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The Activities of Hungarians in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Service of Stephen Báthory (1576–1586)

Działalność Węgrów w Rzeczypospolitej Obojga Narodów w służbie Stefana Batorego (1576–1586)

Abstract

In most existing studies on the reign of Stephen Báthory in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the role of Hungarians has usually been marginalized. When their activities were considered at all, they were typically limited to the military campaigns against Moscow between 1579 and 1582. This issue seems significant from the perspective of the functioning of the immediate entourage of those elected monarchs in the Commonwealth, who were foreigners. To what extent could such rulers, unfamiliar with Polish political culture, make use of their compatriots in their new homeland despite clear formal-legal constraints? The main aim of this article is to present the activities of Báthory's compatriots in the Polish-Lithuanian state throughout his entire reign, demonstrating that Hungarians were not merely occasional members of the monarch's closest circle but rather maintained a constant presence. Only those compatriots

of King Stephen who performed various tasks directly assigned by the monarch or carried out in his interest were taken into account, with a primary focus on military, political-dynastic, and court-related aspects. Each of these aspects was served by Hungarians throughout King Stephen's entire reign, although the group of individuals executing the monarch's particular orders was subject to constant fluctuations. This testified to the steady influx of the monarch's compatriots into the Commonwealth and, consequently, served as evidence of strengthened relations with Transylvania. In total, several thousand of Báthory's compatriots served in his immediate entourage over the course of his reign. Among the court personnel alone, nearly five hundred people were employed over the period of just under eleven years. Meanwhile, in military formations centered around the royal court, such as Hungarian infantry and cavalry, up to two thousand people served simultaneously. Over the years, their numbers underwent constant changes, so the total number of Hungarians in military service was even greater. The size of this group best illustrates the scale of Báthory's compatriots' involvement in Polish affairs.

Keywords: Stephen Báthory, Hungarians, XVI century, Royal Household, foreigners.

Abstrakt

W większości dotychczasowych opracowań poświęconych panowaniu Stefana Batorego w Rzeczypospolitej rola Węgrów była zazwyczaj marginalizowana, a jeżeli już interesowano się ich działalnością, to ograniczano ją do wypraw wojennych przeciwko Moskwie w latach 1579–1582. Zagadnienie wydaje się istotne z punktu widzenia funkcjonowania najbliższego otoczenia monarchów elekcyjnych w Rzeczypospolitej, którzy byli obcokrajowcami. Na ile tacy władcy, jako osoby niezaznajomione z polską kulturą polityczną, mogli wykorzystywać swych rodaków w nowej ojczyźnie, pomimo wyraźnych ograniczeń natury formalnoprawnej? Głównym celem artykułu jest zaprezentowanie aktywności rodaków Batorego w państwie polsko-litewskim w ciągu całego panowania, tak by wykazać, że nie mieliśmy do czynienia z epizodyczną obecnością Węgrów w najbliższym otoczeniu monarchy, ale wręcz przeciwnie – że stałą. Pod uwagę wzięto tylko tych rodaków króla Stefana, którzy wykonywali różnorodne zadania bezpośrednio zlecone przez monarchę bądź realizowane w jego interesie, głównie koncentrując się na aspekcie wojskowym, polityczno-dynastycznym oraz nadwornym. Każdy z tych aspektów był obsługiwany przez Węgrów w ciągu całego panowania króla Stefana, jakkolwiek grupa osób wykonujących poszczególne polecenia monarchy ulegała ciągłym fluktuacjom. Świadczyło to o stałym napływie rodaków monarchy do Rzeczypospolitej, a co za tym idzie, było dowodem na wzmocnienie relacji z Siedmiogrodem. Łącznie w ciągu

całego panowania Batorego w jego najbliższym otoczeniu przewinęło się kilka tysięcy rodaków. Wśród samego personelu nadwornego zatrudniono blisko pięćset osób w ciągu niespełna jedenastu lat. Z kolei w formacjach wojskowych skupionych wokół dworu królewskiego, jak węgierska piechota czy jazda, służyło jednocześnie nawet blisko dwa tysiące osób. Przez lata ich liczebność ulegała ciągłym zmianom, więc łączna liczba Węgrów na służbie wojskowej była jeszcze większa. Wielkość tej grupy najlepiej obrazuje skalę zaangażowania rodaków Batorego w polskie sprawy.

Słowa kluczowe: Stefan Batory, Węgrzy, XVI wiek, dwór królewski, obcokrajowcy.

Ludwik Bazyłow in the monograph *Siedmiogród a Polska. 1576–1613*, published almost sixty years ago described in a rather characteristic manner the impact exerted by King Stephen Báthory upon Transylvania:

As long as Stephen Báthory lived the system of administering Transylvania remained highly specific and consisted of constantly balancing the most efficient line of conduct between the interests of the country and the wishes and requirements of the Polish King,¹ and elsewhere: [...] the estates patiently approved taxes and military recruitments, and expressed joy in connection with assorted news from Poland, while the voivode patiently regulated assorted inner frictions and carried out recommendations from Poland [...].²

Bazyłow drew attention to unequal relations between two brothers: Stephen and Christopher Báthory (in Hungarian: Báthory István and Báthory Kristóf), with the former making use of the latter for his own purposes. The contribution made by Transylvania, even if only during the expedition against Muscovy, was considerable and should be always appreciated, although this was not the sole way, in which King Stephen drew on the resources of his homeland. Apart from involving the state of Transylvania in the policy pursued by the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania, an equally essential subject were the Hungarians, particularly those who accompanied the Polish ruler. Up to now insufficient attention has been paid, and if so then only marginally, to the King's countrymen active in the Polish–Lithuanian state in 1576–1586. This approach was probably incorrect since their involvement in certain events and the part they played within the monarch's closest entourage were essential. At the

1 Ludwik Bazyłow, *Siedmiogród a Polska, 1576–1613* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1967), 38.

2 *Ibidem*, 33.

very onset one should ask whom specifically are we dealing with and just how large was the group of the monarch's compatriots who remained within his closest entourage on a permanent basis? Was their activity in the Commonwealth temporary or continuous? Next, what exactly did they deal with, for what purposes did King Stephen employ them, and why did he seek their support and not that of his new subjects – Poles, Lithuanians, and Ruthenians? Those questions and the very activity of Hungarians within Báthory's entourage are significant within the context of the attitude assumed at the time by the Polish gentry *vis-à-vis* foreigners gathered around monarchs chosen during free elections. The first – Henry of Valois – was from the very onset criticised for surrounding himself with Frenchmen perceived as the reason for the immoral conduct of the young monarch. Even more so, the circumstances of his return to France in 1574 additionally confirmed the aversion of the gentry of the Commonwealth towards foreigners arriving together with newly elected monarchs. It should, therefore, not come as a surprise that the successor of Henry of Valois, i.e. Stephen Báthory, was elected under the condition that he could benefit from the assistance of his countrymen with the consent of the Sejm.³ To this we should add a ban on distributing offices and titles to foreigners. Despite such regulations King Stephen involved Hungarians in Polish issues; they played an essential role within his entourage – an additional argument in favour of taking a closer look at their doings in 1576–1586.

