

IZABELLA PAPP

GREEK MERCHANTS IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY
JÁSZKUNSÁG

In the eighteenth century the Greeks residing in Hungary played an important role in the economic and commercial life of the country. There is no comprehensive work dealing with their activity and history, it is only the history of territories with major companies and parishes that we know. The papers dealing with Balkan merchants collectively called "the Greeks" very often express contradictory opinions. Their presence is sometimes associated with exporting capital, a very harmful process to the country's economy, while in other cases they are considered to be the founders and main representatives of Hungarian capitalism. One cause of the opposing judgements may be the fact that the various territories and communities in the country themselves had different attitudes to foreign merchants, owing to differences in their own ability to take part in commerce, the state of their industry, the degree of their need for Balkan goods or for mediators in selling their own products. The contradictory opinions call our attention to the importance of further investigations into local history, since the picture will not be clear unless we collect data from all parts of the country where these merchants appeared or lived.

This paper aims at showing the numerical proportion, the places of settlement, and the activity of the Greeks in the *Jászkunság* (Jazygo-Cumania in central Hungary) on the basis of archival documents. The Greeks settling in the *Jászkunság* found themselves under special economic and social circumstances. Privileges granted by monarchs made this area very different from other municipal authorities.

The administrative and legal position of the Jászkunság in the eighteenth century

The *Jászkunság*, situated between the rivers Danube and Tisza, did not form a unified territory, it consisted of Jazygia, Little-Cumania, and Great-Cumania. The three separate territories were joined into one administrative unit, collectively called *Jászkun Kerület* or *Hármas Kerület* (Triple District).

The centres of Little Cumania, Great Cumania and Jazygia were Kiskunhalas, Karcag, and Jászberény respectively. Jászberény was also the common seat of the three territories (Pl. 1).

The word "*Jászkun*" preserved the names of two peoples, differing in their ethnicity, manners, and culture: the "jász" (Jazygians) and the "kun" (Cumanians). The Comans were settled in Hungary by Béla IV (1235-70). They populated the deserted areas in the *Tiszántul* (east of the Tisza), between the Danube and the Tisza, and in *Temesköz* (between the rivers Maros and Temes). The Jazygians were of Iranian origin and arrived in Hungary partly together with the Comans, partly, in greater numbers, in the fourteenth century. From the time of their arrival both peoples were granted important privileges. Charters which raised them to a privileged state were given to the Comans by Ladislas IV (1272-90) and to the Jazygians by Charles I (1307-42) in 1279 and 1323 respectively¹. Neither the Comans nor the Jazygians were bound to perform personal services and payment and the serf and lord relationship did not develop in these territories. The land of the Jazygo-Comans — even under Turkish supremacy — was considered to be crown estate. The owner was the king, who exercised his power by the palatine, the highest administrative dignity in Hungary. The palatine was the chief justice and the highest authority of the Jazygo-Comans. On the basis of their privileges the Jazygo-Comans had a considerable degree of self-government, which was similar to that of the royal boroughs. This favourable legal status, however, was combined with rather heavy responsibilities. They were obliged to provide the palatine's emoluments to fulfill military service and in times of war they were mobilized under the crown.

Turkish supremacy caused considerable depopulation in these areas as well. The greatest decrease in the number of inhabitants occurred in Little Cumania, while it was Great Cumania that suffered most during the War of Liberation. The location of Jazygia gave it relative security. During the resettlement, the majority of the population was replaced. From this time on we cannot speak about pure Jazygian and Cumanian ethnic groups. The term "Jazygo-Coman" no longer carries a primarily ethnic meaning, rather it expresses a homogeneity of the area based on its privileged state.

In 1702 the Jászkunság temporarily lost its privileged legal status, when Leopold I (1657-1705) sold the territory to the Order of the Teutonic Knights

1. István Gyárfás, *A jász-kunok története* Szolnok, 1883, vol. III, pp. 40-49; Gábor Bagi, *A Jászkun Kerület és a reformországgyűlések (1825-1847)*, Szolnok, 1989, manuscript, pp. 1-8.

for 500,000 Rhenish forints. Thus the inhabitants became feudal tenants. Actually, they never acknowledged the seignorial supremacy of the Teutonic Knights, and tried to regain their free status. This effort was primarily the reason why they joined forces in the War of Independence (1703-11) led by Prince Rákóczi. Rákóczi (1705-11) confirmed their former privileges but his cause was defeated and the *Jászkunság* failed to regain the privileges².

It was Maria Theresa (1740-80), who made it possible for the Jazygo-Comans to win back their former rights in 1745. The inhabitants made a huge financial sacrifice and took on various loans to repay the price. The event was known as the "Jazygo-Coman Redemption" and the legal status it brought about was very similar to the former privileges. This special, privileged status and territorial detachment of the *Jászkunság* continued till 1876, when Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County was established. The common bearing of burdens, the privileged state, and the self-assurance springing from the redemption developed a relatively closed community. At the start it created a favourable framework for the development of a free peasantry, but later, together with a conservative adherence to the privileges, it hindered the development of capitalism.

We shall now examine how this territory, in many respects different from other municipal authorities of the country, accepted the foreign merchants arriving with their goods in greater and greater numbers.

The appearance of the Greek merchants in the Jászkunság and the first national census

The presence of the Greek merchants in the *Jászkunság* may be considered continuous from the time of the Turkish supremacy. They appeared between the rivers Danube and Tisza — thus in the *Jászkunság* — at the same time as the Turks. They could trade freely in the territories under Turkish rule and by the end of the seventeenth century the commerce of the whole area was in the hands of the Greeks³.

