januszek-Sieradzka for calculating the dates of the *cisiojanus* used in the source.

koyń s cziszawa plesnyvy innohodnyk kopinydzi dobri

koyń cziszawy strzelczy dobri

koyń cziszawi strzelczy dobri

Then koyń s roskazanya krola yego mylosci dal gi wskody do mastelle krolewskyey w Torunu 1520 in die Visitationis Beate Marie [2 VII]

Thuronie 1520 in die sancti Michaelis [29 IX] in recessu ad Wagrowiecz solutus est sibi iste equus pro quo dati sunt sibi fl undecim ut in regestrum domini thesaurarum et equorum stat.

koyń gnyady trzi nogi biale strzelczy dobri

koyń czisawi nogi zadnye byale lyssina przesz czolo strzelczy dobri

koyń gnyadi s takim pyathnem [rys.] strzelczy dobri

koyń glynka bez wsego gynszego znaku strzelczy dobri

koyń s riza plesnyvy innohodnyk strzelczy dobri

Wagrowiecz 1520 myasto koyńya cziszawego, czo mu zaplaczon then popisal:

koyń cziszawy lyssyna na czele strzelczy dobri.¹⁵

Dmieter Moskviczin ma w slusbie dwa konya, ktore w Ossyeku 1519 in die decolationis sancti Joannis Baptiste [29 VIII] ye popisal:

bachmath s riza plesnyvi pyathno na przedney levey nodze takove [rys.] dobri.

Then bachmath yemu sdechł v Olanthu v ta sillaba In De Mar Ti Us [27 II] 1520.

Thuronie 1520 in die Paschae [8 IV] then koyń yemu zaplaczon, za ktori dano yemu syethm zlothich ut in regestrum domini thesaurarii stat.

bachmath z wrona plesnyvi pyathno tho [rys.] na prevey zadney biedrze dobri.¹⁶

Thurczin eodem die [1520¹⁷] unum equum in servitium conscripsit:

walach pryskovany s wrona plesnyvi bez pyathna dobri.¹⁸

The notes cited here are no different from the descriptions of the fellowships of Polish courtiers. In the fellowships set up by both the “locals” and the “foreigners”, we can come across similar or even identical patterns related to marking the horses (branding), their colours or characteristic features (spots, stars, white colouration of legs and others). This also concerns breeds of i.e. Westphalian horses (the so-called Friesians typical of the European heavy-armoured cavalry), steeds and bedews (associated with the Asian and South-European military), or horses with the “sekielski” branding (or “seklerski”, from the territories of the Danube farms and Hungary), which turn up together with many courtiers of various provenance. Similarly to the case of general defence service of the cavalry, this results from the fact that the “exemplary records were a foundation for paying [...] compensations for losses accumulated in service” and were to prevent a situation in which “a good

¹⁵ AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, ff. 117v–120.

¹⁶ AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, f. 207.

¹⁷ There is no *cisiojanus* for the daily date in the given entry.

¹⁸ AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, f. 222.

and healthy horse was registered but a sick or worse was in service, and when a horse like that died, a compensation for a good horse was demanded.”¹⁹ Nevertheless, it is difficult to suspect people from the king’s closest circle of this type of extortion. Perhaps the lists were made in accordance with some customs within the royal chancellery and its officials who dealt with military matters.²⁰

The activity of the horse courtiers is particularly intense in the analysed chronological framework. The courtiers took part in the 1519 Tartar invasion and then were moved to the northern theatre of military operations, where they played an prominent role in the war against the Teutonic Knights in 1519–1521.

Therefore, for the chronological scope of the signature registers of horse courtiers we have at our disposal a list of courtiers fighting against the Tartar attack in the summer of 1519 and a list of losses from 8 August 1519, and thus reported 6 days after the tragic Battle of Sokal.²¹ It shows that 106 royal fellowships had altogether 363 horses. Out of this number, 45 fellowships (159 horses) were heavy-armoured while 52 fellowships (175) were light cavalry. What is more, 9 fellowships (29 horses) were brought by the courtiers of the queen.