The most conspicuous activity pursued by Hungarians during the discussed period was their participation in the military undertakings of King Stephen. Naturally, pride of place goes to three expeditions against Muscovy, although one might have the impression that the pursuits of Báthory's countrymen had been reduced exclusively to the 1579–1582 period. On the one hand, popular biographies of this monarch as well as monographs dealing with two out of three expeditions involving Polotsk and Pskov are an excellent description of the involvement of the Hungarians although, on the other hand, such publications evade activity prior to and after the campaigns, as if the Hungarians' presence was merely an episode.⁴ The problem comes down to the fact that in the course of the above-mentioned campaign we dealt both with Hungarians who arrived

3 Świątosław Orzelski, *Bezkrólewia ksiąg ośmioro, czyli dzieje Polski od zgonu Zygmunta Augusta r. 1572 aż do r. 1576 skreslone przez Świątosława z Borzejowic Orzelskiego, starostę radziejowskiego*, vol. 3, transl. Włodzimierz Spasowicz (Petersburg i Mohylew: Nakładem Bolesława Maurycego Wolffa, 1856), 3.

4 See: Jerzy Besala, *Stefan Batory* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1992); Karol Olejnik, *Stefan Batory* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza RYTM, 2013); Dariusz

in the Commonwealth so they could take part in battles against Muscovy as well as with a quite considerable group of those of Báthory's compatriots who appeared in the Polish–Lithuanian state during the first years of his reign.⁵ In other words, this was a set of Hungarians active in the military domain not sporadically but for a much longer period of time, i.e. a major part of the reign; it is their pursuits that I intend to present.

At the very onset it is worth drawing attention to the fact that the discussed group was composed of, among others, a unit described by Henryk Kotarski as the Hungarian court infantry,⁶ which indubitably comprised a fundamental assembly of Báthory's countrymen taking part in military undertakings during the course of his reign. Much appears to indicate that apart from the infantry there were also other Hungarians, probably equestrians, active either at the very beginning of Báthory's reign or during its last years, although a precise determination of their number remains difficult owing to fragmentary sources. The composition of the retinue, which accompanied King Stephen during his journey and entry into the Commonwealth makes us aware of the very essence of the problem. This is important insofar as the Hungarians taking part in assorted military undertakings in the Polish–Lithuanian state originated predominantly from this particular group. Karol Olejnik estimated the size of the retinue as 2 000 infantrymen and twice as many cavalry, while Jerzy Besala, basing himself on the chronicle by Świętosław Orzelski, mentioned 400 infantrymen and 700 equestrians.⁷ In turn, Reinhold Heidenstein, the King's secretary, whose function resembled that of a court historian, wrote about 2 000 infantrymen and 1 000 horse

Kupisz, *Połock 1579* (Warszawa: Bellona, 2003); *idem*, *Psków 1581–1582* (Warszawa: Bellona, 2006).

- 5 This was well presented by Henryk Kotarski in a series of articles on the expeditions of King Stephen against Ivan IV, particularly legible in tables and appendices differentiating types of detachments of Hungarian armies. Henryk Kotarski, "Wojsko polsko-litewskie podczas wojny inflanckiej 1576–1582: Sprawy organizacyjne: Część II," *Studia i Materiały do Historii Wojskowości (SMHW)* 17/1 (1971): 52–124; Kotarski, "Wojsko polsko-litewskie podczas wojny inflanckiej 1576–1582: Sprawy organizacyjne: Część III," *SMHW* 17/2 (1971): 81–151; Kotarski, "Wojsko polsko-litewskie podczas wojny inflanckiej 1576–1582: Sprawy organizacyjne: Część IV," *SMHW* 18/1 (1972): 3–92.
- 6 Kotarski, "Wojsko polsko-litewskie... Część III," 143. They were part of the court army, predominantly the Polish cavalry of King Stephen, formed at the beginning of his reign. See: Dominik Kadzik, "Wojsko nadworne na początku wojny Stefana Batorego z Gdańskiem w świetle akt skarbowych," *Przegląd Historyczno-Wojskowy* XIX (LXIX)/1 (259) (2017): 9–44.
- 7 Olejnik, *Stefan Batory*, 90; Besala, *Stefan Batory*, 135; Orzelski, *Bezkrólewia Książki Osmioro*, vol. 3, 193.

soldiers.⁸ The above-mentioned Henryk Konarski, author of an excellent study dedicated to aspects of the organisation of Báthory's expeditions, claimed that 550 infantrymen and 1000 equestrians were involved.⁹ Settling solely for those examples, both chroniclers from the time of Báthory and contemporary historians are far from agreeing about the number of the armed infantry and cavalry arriving from Transylvania in April 1576. The differences are considerable, although in the majority of cases the mounted formation was almost twice as large as the infantry. Nonetheless, none of the mentioned authors discovered the register written down precisely during King Stephen's arrival in Kraków.¹⁰ The list in question contains the Christian names and surnames of all Hungarian dignitaries and nobility together with the numbers of horses and equestrians, a total of 1,232 persons, as well as a general statement that the infantry was composed of 1,000 armed men. Therefore, contrary to all previous assumptions, both types of formations were of a similar size.

