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**Polish ladies-in-waiting at the court of Nicholas I**

The imperial court is a space for representing power: here every word, gesture, distance, and location had an impact on the construction of the hierarchy of power. The emperor made someone closer, and moved away from others in a seemingly invisible way, but his (monarch) tone of voice, his slightest body movements could tell a lot. It is not surprising that the court was also the space of the ruler's politics; persons, who were close to emperor’s family, had power within the country and high importance in the international stage. This way of influencing politics could be the rise of one group of people, showing attention to them, giving them places in the ministry of the imperial court, where they were involved in the public and private life of the monarch's family.

In this regard, it is interesting to look at the court staff of the ladies-in-waiting (mostly young unmarried noblewomen, who were on duty for the empress), which was part of the complex structure of the Russian imperial court during the reign of Nicholas I (1825–1855). Nicholas I was known for his desire to regulate all spheres of life and the court as well. The emperor strove to preserve the «Russian» court with its long-standing traditions, which were distinguished by an Orthodox component. However, according to the staff of court officials and court ladies, it is noticeable that not only representatives of the Russian nobility were appointed to this service, but also a number of nobles of other ethnic origins. Among the staff of ladies-in-waiting, the largest number of young unmarried noblewoman was Russians, Germans, Poles, Georgians, French women, and Swedes.

This report focuses on Polish ladies-in-waiting at the court of Nicholas I. A number of questions appear for the historical research: why Nicholas I kept the multinational state of ladies-in-waiting, when he tried to preserve Russian, Orthodox traditions in the imperial court. Why exactly Poles were chosen to serve at the court? How long were Polish ladies-in-waiting in service at the imperial court? Did the families of girls play a role in this choice? Was the choice of noble Polish women the result of the emperor's policy of power? Did the political situation influence on the service of Polish ladies-in-waiting (for example, the uprising of 1830–1831)?