In this group we can find 5 fellowships (17 horses) of light-armoured courtiers who were foreigners (almost 10% of the fellowships and horses). Courtiers of foreign origin who served in the heavy-armoured cavalry (20% of the fellowships and almost 24% of the horses) arrived for the expedition against the Tartar forces in greater numbers, with 9 fellowships (38 horses).

Table 1. “Foreign” light-armoured courtiers in the 1519 expedition against the Tartars (compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Mikołaj Mniszeh ²²	3
2. Sindik ²³	3
3. Hrinko ²⁴	4
4. Gocz ²⁵	3
5. Kniezyk ²⁶	4

¹⁹ A detailed pattern of registers in the permanent defence survived until 1563, PLEWCZYŃSKI 1985, pp. 36–37.

²⁰ More broadly on the “military department” in the chancellery of Sigismund the Old in CHORAŻYCZEWSKI 2007, pp. 239–246.

²¹ AGAD, ASK, I, cap. 49, ff. 14v–18v.

²² Cf. AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, f. 194v.

²³ AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 97v.

²⁴ AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 63v–64.

²⁵ AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 133v.

²⁶ AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 164v–165.

Table 2. "Foreign" heavy-armoured courtiers in the expedition against the Tartars in 1519 (compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Humborg Miles ²⁷	6
2. Morawiec ²⁸	3
3. Jan Kempa ²⁹	2
4. Psarutus Italus	3
5. Nikiel Nipszyc ³⁰	4
6. Nikiel Humburg ³¹	6
7. Spergald ³²	5
8. Cetricz ³³	5
9. Fabian Sandorff	4

Using the available data it is possible to calculate that in the campaign against the Tartars in 1519 featured 14 court fellowships (55 horses) brought by foreigners (more than 13% of the fellowships and more than 15% of horses of the entire despatched court).

The next court banner refers to the beginning of the Polish–Teutonic War when a unit of the royal court with forces of 45 fellowships (190 horses) participated in the siege of Kwidzyna on the 12–14 March 1520.³⁴ There were 5 foreign fellowships, amounting altogether to 15 horses (more than 11% of the fellowships, less than 8% of the horses) amongst the besiegers.

Table 3. "Foreign" courtiers in the siege of Kwidzyna, 12–13 March 1520 (compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Florian Smodzin	4
2. Hrinko ³⁵	5

²⁷ AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, ff. 117v–118.

²⁸ The fellowship was enlarged to 3 horses on 1 November 1518, AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 41v–42.

²⁹ AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 263v.

³⁰ The fellowship was enlarged to 4 horses on 7 July 1519, AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 137v–138.

³¹ AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 187v–188.

³² AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 80v–81v.

³³ AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 127v–128v.

³⁴ AGAD, ASK, I, cap. 49, ff. 34v–37.

³⁵ The fellowship was enlarged to 5 horses on 15 November 1519, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, f. 64v.

3. Morawi[ec]	2
4. Kempa	2
5. Francz Magnus ³⁶	2

Foreigners who were in the king's entourage in Toruń were definitely more numerous. 78 fellowships of courtiers (354 horses) were recorded in March,³⁷ from which 11 fellowships (57 horses) can be classified as "foreign" (more than 14% of the fellowships, more than 15% of the horses).

Table 4. "Foreign" courtiers in Toruń by the king's side in March 1520
(compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Humborg miles ³⁸	9
2. Feystrzicz ³⁹	4
3. Morawiec podczaszy ⁴⁰	4
4. Sandorff	5
5. Herborth ⁴¹	3
6. Niprzyc ⁴²	5
7. Cetricz ⁴³	6
8. Humborg Nikiel ⁴⁴	6
9. Skorutha ⁴⁵	6
10. Mikołaj Mnissek	4
11. Spergald ⁴⁶	5

³⁶ He entered the service only on 10 March 1520 in Toruń, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, f. 86v.

³⁷ AGAD, ASK, I, cap. 49, ff. 35v–36.

³⁸ AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, ff. 119–119v.