From the viewpoint of the topic we are dealing with it might seem that "Panowanie Henryka Walezego i Stefana Batorego..." by Jan Ch. Albertrandi includes important information, namely, that after his arrival in Warsaw in June 1576, the monarch dismissed the majority of the Hungarian cavalry and left behind only the infantry.¹¹ However, not all Hungarian post riders were discharged, since during the following months they were remunerated, although several score remained.¹² It is worth emphasising that regardless of how many Hungarians from the retinue accompanying Báthory on his journey in April 1576, remained in the Commonwealth, this was not their ultimate number. In the following

8 Reinhold Heidenstein, *Dzieje Polski od śmierci Zygmunta Augusta do roku 1594: ksiąg XII*, vol. 1, transl. Michał Gliszczynski, ed. Włodzimierz Spasowicz (Petersburg: Nakładem i drukiem Bolesława Maurycego Wolffa, 1857), 231.

9 Kotarski, "Wojsko polsko-litewskie podczas wojny inflanckiej 1576–1582: Sprawy organizacyjne: Część I," *SMHW* 16/2 (1970): 108. It is worth noting that the author, in turn, referred to Tadeusz Korzon who assessed the capability of this troop, which arrived together with Báthory from Transylvania, as 600 infantrymen and 1 100 equestrians, and to Adolf Pawiński, who mentioned 2 000 infantrymen and 1 000 equestrians. Tadeusz Korzon, *Dzieje wojen i wojskowości w Polsce. Epoka przedrozbiorowa*, vol. 2 (Lwów–Warszawa–Kraków: Wydawnictwo Zakładu Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, 1923), 10; Adolf Pawiński, *Skarbowość w Polsce i jej dzieje za Stefana Batorego* (Warszawa: Skład Główny w Księgarni Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1881), 317 (Żródła Dziejowe, vol. VIII).

10 Praga, Statni ustredni archiv v Praze, fond SM - Cizina, MS. XIII/80, ff. 71–73.

11 Jan Chrzyciel Albertrandy, *Panowanie Henryka Walezjusza i Stefana Batorego, królów polskich* (Kraków: nakładem Józefa Czecha, 1860), 96.

12 Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie, Archiwum Skarbu Koronnego, Rachunki Królewskie [AGAD, ASK, RK], MS. 246, ff. 213–214.

years there was considerable fluctuation involving predominately the recruitment of new armed men – we may assume that after a certain time some of them resigned from service or perished. This holds true both for the equestrian and infantry formation. Already at the turn of October 1576 Istvan Caroli (in Hungarian: Károlyi István) set off for the Hungarian border in order to enlist the infantry.¹³ This fact is best illustrated by different numbers of the court infantry in the following years. According to a list from October 1576, the camp set up at Grabiny at the time of the war waged against Gdańsk was composed of 530 armed men.¹⁴ During the next year the battle of Lubieszów supposedly involved 600 Hungarians; this is the most widespread view in historiography.¹⁵ Could this difference – ca. 70 men – have been the outcome of the Caroli recruitment? Already at this stage our attention is drawn to the fact that in the course of the first two years assorted sources mentioned 500–600 Hungarian court infantrymen, while the total of those who arrived in the Commonwealth was 1,000. Naturally, there comes to mind the question – what about the remaining men? It is difficult to unambiguously state whether those 400 returned to their motherland. At the end of 1577 all Hungarian formations serving the monarch supposedly totalled 290 equestrians and 671 foot soldiers,¹⁶ while in August 1578 – 300 and 1,500, respectively.¹⁷ In the last case I would be inclined to remain cautious since that figure comes from “Kronika z czasów Stefana Batorego” by Leonard Górecki. Henryk Kotarski drew attention to the fact that numbers of this sort were not reflected in known registers and treasury sources.¹⁸ Even more so considering that 1 023 armed men took part in the Polotsk campaign (1579),¹⁹ while a year later an expedition against Velikiye Luki involved already 1 975 persons.²⁰

13 AGAD, ASK, RK, MS. 250, part II, f. 107–107; MS. 251, f. 228v. See: Sunkó Attila, “Az erdélyi fejedelmi testőrség archontológiája a XVI. Században,” *Fons (Forráskutatás és Történeti Segéd tudományok)* 1/2 (1994): 186–214.

14 AGAD, ASK, RK, MS. 252, ff. 76–81v.

15 See: Korzon, *Dzieje wojen i wojskowości*, 13; Olejnik, *Stefan Batory*, 119. The majority of authors base themselves on an army register from 17 April 1577 published in: *Stefan Batory pod Gdańskiem 1576–1577. Listy, uniwersaly, instrukcje*, ed. Adolf Pawiński (Warszawa: Skład Główny w Księgarni Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1877), 20–21 (Żródła Dziejowe, vol. III).

16 Kotarski, “Wojsko polsko-litewskie... Część II,” 73.

17 Kórnik, PAN Biblioteka Kórnicka, MS. 278, ff. 26v–27.

18 Kotarski, “Wojsko polsko-litewskie... Część II,” 66.

19 *Ibidem*, 92.

20 Kotarski, “Wojsko polsko-litewskie... Część III,” 143–44.

It becomes much more difficult to define the size of the Hungarian detachments of King Stephen after the expeditions against Muscovy. At the turn of 1582 the detachments in question participated in a campaign conducted in Ukrainian territories in order to protect the latter against a potential Tatar foray. We know from scarce sources that the campaign involved 20 units of the court army, both Polish and Hungarian.²¹ Unfortunately, their number was not mentioned anywhere, and we may only assume that there were about 500 Hungarians. This estimation is based on the fact that some of the preserved remuneration accounts from the end of 1583, mention sums veering between 2,100 and almost 2,330 Polish zlotys.²² We also know that at the time the average remuneration of a Hungarian infantryman was 4 Polish zlotys and 13 groschen, while an infantry officer or a lieutenant received 5 Polish zlotys and 15 groschen and 8 Polish zlotys and 23 groschen, respectively.²³ This would suggest a return to the very beginning of the reign when the Hungarian court infantry was composed of ca. 600 persons, except that remunerations paid during the last years of Bathory's life varied; by way of example, in June 1585, they amounted already to 3,996 zlotys, in July – to a mere 2,000 zlotys, in August – to 3,000 zlotys, and in September – to 4,000 zlotys.²⁴ It is difficult to say whether those differences were a derivative of the changing number of soldiers or an outcome of the financial capacities of the royal treasury, which in a certain month had at its disposal a suitable amount of money and during another month did not. Regardless which of those causes was at stake, the size of a Hungarian court infantry patrol oscillated between 500 and 1,000 persons, although the first figure is more probable. All these facts depict predominantly a single fundamental problem, that of an exchange of men, which undoubtedly must have occurred in the course of this entire period. We did not deal with a single group of the same people who arrived in the Commonwealth in 1576 and spent successive 11 years there – although such individual examples probably did take place – but we can formulate the thesis that this large group

21 “Instructio nuntii ad particulares conventus missis data, Grodno 16 July 1582,” in *Akta Metryki Koronnej co ważniejsze z czasów Stefana Batorego 1576–1586*, ed. Adolf Pawiński (Warszawa: Skład Główny w Księgarni Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1882), 230 (Źródła Dziejowe, vol. XI); *Letter from King Stephen Báthory to Marcin Kromer, 13 January 1583*, AGAD, Archiwum Zamoyskich, MS. 3002, ff. 78, 81; *Letter from King Stephen Báthory to Marcin Kromer*, Biblioteka Czartoryskich, Teki Naruszewicza, MS. 90 (1583), doc. 10.

22 AGAD, ASK, RK, MS. 362–363, f. 201v.

23 Kotarski, “Wojsko polsko-litewskie podczas wojny inflanckiej 1576–1582: Sprawy organizacyjne: Część V,” *SMHW* 18/2 (1972): 75.

24 ASK, RK, MS. 362–363, ff. 203v–204.

served Báthory for only a certain time. Presumably, a similar process took place among the considerably less numerous Hungarian cavalry.

The moment Hungarians appeared on Polish–Lithuanian soil they became instantly involved in assorted undertakings, with the military aspect in particular in the forefront. The Hungarian infantry under the command of Jerzy Bamfi supported the detachments of Stanisław Górka, which regained the castle in Lanckorona, captured in 1576 by Łaski, an adherent of Emperor Maximilian II.²⁵ Following the events associated with the coronation and assumption of power by King Stephen Hungarian forces were redirected to a theatre of war aimed against Gdańsk. Here they were present both at the battle of Lubieszów and the siege of the town itself. Particular attention is due to the fact that Kaspar Bekes (in Hungarian Bekes Gáspár), together with Hungarian detachments, was entrusted with protecting Elbląg.²⁶ Owing to the fact that these units belonged to Báthory's court army they accompanied the monarch during his journeys across the country. This also explains why they were used as *sui generis* immediate response forces. Naturally, King Stephen had at his disposal other formations, to mention the much larger Polish court cavalry or the detachment of equestrian couriers. Theoretically, this was a considerable host, but the King was not always capable of benefitting from its potential, as best illustrated by the events of 1578. At that time Stephen Báthory resided in Lvov, the site of diplomatic negotiations with the Crimean Khanate about jointly attacking Muscovy. In the course of the talks Zaporozhe Cossacks invaded the Moldavian Principality and toppled the local ruler, a fact that directly affected Báthory and undermined his reliability in the eyes of the Tatars. In order not to squander the joint treaty against Ivan IV the Terrible, and to satisfy Turkey – the sovereign of Tatars and Moldavia – it was decided to dispatch the Polish army against the Cossacks. The expedition included the above-mentioned 300-strong cavalry and 1,500-strong Hungarian infantry under Kaspar Bekes.²⁷ Interestingly, equestrian courtiers refused to participate in the expedition although such was the command issued by Deputy Chancellor Jan Zamoyski.²⁸ It seemed that members of Báthory's closest

25 Heidenstein, *Kronika*, vol. 1, 239; Orzelski, *Bezkrólewia*, vol. 3, 259.

26 Heidenstein, *Kronika*, vol. 1, 277; Aleksander Bołdyrew, "Węgrzy w armii Stefana Batorygo 1576–1586", in *Barbarzyńcy u bram. Mare integrans. Studia nad dziejami wybrzeża Morza Bałtyckiego*, eds. Maciej Franz, Zbigniew Pilarczyk (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2012), 403–404; Besala, *Stefan Batory*, 198.

27 Kórnik, PAN Biblioteka Kórnicka, MS. 278, ff. 26v–27.

28 The courtiers shielded themselves behind formal issues, for instance, that one of the marshals and not the sub-chancellor enjoyed such rights. Wrocław, Zakład im.

entourage – the King’s courtiers – should have carried out such a task without any objections. In fact, this was by no means the first or last example of their stand. Those whom the monarch could trust unquestionably were precisely his countrymen. During the same year, a detachment composed of 600 persons from the Hungarian court infantry safeguarded the south-eastern terrains of the Commonwealth against a potential Tatar invasion²⁹ – negotiations involving both sides went on for several months and for a long time it was not known how they would end. Subsequent activity focused predominantly on three best documented expeditions against Muscovy. The last known military campaign involved the protection of Ukrainian lands against another Tatar threat at the turn of 1582 and 1583, as mentioned above. Hungarians from Báthory’s court army took part in all the military undertakings of that monarch. Only the Polish cavalry from the court army was comparable. Naturally, one of the reasons was the fact that the Hungarian infantry was still being financed, and thus it was quite natural that it was dispatched wherever a threat loomed. On the other hand, constant challenges made it impossible for King Stephen to demobilise this unit. After all, from 1576 to 1583 new perils emerged constantly. A certain part was played by the question of trust and the monarch’s personal opinion on the military potential of the Hungarians. In his *Kronika* Paweł Piasecki expressed the view that Báthory’s praises concerning the valour of his countrymen deepened divisions between him and his subjects from the Commonwealth.³⁰

Hungarian soldiers, whether from the infantry, the cavalry, or the Transylvanian detachments, which took part in campaigns against Muscovy in 1579–1582 were more experienced and better equipped than their Polish counterparts.³¹ This is how they are perceived by present-day historians, but the inhabitants of Poland of that period had a different opinion. It is worth mentioning that only Reinhold Heidenstein expressed extremely positive views about the Hungarians.³² It is often stressed that

Ossolińskich, MS. 3169/III (teki Platera, 1578), ff. 166v–167v; Kórnik, PAN Biblioteka Kórnicka, MS. 279, ff 38v–41.

29 Kotarski, “Wojsko polsko-litewskie... Część II,” 60.

30 *Kronika Pawła Piaseckiego biskupa przemyskiego. Polski przekład wedle dawnego rękopismu, poprzedzony studjum krytycznym nad życiem i pismami autora*, ed. Julian Bartoszewicz (Kraków: W drukarni Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1870), 18–19.