³⁹ The fellowship was enlarged to 4 horses in 1519 in Toruń, AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 268v–269v.

⁴⁰ The fellowship was enlarged to 4 horses in autumn 1519, AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 42.

⁴¹ He entered the court service on 21 December 1519, AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 197.

⁴² The fellowship was enlarged to 5 horses on 14 November 1519, AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 139.

⁴³ The fellowship was enlarged to 6 horses on 14 November 1519, AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 128v.

⁴⁴ In November 1519 he exchanged a horse previously reported as damaged for a new one, AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 188v.

⁴⁵ AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 191v–192.

⁴⁶ The lack of a higher number of entries in the register most likely stems from the taking over of the command in the mercenary infantry. GŁADYSZ 2014, pp. 452–453.

On 25 June 1520 in the camp in Toruń were recorded 52 light-armoured fellowships (254 horses),⁴⁷ and amongst them 6 of foreign origin (24 horses), which constituted less than 12% of the total number of the fellowships and more than 9% of the horses. On the other hand, out of 69 heavy-armoured fellowships of cavalry (285 horses), it is possible to distinguish 11 foreign ones (53 horses), which amounts to nearly 16% of the fellowships and less than 19% of the horses.

Table 5. "Foreign" light-armoured courtiers in Toruń on 25 June 1520
(compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Mikołaj Mniszek ⁴⁸	4
2. Florian Smodzin ⁴⁹	4
3. Morawiczki ⁵⁰	6
4. Dimiter Moscus ⁵¹	5
5. Narbort Plot? ⁵²	2
6. Mercuri ⁵³	3

Table 6. "Foreign" heavy-armoured courtiers in Toruń on 25 June 1520
(compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Morawiec	4
2. Kempa	2
3. Nipczik	5
4. Humborg junior	6
5. Feyszrzicz	4
6. Fabian Sandorff	5
7. Mikołaj Narbort	4

⁴⁷ AGAD, ASK, I, cap. 49, ff. 39v–41v.

⁴⁸ The fellowship was enlarged to 4 horses on 14 November 1519, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, f. 195.

⁴⁹ The register informs us about the enlargement of the fellowships to three (and not four) horses only on 10 November 1521, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, f. 87.

⁵⁰ He joined the court with 3 horses on 1 March 1518 after finishing his service as a captain in Lithuania. On 14 November 1519 the fellowship was enlarged to 5 horses, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, ff. 197v–198v.

⁵¹ The fellowship was enlarged to 5 horses on 8 April 1520, AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 207v–208.

⁵² He began his service on 20 March 1520 in Toruń, AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 174.

⁵³ AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, f. 159v.

8. Skoruta	6
9. Francz Magnus	2
10. Humborg Miles	9
11. Cetricz ⁵⁴	6

Having counted all the horse courtiers in Toruń, we can establish that they kept 121 fellowships (539 horses). There were 17 alleged foreign fellowships (77 horses) in this group. Courtiers of foreign extraction as part of this group thus constituted 14% of companions with more than 14% of the horses of the court regiment.

After breaking peace negotiations with the Teutonic Knights,⁵⁵ on 28 June 1520 a court banner of 43 fellowships (192 horses) under the command of the courtier, Wojciech Sampoliński, was sent from Toruń to fight against the Teutonic Knights.⁵⁶ Only 3 fellowships of foreign origins, amounting to 8 horses (7% of the fellowships, more than 4% of the horses) were included in the court banner.

Table 7. "Foreign" courtiers sent against the Teutonic Knights on 28 June 1520
(compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Florian Smodzin	4
2. Narbort kozak	2
3. Mercuri ⁵⁷	2

A small court banner of 69 horses in 15 fellowships was sent to directly fight against the Teutonic Knights' armies plundering Mazovia in July 1520.⁵⁸ There were 3 foreign fellowships in its ranks, amounting to 14 horses (20% of the fellowships, more than 20% of the horses):

⁵⁴ On 23 June 1520 he signed in a new horse in place of the one lost in February 1520, AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 129.

⁵⁵ See WOJCIECHOWSKI 1946, p. 103–104.

⁵⁶ AGAD, ASK, I, cap. 49, f. 42.

⁵⁷ It was recorded in the register that the fellowship was enlarged to 3 horses on 4 May 1520, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, f. 160.

⁵⁸ AGAD, ASK, I, cap. 49, f. 55v.

Table 8. “Foreign” courtiers in Mazovia in July 1520 (compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Kempa	2
2. Fridrich Sopia ⁵⁹	7
3. Dux Wisniowiecki ⁶⁰	5

In the meantime, Sampoliński’s court banner — which in a slightly changed composition was sent in August of 1520 to fight near Reszel threatened by the Teutonic Knights — returned to the main forces of the royal court⁶¹. It consisted of 34 fellowships (145 horses), including 5 fellowships made of foreigners with at least 16 horses (almost 15% of the fellowships, 11% of the horses).

Table 9. “Foreign” courtiers near Reszel in July 1520 (compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Florian Smodzin	4
2. Kyssziel Olechno ⁶²	4
3. Mercori ⁶³	3
4. Sindik	4
5. Jan Narbort ⁶⁴	½

In connection with the mobilisation of mercenary units arranged near Wągrowiec, on 27 September 1520 a court regiment — consisting of 69 fellowships of heavy-armoured cavalry (284 horses) and 49 fellowships of light-armoured cavalry (249 horses) — left Toruń for the meeting place. Overall, the concentrated forces of the horse courtiers had amounted to 118 fellowships — 533 horses.⁶⁵

Courtiers of foreign extraction were recorded in both types of court cavalry fellowships. They commanded 10 fellowships (48 horses) in the heavy-armoured

⁵⁹ The first annotation in the register from 28 January 1521, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, f. 254v.

⁶⁰ The first annotation in the register from 28 January 1521, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, ff. 256v–257.

⁶¹ AGAD, ASK, I, cap. 49, ff. 44–44v.

⁶² Enlargement of the fellowship to 4 horses on 14 November 1519, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, ff. 169v–170v.

⁶³ Recorded enlargement of the fellowship to 3 horses, written down in the register on 4 May 1520.

⁶⁴ Annotation in the register about the enlargement of the fellowship to 3 horses on 7 July 1520, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, f. 174v.

⁶⁵ AGAD, ASK, I, cap. 49, ff. 45v–49.

cavalry and 9 fellowships (35 horses) in the light-armoured cavalry. Thus, they constituted more than 14% of the fellowships and nearly 17% of heavy-armoured cavalry horses and more than 18% of the fellowships and 14% of light-armoured cavalry and archers' horses. In relation to the entire group of the horse courtiers, their number exceeded 16% of the fellowships (at the same time it was less than 16% of the horses).

Table 10. "Foreign" heavy-armoured courtiers sent to Wągrowiec of 27 September 1520 (compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Humborg miles ⁶⁶	9
2. Francz magnus	2
3. Kempa	2
4. Nipczycz	5
5. Nikel Humborg	6
6. Dantyszek	3
7. Cetricz	6
8. Skoruta	6
9. Feystercz	4
10. Sebastian Canide	5

Table 11. "Foreign" light-armoured courtiers sent to Wągrowiec on 27 September 1520 (compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Kyssiel Olechno ⁶⁷	4
2. Jan Narbort ⁶⁸	2
3. Mikołaj Mniszek	4
4. Sindik ⁶⁹	4
5. Florian Smodzin	4

⁶⁶ He signed in a new horse in Wągrowiec to replace a previously reported damaged one, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, ff. 119, 120.

⁶⁷ In Wągrowiec on 28 October 1520 he reported one horse as damaged, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, f. 170v.

⁶⁸ The fellowship numbers shown as underestimated once again.

⁶⁹ In Wągrowiec he reported two horses as damaged and in their place he signed in two new ones, AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 98–98v.