31 Kotarski, “Wojsko polsko-litewskie.... Część IV,” 69.

32 Bołdyrew, “Węgrzy w armii Stefana,” 406; Tomasz Zackiewicz, “Skutki zróżnicowania etnicznego armii Rzeczypospolitej w czasach Stefana Batorego,” in *Nad społeczeństwem staropolskim. Kultura – instytucje – gospodarka w XVI-XVIII stuleciu*, vol. 1, eds. Karol Łopatecki, Wojciech Walczak (Białystok: Ośrodek Badań Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej, 2007), 225.

the division of the army by King Stephen according to nationality criteria was to serve, among others, a restriction of conflicts chiefly along the Poles – Hungarians line.³³ Reasons for such an opinion can be discovered precisely in the way, in which Báthory's countrymen acted. First: blatant insubordination and, at times, outright disregard of plans or acting on one's own. Take the example of the Polotsk expedition, when in the course of the siege of Zapolocie the Hungarians decided to attack from a different side, or in 1579, wantonly stormed Polotsk. A year later, after the conquest of Velikiye Luki, they violated binding commands and began to plunder the town. Finally, in the course of the third expedition involving Pskov they frequently acted on their own during the siege, e.g. when they began crushing town walls by using assorted tools. The independence of the Hungarians was the outcome of the high position of their commanders in the war council, which in turn, the Poles did not find to their liking. Dignitaries from the Commonwealth were of the opinion that the Hungarians, as foreigners, should submit. The best-known personalisation of this problem was the conflict of 1579, involving Kasper Bekes and Mikołaj Mielecki. The latter was the Crown Hetman, i.e. the highest military commander after the monarch, but nonetheless was ignored by Bekes, who was accused of usurping certain competences.³⁴ In turn, the position held by Balthasar Báthory (in Hungarian Báthory Boldizsár), the King's nephew, who after his uncle's departure took over command of the Hungarians at Pskov, could be, due to kinship, also translated into the independent attitude of remaining compatriots.³⁵

The second cause of the conflict involved material issues. King Stephen always ensured regular remuneration for the Hungarians, without any delays, and this was the reason why despite assorted inconveniences his countrymen did not resign from serving in the army, although desertions did occur.³⁶ In the case of Polish–Lithuanian armies this approach did not function to the same extent. It was not payment as such, which caused problems but, to a much greater degree, the spoils of war. While Poles and Lithuanians behaved in a disciplined manner, the Hungarians turned to pillage immediately after capturing fortresses, as in the case of Polotsk and Velikiye Luki or smaller castles. A certain role was played

33 Karol Kościelniak, *Kadra oficerska w wojsku koronnym w latach 1576–1648. Studia nad zawodem wojskowym* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo DUET, 2011), 74.

34 Albertrandy, *Panowanie Henryka Walezego*, 144; Heidenstein, *Dzieje Polski*, 324.

35 *Letter from Jan Zamoyski, Crown Chancellor, to Dominik Alemani, 4 January 1582*, in: Zakład im. Ossolińskich, MS. 3173/III (teki Platera, 1582.), f. 4v.

36 Böldyrew, "Węgrzy w armii Stefana," 414.

also by charges made by the opposition, whose members claimed that the King granted landed estates to his compatriots, as exemplified by conferring the Lanckorona starosty to Kasper Bekes.³⁷ Inconveniences and problems caused by the lack of supplies were also significant.³⁸

Yet another aspect of the activity of Hungarian soldiers stirred negative emotions among the population of the Commonwealth. The extremely brutal and fierce Hungarians indulged in cruelty both during battle and after, i.e. in their treatment of the vanquished. Already in the course of a conflict involving Gdańsk (1577) they mercilessly dealt with prisoners of war who, after all, were Báthory's subjects.³⁹ The best-known event of this sort was the slaughter of the population of Velikiye Luki. The Hungarians - ready to plunder - discovered that their countrymen captured by the Muscovites had been tortured, a finding that roused the need for revenge.⁴⁰ Aleksander Bołdyrew correctly noticed that this type of behaviour on the part of the Hungarians was in fact perceived by the Poles as barbarian.⁴¹ Indubitably, it was the outcome of different mentalities, since the gentry from the Commonwealth was firmly pacifistic while their southern neighbours had been harassed by several wars during a major part of the sixteenth century.

The second type of Hungarian activity during the reign of King Stephen was associated with widely comprehended politics and pertained to members of the monarch's close entourage. True, according to an exact comprehension of the (Polish) royal court only some of its members belonged to this institution and were financed by the royal treasury – a total of 464 throughout the entire reign.⁴² Others remained informally associated with the Báthory court. Owing to highly fragmentary sources it is difficult to resolve this question, but in reference to Kasper Bekes it was said that he was the “*creator of the Hungarian court.*”⁴³ Moreover, in

37 Heidenstein, *Dzieje Polski*, 333.

38 Bołdyrew, “Węgrzy w armii Stefana,” 410, 412.

39 Orzelski, *Bezkrólewia*, vol. 3, 264.

40 “Diariusz Łukasza Działyńskiego, podczaszego koronnego, ze zdobywania Wielizy, Wielkich Łuków i Zawolocia od 1 sierpnia do 25 listopada 1580 r.,” in *Sprawy wojenne króla Stefana Batorego. Diariusze, relacje, listy i akta z lat 1576–1586*, ed. Ignacy Polkowski (Kraków: Nakładem Akademii Umiejętności, 1887), 233–234; *Diariusz Jan Zborowski ze zdobywania zamków w 1580 r. do Piotra Zborowskiego*, in: *ibidem*, 202–203.

41 Bołdyrew, “Węgrzy w armii Stefana,” 401–402.

42 See: Dominik Kadzik, “Foreigners at the Royal Court of Stephen Báthory on the Example of Inhabitants from the Lands of the Kingdom of Hungary,” *Przegląd Historyczny* CXII/2 (2021): 369–386.

43 *Akta historyczne do panowania Stefana Batorego króla polskiego od 3 marca 1578 do 18 kwietnia 1579 r.*, ed. Ignacy Janicki (Warszawa: Drukarnia Józefa Bergera, 1881), 133.

the case of five Hungarians who fulfilled the functions of couriers at the Polish court it was recorded that they had been transferred from that post to become Hungarian courtiers (*ad equiti hungari*).⁴⁴ Furthermore, a list of the latter has been preserved although without a date.⁴⁵ Most probably it was written between 1579 and 1581, since there is no mention of Kasper Bekes, who died after the Polotsk campaign, in contrast to his brother, Gabriel (in Hungarian Bekes Gábor), who perished at the battle of Pskov in 1581. The document lists 26 Hungarian courtiers and a total retinue of 185 men. It is difficult, however, to conclude unambiguously upon the base of those premises whether some sort of an institution more or less formalised and resembling the Hungarian court actually functioned. Additionally, the closest Báthory entourage included members of the Transylvanian chancellery, established at the very beginning of the reign and composed of: István Kovacsóczy, Márton Berzeviczy, Ferenc Wesselényi, Pal Gyulay, and Peter Kendy.⁴⁶ Moreover, we should also remember those Hungarians who acted as royal secretaries in the king's chancery: Miklós Zygmunt Pozgay, Pal Gyulay, Márton Berzeviczy, and Tidemann Giese. All were included among the monarch's most important advisers.⁴⁷ Both groups of chancery clerks were responsible for the administrative handling of issues connected with Transylvania. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that Pal Gyulay and Márton Berzeviczy worked in both chanceries. Finally, mention is due to the nephews of King Stephen, i.e. Andrew and Balthasar (in Hungarian András and Boldizsár), sons of Andrew. Perhaps we should also include Griselda Báthory, the king's niece and daughter of Christopher, although in her case direct involvement in politics was out of the question. If we add to all the above-mentioned groups also Hungarian units of court guards (foot and horse) then we shall be dealing with a significant community of several hundred people, if not oscillating within a thousand. This may explain negative comments and opinions claiming that King Stephen was surrounded solely by his compatriots.⁴⁸

44 *Hozwai, Nadsiladi* Michał, *Nagy-Mihály* Baltazar, *Seremi Jerzy, Warady*, AGAD, ASK, RK, MS. 252, ff. 24v, 25, 26v; MS. 253, ff. 138, 138v, 142v.

45 AGAD, ASK, RK, MS. 348/I, ff. 234–234v.

46 Ildikó Horn, *Andrzej Batory* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2010), 31.

47 Leszek Kieniewicz, "Sekretariat Stefana Batorego. Zbiorowość i kariery sekretarzy królewskich," in *Społeczeństwo staropolskie. Studia i szkice*, vol. 4, eds. Anna Izydorczyk, Andrzej Wyczański (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986), 55.

48 "The king insulted the people due to the Hungarians who swarmed the court and the chamber." Joachim Bielski, *Konika polska Marcina Bielskiego*, vol. 3, ed. Kazimierz Turowski (Sanok: nakład i druk Karola Pollaka, 1856), 1535.

At the very onset Báthory's most important political goal was an understanding with the supporters of the Emperor who would then recognise him as king. Certain activity in this domain was demonstrated by Hungarians dispatched from Warsaw to Łowicz in order to escort Primate Uchański to a meeting with the monarch.⁴⁹ At that time, they were the most trusted persons that would not allow themselves to be deceived or even bribed by the Primate, who in June 1576, continued supporting Emperor Maximilian II. Possibly the monarch's countrymen were supposed to influence Uchański by means of their appearance and the accompanying circumstances of the escort, so that the Primate would begin to support King Stephen. Next, at the turn of the 1570s, the prime political goal was to win the war with Muscovy, in which the military activity of the Hungarians played its part. The last years of Báthory's reign were guided by two undertakings, in which some sort of a role was to be played by the King's compatriots. The first involved international plans of creating a great anti-Turkish coalition resulting in the liberation of Hungary.⁵⁰ Already prior to his coronation Báthory's contacts with Turkey benefitted from the services of his heretofore subjects; the latter included Máté Nagy, who in Istanbul sought support for the monarch in the course of rivalry with Emperor Maximilian II over the Polish throne.⁵¹ The King's nephews also played a certain role in diplomacy. Balthasar passed on information about the Persian-Turkish war and thus the safer position of the Commonwealth.⁵² Nonetheless, it was Andrew who was entrusted with a much more important task in his uncle's international plans by acting as an envoy to Rome, where he forwarded to the Pope royal letters concerning preparations for a war against Muscovy and, subsequently, a crusade against the Ottomans.⁵³ This fact was to

49 *Jana Dymitra Solikowskiego arcybiskupa lwowskiego Krótki Pamiętnik Rzeczy Polskich od zgonu Zygmunta Augusta zmarłego w Knyszynie 1572 r. w miesiącu lipcu, do r. 1590*, ed. Władysław Syrokomla (Petersburg i Mohylew: Nakładem Bolesława Maurycego Wolffa, 1855), 39.

50 See: Karol Olejnik, "Moskwa w antytureckich planach Stefana Batorego," in *W kręgu idei, polityki i wojska. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Januszowi Farysiowi w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin*, eds. Tomasz Sikorski, Henryk Walczak and Adam Wątor (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 2009), 489–500; Adrienne Körmendy, "Wschodnia polityka Stefana Batorego a Węgry," in *Dawna Rosja i Rosjanie we współczesnych badaniach polskich*, eds. Jan Tyszkiewicz, Krzysztof Łukawski (Pułtusk: Akademia Humanistyczna imienia Aleksandra Gieysztor, 2012), 9–30.

51 Kazimierz Dopierała, *Stosunki dyplomatyczne Polski z Turcją za Stefana Batorego* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986), 38–39.

52 *Ibidem*, 107.

53 Dopierała, *Stosunki dyplomatyczne Polski*, 144; Olejnik, *Stefan Batory*, 319–320.

testify to acquainting the future cardinal and bishop of Warmia with the plans of King Stephen, but did Balthasar know about them?⁵⁴ The sovereign of the Commonwealth wished to gain an ally, i.e. Sweden, on the international arena and intended to marry Balthasar off to Anna Vasa.⁵⁵

A successive level of the political activity pursued by Hungarians serving King Stephen was linking the Commonwealth and the Báthory family with Transylvania so as to ensure relatives a convenient position in future elections.⁵⁶ In the course of the Pskov expedition Father Jan Piotrowski, the royal secretary, noticed that despite the fact that Balthasar enjoyed greater popularity and was treated according to special principles by courtiers and Hungarians alike, King Stephen put greater trust in Andrew.⁵⁷ Prior to the Sejm of 1582, there appeared rumours that Báthory even intended to nominate one of the brothers as his successor.⁵⁸ Possibly one of the reasons for such commentaries was the fact that Báthory handed over command of the Hungarian detachments at Pskov to Balthasar, and, on the other hand, granted successive Church functions to the latter's brother. Furthermore, there emerged concept of one of the nephews – Stephen in 1579, Balthasar in 1582, and Andrew in 1584 – marrying the earlier mentioned Anna Vasa.⁵⁹ Such a marriage would be a repetition of that of their uncle to a representative of the House of Jagiellon; hence the intention to make use of the legitimization of the previous dynasty in order to increase chances for winning a subsequent election. Nonetheless, this did not meet with the approval of Anna Jagiellon who preferred to see her nephew, Sigismund Vasa, mounting the Polish throne rather than one of Báthory's nephews, even married to her niece Anna.