6. Kniezyk	4
7. Mercury	3
8. Morawicki	6
9. Gocz ⁷⁰	4

In November 1520 the army of Hetman Mikołaj Firlej headed for Eastern Pomerania in order to win back the area lost to the Teutonic Knights. A unit of courtiers with Piort Kmita Sobieński, comprising 55 fellowships (253 horses)⁷¹, went together with them. 12 fellowships of non-Polish courtiers with 48 horses (nearly 22% of the fellowships, 19% of the horses) marched under the command of the Court Marshal.

Table 12. “Foreign” courtiers at Chojnice in November 1520 (compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Francz Magnus	2
2. Morawiec Simon ⁷²	4
3. Kempa ⁷³	2
4. Nikiel Humborgk	6
5. Carwat ⁷⁴	3
6. Skoruta	6
7. Sveystarcz [Feystricz?]	4
8. Schandorff	5
9. Mercuri	4
10. Kisiel Olechno	4
11. Kniezyk	4
12. Nipczyc ⁷⁵	4

⁷⁰ The fellowship was enlarged to 4 horses on 14 November 1519, AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 134.

⁷¹ AGAD, ASK, I, cap. 49, ff. 51v–52v.

⁷² Enlargement of the fellowship to 4 horses on 14 November 1519, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, ff. 41v–42v.

⁷³ A comment by this courtier — *in Torun*. Perhaps he did not go with Kmita Sobieński, remaining in the camp in Toruń, AGAD, ASK, I, cap. 49, f. 51v.

⁷⁴ AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, ff. 62v–63.

⁷⁵ With an annotation, *per manus Dantisci*, signifying that Nipszyc’s fellowship was led by his substitute, Dantyszek, who as a horse courtier was listed in the registries of the royal court, AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 52v. The lack of one horse in the fellowship is a result of Nipszyc’s absence.

The last military use of the court banner took place on 17 March 1521, when it was sent against the heavy-armoured cavalry of the Teutonic Knights who threatened border towns.⁷⁶ 32 fellowships which had 157 horses were once again commanded by Wojciech Sampoliński. Particularly high frequency of potential foreigners was recorded in this group. Their 10 fellowships amounted to as many as 48 horses (more than 31% of the fellowships and nearly 31% of the horses).

Table 13. "Foreign" courtiers at the Polish-Teutonic border in March 1521
(compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Jaskman ⁷⁷	4
2. Sindik ⁷⁸	4
3. Morawicki	5
4. Florian Smodzin	4
5. Narborth cosak ⁷⁹	3
6. Kierdey ⁸⁰	4
7. Juchno ⁸¹	4
8. Jan Morawiec	6
9. Dux Wisniowiczki	5
10. Humborg miles	9

On the other hand the last list of the horse courtiers staying in the royal camp was made on 21 of April 1521 before King Sigismund I the Old left for Cracow.⁸² It featured 409 horses in 86 fellowships, from which 62 fellowships were heavy-armoured (263 horses) while only 24 were light-armoured (146 horses). Amongst the heavy-armoured cavalry, there were 10 fellowships recorded with 44 horses (more than 16% of the fellowships and almost 17% of the horses) while in the light-armoured cavalry there were 5 fellowships and 22 horses (nearly 21% of the fellowships and 15% of the horses) of foreign courtiers. To sum up the entire force of the horse courtiers — there were more than 17% of the fellowships and more than 16% of the horses.

⁷⁶ AGAD, ASK, I, cap. 49, ff. 57v–58.

⁷⁷ AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, ff. 224v–225.

⁷⁸ He reported the loss of a horse in January 1521 to W. Sampoliński and signed in a new one, AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 98, 99.

⁷⁹ Enlargement of the fellowship to 3 horses, recorded in the register on 7 July 1520, was written down after some delay.

⁸⁰ He started his service at the court in Toruń in 1520, AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 208v–209.

⁸¹ He started his service at the court in Bydgoszcz on 17 November 1520, AGAD, ASK, 85, f. 246v.

⁸² AGAD, ASK, I, cap. 49, ff. 59v–61.

Table 14. “Foreign” heavy-armoured courtiers in Toruń in April 1521
(compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Francz Magnus	2
2. Morawiec	4
3. Kempa ⁸³	2
4. Nipczycz ⁸⁴	5
5. Humborg Nikiel	6
6. Dantyszek	4
7. Cetricz	6
8. Skoruta	6
9. Feystricz ⁸⁵	4
10. Sandorff	5

Table 15. “Foreign” light-armoured courtiers in Toruń in April 1521
(compiled by the author).

Courtier	Size of fellowship
1. Mikołaj Miszek ⁸⁶	4
2. Goszcz	3
3. Kniezik	4
4. Mercury	4
5. Sopia	7

Having assumed that all of the abovementioned *curiensi* listed in the registries can in fact be classified as horse courtiers of foreign background, it can be concluded that their average involvement in the court military units in the period under discussion was similar in both the direct participation in the military activities as well as in the camp, while assisting the king, on average amounting to slightly over

⁸³ On the 30 March 1521 he reported one horse as damage, and thus, realistically, he had only one horse at his disposal, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 13, f. 263v.

⁸⁴ The fellowship was given in its entirety by Dantyszek to Nipszyc.

⁸⁵ After the end of the campaign he lost two horses. One in Marbork (as an envoy?) and the second one in Łowicz, on his way back to Cracow. In their place, he signed in two new ones, AGAD, ASK, 85, ff. 269v–270.

⁸⁶ In 1521 he received a compensation for 2 of his horses. On 21 July 1521 the fellowship returned to peace status; it was reduced to 3 horses, AGAD, ASK, 85, cap. 14, ff. 194v–195.

15% of all the fellowships and horses in the group of the heavy-armoured cavalry and about 17% of the fellowships and more than 15% of the horses in the light-armoured group. It should also be noted that the participation of foreigners was much more diverse in the court banners sent against the armies of the Teutonic Knights (7–31% of the fellowships and 4–31% of the horses) than in the group of courtiers remaining with the monarch in the rear (14–17% of the fellowships and 14–16% of the horses).⁸⁷

On the basis of the data presented here it can be concluded that the background (national, state, ethnic) had no influence over the decision to assign a particular courtier to a fellowship to participate in a military mission. Reputed (and often widely valued) military competences were definitely moved to the fore, which was mentioned by Łukasz Górnicki who stated: “the main call for a courtier is the craft of a knight.”⁸⁸ Thus, courtiers of foreign origin who were included in the configuration of the court banner, extemporaneously formed from the court regiment to fight, must have had such skills or, in the worst case, tried to get a military experience during the conflict. This is evidenced by a much higher participation of foreign court fellowships (31%) in the last military task of the war with the Teutonic Knights, that is the fighting of the court banners at the Polish-Teutonic border in March 1521, at a time when the conflict was dying out and it presumably this was the last opportunity for the men to prove themselves in a skirmish.

Nevertheless, regardless of the ideas guiding the foreigners trying to become horse courtiers, they were certainly no different from the local courtiers who also sought to stabilise or improve their social position in this way. Bravery showed at the battlefield and reliable service in the camp could bring not only promotion at the royal court or in the military hierarchy, but also lucrative offices. Examples of careers linked to service at the royal court of Sigismund the Old also concern foreigners who over time became gradually Polonised.

Amongst the horse courtiers listed in the analysed registers in 1518–1526, Mikołaj Mniszech, a Moravian, became court marshal of Chancellor Krzysztof Szydłowiecki in 1520, and in 1537 — chamberlain of Duke Sigismund Augustus.⁸⁹ Humborg, a knight, was honoured in 1526 with the title of the Knight of the Golden

⁸⁷ Direct participation in military activities generated losses. They are presented in the registries in the form of horses reported by the courtiers — their owners — as “damaged” as a result of strenuous marches, illnesses, and (although much less frequent) military activities. As a comparison, it is worth adding that in the campaign against Moldova in 1509 the presence of courtiers of foreign background in the court banner was around 5% while in 1531–1532 around 8%: GŁADYSZ 2014, pp. 164–166; GŁADYSZ 2013, pp. 62–69, 73–74.