54 Besala, *Stefan Batory*, 468.

55 Horn, *Andrzej Batory*, 50–51.

56 *Ibidem*, 61–62.

57 “List od przyjaciela (x. Jana Piotrowskiego) do marszałka Opalińskiego z 3 lipca 1581 r.,” in Jan Piotrowski, *Dziennik wyprawy Stefana Batorego pod Psków*, ed. Edward Czuczynski (Kraków: Nakładem Księgarni Spółki Wydawniczej Polskiej, 1894), 8–12.

58 See: Kazimierz Morawski, *Andrzej Patrycy Nidecki, jego życie i dzieła* (Kraków: Nakładem Akademii Umiejętności, 1892), 306; Ewa Dubas-Urwanowicz, *O nowy kształt Rzeczypospolitej. Kryzys polityczny w państwie w latach 1576–1586* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG, 2013), 108, 112; Olejnik, *Stefan Batory*, 265. The participation of Balthasar in the 1581–1582 campaign possessed also a political dimension since it was noticed that this was the way, in which King Stephen attempted to nominate him the prince of Livonia. Besala, *Stefan Batory*, 401–402.

59 *Listy Anny Wazy (1568–1625)*, eds. Karol Łopatecki, Janusz Dąbrowski, Wojciech Krawczuk and Wojciech Walczak (Warszawa: Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, 2022), 15.

The above-mentioned undertakings on an international and quasi-dynastic field were linked predominantly with the activity of the King's nephews whereas the remaining Hungarians dealt on a daily basis with issues less spectacular but just as necessary, such as administration and bureaucracy within the closest royal milieu. One of the most frequent activities throughout the entire reign involved the duties of the courier, a messenger of King Stephen to Transylvania. This involved predominantly all Hungarians who served as court couriers, although Báthory's remaining compatriots also participated; it is difficult to define what those missions involved since there often appears the enigmatic term: "in the interest of the King," not to mention that the most frequent task was importing Hungarian wine.⁶⁰ Interesting facts include the mission conducted by Hozwai, who in October 1583 was responsible for transporting a statue of King Stephen to Transylvania.⁶¹ Furthermore, couriers travelled within the Commonwealth to deal with more mundane issues, such as transporting goods required by the King and his court or handing over information.⁶² Márton Berzeviczy and Ferenc Wesselényi acted as *sui generis* superiors of the Hungarians; the former dealt with the Transylvanian chancellery, as evidenced by the fact that remunerations were paid through his mediation.⁶³ The latter, from the time he became nominated *salariat sive camerarii*, was responsible for all countrymen formally employed at the royal court.⁶⁴ Hungarians engaged as courtiers and court servants fulfilled their duties stemming from held posts. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that in comparison with courts of the Jagiellonian era or European ones at the end of the sixteenth century, which entailed the presence of a large group of foreigners, the profile of the closest entourage of King Stephen was distinctly Polish–Hungarian,

60 AGAD, ASK, RK, MS. 246, f. 108v; MS. 250, part II, f. 103; MS. 251, f. 224; MS. 254, ff. 252–252v; MS. 261, ff. 194v, 196, 213; MS. 267, ff. 122, 128v; MS. 268, ff. 189, 200; MS. 269, ff. 207v, 218; MS. 276, ff. 131–131v; MS. 278, part 2, ff. 66, 77; MS. 367–368, ff. 118v–119; "List Jana Zamoyskiego do KJM, Psków 30 I 1582 r.," in: *Archiwum Jana Zamoyskiego*, vol. 3, ed. Józef Siemieński (Warszawa: Druk F. Wyszyńskiego i s-ki, 1913), 12–13; "List Hieronima Rozrażewskiego do Berzeviczego, 15 sierpnia 1582 r.," in *Korespondencja Hieronima Rozrażewskiego*, vol. 2, ed. Paweł Czaplewski (Toruń: Nakładem Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu, 1939–1947), 20.

61 AGAD, ASK, RK, MS. 268, ff. 202v–203; MS. 269, f. 221.

62 AGAD, ASK, RK, MS. 261, f. 197; MS. 276, f. 134; MS. 278, part 2, f. 79.

63 AGAD, ASK, RK, MS. 261, fols 108v. At the very onset of his reign he was responsible even for Hungarian courtiers. AGAD, ASK, RK, MS. 251, f. 201v.

64 Dominik Kadzik, "The Political Career of Gáspár Bekes and Ferenc Wesselényi in Poland-Lithuania during the Reign of Stefan Batory," *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego. Prace Historyczne* 148/4 (2021): 673–686.

with few examples of persons from other states. This fact must have impacted the functioning of the institution, observed particularly in reference to two groups created for the Hungarians – cooks and coachmen together with grooms. Apparently Báthory was accustomed to Hungarian cuisine to such a degree that even after becoming King of Poland he did not want to resign from native dishes. A similar situation must have taken place with regard to the stable staff who, we may assume, were better skilled in taking care of horses than the inhabitants of the Commonwealth.⁶⁵ Quite possibly this was the impact of the fact that for a larger part of the reign herds of horses, accompanied by staff, were brought over from Hungary, as was the case in 1582 or 1583. Upon arrival on Polish–Lithuanian territory such persons were temporarily employed at the royal court.⁶⁶ Yet another task involved safeguarding the route of the royal retinue, entrusted to the Hungarian court infantry, albeit always accompanied by one of the Polish courtiers.⁶⁷ Occasionally, owing to their equipment and wartime experiences, such infantrymen were employed as a preventive measure in situations when the King's closest surrounding witnessed clashes and the threat of bloodshed, as in 1578, when the latter involved two cavalry captains from the court army.⁶⁸ To this category of safety, we must also include ushers responsible for persons entering interiors directly occupied by the monarch. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that Hungarians did not appear in this category of court staff until 1582, when the political conflict with the Zborowski faction assumed an increasingly confrontational character.⁶⁹