⁸⁸ Górnicki developed his argument as follows: “when the courtier is in need or in some kind of skirmish, he should make sure to somehow exempt himself from the crown, so he could prove in the smallest fellowship his bravery and advantage”, GÓRNICKI 2004, p. 137.

⁸⁹ KOWALSKA 1976, pp. 484–486.

Spur, which was a form of ennoblement.⁹⁰ Jan Narbut, who served in a Cossack way in a group of light-armoured men, received the Marków District Office in 1540,⁹¹ while Mikołaj Narbut became governor of Samogitia (1535) and then prefect (*starosta*) of Krewa and Mazyr, and in 1542 — hospodar's marshal.⁹² On the other hand, Jan Spargeld and Nicolaus Rachemberg made a name for themselves as captains of mercenary troops⁹³ and Dymitr Moscus in the role of a commander of the formation of *pobrzeżnicy*.⁹⁴ Careers of such horse courtiers as Mikołaj Nipszyc⁹⁵ or Jan Dantyszek⁹⁶ do not require a broader discussion, while a majority of the individuals mentioned here has not yet been recognised enough in order to rule out their career outside of the royal court.

To sum up, it should be stated that the national, state or ethnic criterion was not crucial for potential military usefulness and realistic use in combat of courtiers of foreign background by Sigismund I the Old and the royal court officials like Marshal Piotr Kmita Sobieński and a commander of the court banner Wojciech Sampoliński. This is demonstrated by the lack of differences in the size of fellowships or the nature of military service of the *curienses*, but also by their use, which depended on purely military considerations. When it was planned for the fellowship to do delaying or reconnaissance activities, a group of courtiers sent to carry out the task was dominated by light-armoured troops, which could attack the enemy by surprise and move faster due to their lighter weaponry and armour. On the other hand when a serious battle against enemy forces was in preparation, the percentage of heavy-armoured cavalymen — who could shift the balance of victory with a decisive charge — would increase. In this regard, the courtiers' background, which would nowadays be understood as "foreign", was of no significance.

With regard to the facts presented here, a particularly valuable conclusion by Marek Plewczyński — pointing out that "the Crown's army played a significant role in a process of assimilating the national minorities and Polonisation of various nationalities that resided in the Jagiellonian monarchy"⁹⁷ — seems to be reflected also in the military circles of courtiers, in which the abovementioned minorities, even though they did not play a pivotal role, were most certainly present.

⁹⁰ GŁADYSZ 2014, pp. 375–376.

⁹¹ EFE, XXX, 1, p. 213.

⁹² WIŚNIEWSKI 1977, pp. 536–537.

⁹³ PLEWCZYŃSKI 1988, pp. 316–317, 319–320, 322.

⁹⁴ See above.

⁹⁵ MAŁŁEK, SZYMANEK 1978, pp. 129–131.

⁹⁶ POCIECHA 1938, pp. 424–430.

⁹⁷ PLEWCZYŃSKI 1991, p. 170.

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Courtiers of Foreign Origin amongst the Horse Courtiers of King Sigismund I the Old in 1518–1526.

Part Two: The Significance of “Foreign” Courtiers in Military Activities of the Royal Court in 1519–1521 in the Light of Signature Registers of the Horse Courtiers

In the article the author demonstrates that the criteria of nationality, state or ethnicity was not key to the potential military usefulness and actual use in warfare of courtiers of foreign origin by Sigismund the Old as well as Marshal Piotr Kmita Sobieński and the commanders of the court regiment, Wojciech Sampoliński and Jan Boratyński. This is evidenced not just by the lack of differences in the size of detachments or nature of military service of the *curienses*, but also by their deployment determined by purely military considerations. When delaying or reconnaissance operations were planned, courtiers sent to carry them out made up mainly light detachments facilitating surprise attacks and moving faster (by virtue of being lighter armed and armoured). On the other hand when a serious attack on the enemy's main forces was planned, the dominant group was that of lancers, who could bring a victory with their decisive charge. In this perspective the origin of the courtiers understood today as “foreign” did not matter.