Owing to the number of Hungarians in Báthory's direct entourage they too were compelled to fulfil a representative function similar to that of the courtiers. Already in the course of Bathory's ceremonial entry into Kraków his compatriots stood out due to their armour.⁷⁰ Subsequently, they accompanied the monarch during the procession to Skalka or the coronation, at which a particular role was assigned to court guards.⁷¹ During a tournament held upon the occasion of coronation ceremonies

65 Kadzik, "Foreigners at the Royal Court," 369–386.

66 AGAD, ASK, RK, MS. 263, f. 150; MS. 268, ff. 164v–165, 166v–167, 169v–170, 171–171v; MS. 269, ff. 182–182v, 184v–185, 187v–188, 189; MS. 369, ff. 177–177v, 179v–180, 182v–183.

67 AGAD, ASK, RK, MS. 256, ff. 141, 143v; MS. 257, ff. 235v, 240v.

68 "List od przyjaciela (x. Jana Piotrowskiego) do marszałka Opalińskiego z 10 czerwca 1578 r.," in: *Sprawy wojenne króla*, 112; Biblioteka Kórnicka, MS. 279, ff. 26–26v.

69 Kadzik, "Foreigners at the Royal Court," 379–380.

70 Orzelski, *Bezkrólewia*, vol. 3, 193.

71 *Ibidem*, 221, 224–225.

the Hungarians, under the command of Bamfi, faced the Poles in lance jousts and entertained the gathered crowds.⁷² It is worth drawing attention to the fact that the Hungarian court infantry or courtiers comprised groups fulfilling military and militia functions, and thus had to be well equipped. Thus, even their marches must have produced admiration among the inhabitants of the Commonwealth provinces. Occasionally, this impression was so strong that, as in Niepołomice in 1585, it seemed that King Stephen was accompanied solely by his compatriots.⁷³ Upon certain occasions Hungarian dignitaries outright replaced the King at assorted ceremonies as in the case of Ferenc Wesselényi at the funeral of Mikołaj Mielecki, the voivode of Podolia, in 1585.⁷⁴ On the other hand, the absence of any sort of activity on the part of Hungarians from Báthory's closest entourage during the wedding of Jan Zamoyski and Griselda Báthory appears to be particularly intriguing. From the propaganda point of view, it was the most significant event during this monarch's reign, apart from the coronation.⁷⁵ Not only did the wedding take place on Wawel Hill and resembled royal ceremonies owing to its public character, but a tournament and a parade with staged personifications of Roman deities were organised. To complete those events an official triumph following the victorious war against Muscovy was added. Inasmuch Polish courtiers distinctly marked their presence, sources remain totally silent about the compatriots of King Stephen – only the monarch's nephews were mentioned on a list of persons taking part in the feast held on Wawel Hill.⁷⁶

The activity of Hungarians from the Báthory entourage in the course of his reign in the Commonwealth was closely connected with the monarch's goals and requirements. Any sort of individual, autonomous undertakings were out of the question. Mutual relations were based on a strict, hierarchic dependence on the ruler. Without doubt the activity of the Hungarians can be divided according to two milieus - that of the army and that concentrated on the court. The first group participated in

72 *Ibidem*, 234–235.

73 See: Aleksander Kraushar, *Czary na dworze Batorego. Kartka z dziejów mistycyzmu w XVI wieku, jako przyczynek do charakterystyki króla Stefana* (Kraków: Gebethner i spółka, 1888), 74.

74 *Kronika mieszczanina krakowskiego z lat 1575–1595*, ed. Henryk Barycz (Kraków: Druk W. L. Anczyca i spółka, 1930), 29.

75 Dubas-Urwanowicz, *O nowy kształt*, 177.

76 "Wesele Jana Zamoyskiego z Gryzeldą Batorówną," AGAD, Archiwum Publiczne Potockich, MS. 53, ff. 242–248; "O przyjeździe synowicy królewski, która szła za Pana Canclerza Zamoyskiego," Kórnik, PAN Biblioteka Kórnicka, MS. 280, ff. 134v–141.

the war against Gdańsk followed by expeditions against Muscovy and secured south-eastern terrains against Tatar forays. The second group was responsible for the daily functioning of the court and met such fundamental needs of the monarch as food and transport. Additionally, it dealt with correspondence, mainly with Transylvanians, or fulfilled representative functions. A *sui generis* link between those two groups was the Hungarian court infantry active both during wartime and on a daily basis within the court milieu, even if only securing the route of the royal procession. That which linked Hungarians attending Báthory was the shared continuity of service. Almost all described aspects of functioning within the monarch's entourage were realised in the course of his entire reign, and in no case were episodic. This is not to say that the composition of either the court infantry or cavalry, the Transylvanian chancellery, secretaries or courtiers and Hungarian court servants was constant. The cadres changed almost each year for different reasons – some resigned from service, while others perished during its course. Thus, we arrive at a successive shared feature, i.e. uninterrupted fluctuation regardless of social status or profession. Even if such a phenomenon existed it was proof that contacts with Transylvania remained very close, since each year a smaller or larger group of Hungarians travelled to the Commonwealth for one reason - to seek employment at the court of King Stephen. The last shared aspect of service performed by the monarch's compatriots was a high assessment of their skills in required domains. In the army it involved chiefly the role of the infantry and siege warfare, i.e. the weakest aspects of the Polish–Lithuanian army. Best proof of such an assessment was establishing chosen infantry (*piechoty wybranieckiej*) according to Hungarian standards. It was natural that the Hungarians and not the Poles or the Lithuanians handled demanding contacts with Transylvania. In the case of culinary matters we dealt rather with the ruler's personal preferences. As regards the court milieu we must take into consideration also the aspect of trust and freedom of contacts – after all, Báthory never learned to speak Polish. Against this background the role played by the King's nephews, Andrew and Balthasar, appears to be dissimilar, but this was the outcome of the obvious fact that they were related to the monarch. The nephews held a position different from that of the remaining Hungarians, and thus their uncle assigned them tasks associated with the interest of the dynasty rather than with his own.

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