We have no data concerning the time of the first appearance or settling of Greek merchants. The surnames of Greek origin (Illija, Marko, Pap, Nyrcó, Szappanos) in the Pentz's census⁴ indicate that some of them made

2. József Kiss, *A Jászkun Kerület parasztsága a Német Lovagrend földesuri hatósága idején 1702-1731*, Budapest, 1979, pp. 29-31.

3. Ödön Füves, "Görögök a Duna-Tisza közén", in *Antik Tanulmányok*, 1966, p. 92 (hereinafter referred to as Füves, 1966).

4. The census was ordered before the area was sold to the Order of the Teutonic Knights

their living here as early as the time of Turkish supremacy⁵. It was in the eighteenth century that they arrived in this area in greater numbers. Though their number never exceeded sixty or eighty during the century, their activity proved to be essential for the Jazygo-Comans, who primarily dealt with agriculture and stock-breeding.

This part of the country was in many respects favourable for the Greeks for intermediate trade and settlement. In the period of meddling the main destination was Pest and Vienna, so most of the commercial routes crossed the *Jászkunság* or at least part of it. The territory was also a good buyer's market for both Eastern and Western commodities, as neither royal free boroughs nor merchants other than the Greeks were in the immediate vicinity. The inhabitants of scattered villages could not acquire the goods in any other way, thus the Greeks did not have to compete with anybody. It was an important aspect for them that this territory was close enough to the Turkish Empire to enable them to reach their own country easily from here. They had good opportunities to maintain their family and business connections here and they could cherish the hope of returning home even after settling here.

These aspects played an important role in the process that made the areas between the Danube and the Tisza and east of the Tisza the most heavily populated by the Greeks. The centre of the land water routes leading from the south to the north was Pest, so this town became the centre of the Greek population in Hungary. Their number was much lower in Transdanubia and Northern Hungary⁶.

In the papers of the Szolnok County Archive examined so far, the first piece of information concerning the Greeks is from 1732⁷. In this document the merchants of Jazygo-Cumania and Heves and Külső Szolnok Counties asked permission to continue to stay, settle, and sell their goods freely in this part of the country. The petition was written because in this period the native merchants frequently complained about the many advantages of their foreign competitors. The Imperial Court of Vienna issued the first restrictive act in

o estimate its financial strength and the probable amount of duty. Kristóf Pentz, the census-taker of the Treasury, was charged with conducting it. The original census may be found in the National Archives: U et C Fasc. 71, No 4.

5. Márta Nagy, "The Iconostasion of the Greek Orthodox Church in Karcag", in *Balkan Studies*, 28(1987), p. 237.

6. Ödön Füves, *Görögök Pesten 1686-1931*, Budapest, 1972, doctoral thesis, p. 280 (hereinafter Füves, 1972).

7. Szolnok Megyei Levéltár (Archives of Szolnok Country, hereinafter SZML) Jászkun Kerület közgyűlési jegyzőkönyv 1732, pp. 16-18.

1725 limiting the Greeks' wholesale activity to Turkish goods and their retail activity to participation in fairs⁸.

The support of the *Jászkun Kerület* for the Greeks was expressed in the decision of the General Assembly, which was forwarded to the Council of the Governor-General (*Consilium regium locumtenentiale Hungaricum*). It explained that the Greeks living here were "never injurious to the inhabitants, rather they served to their advantage both by bearing the common expenses and by the payment of taxes, and the Royal Treasury gained much from them. Because the inhabitants live in sparsely populated areas, it is the Greeks from whom they can cheaply purchase clothes, salt, pepper, and other minor essentials". Again it was very advantageous for the population that the Greeks bought their corn, wine, and other foods tuffs at market price or exchanged these for their own wares. An important circumstance mentioned in the explanation is the fact that the Greeks often lent money to the residents "without any rating or interest"⁹.

The above-mentioned decision records the situation in the *Kerület*, and documents the good relations between the Greeks and the local residents. A similarly favourable opinion was characteristic of the later relationship between the people of the *Jászkunság* and the Greeks. Archival documents show that the statutes and questionnaires concerning the Greeks were always returned with answers advantageous to the foreign merchants. The Jazygo-Comans were tolerant in executing the various restrictive orders, which must have been profitable for both parties. The commercial and financial activity of the well-to-do and business-orientated Greeks nicely complemented the farming and animal husbandry practised by the local residents. Later, the Greeks who had settled in the *Jászkunság* did not only take part in the economic life of the communities but in some places they also became public figures.

In other parts of the country their reception was not unanimously favourable. They were not welcome in the towns, where the local people themselves dealt with commerce. Debrecen, for example, did not let them settle¹⁰, and the northern towns resisted them as well¹¹. The reason was that the duty con-

8. Füves, 1966, p. 93.

9. SZML Jászkun Kerület közgyűlési jegyzőkönyv 1732, p. 19, quoted by Márta Nagy, 1987, p. 237.

10. Lajos Zoltai, *Debrecen város százados küzdelme a görög kereskedőkkel*, Debrecen, 1935.

11. István Högye, "A görögök szerepe Hegyalja életében a 18. században", in *Miskolci Herman Ottó Múzeum Közleményei*, 10(1977), p. 13; István Dobrossy, A 17-19. századi ujjörög diaszpóra néprajzi jelentősége Északkelet-Magyarországon, in *Interetnikus kapcsó*

cessions laid down in the peace treaties ensured very favourable conditions for the Greeks to exchange their goods. While the local inhabitants had to pay a thirtieth at every customs post, and very often other taxes were imposed on them, the Greeks could trade after paying a single 3% or, later, 5% duty. By reducing the duties the Imperial Court of Vienna aimed at securing a good market for local products, but the poor conditions enabled the Greek merchants turn it to their own advantage¹².

In 1725 the repeated complaints of native merchants resulted in the restrictive orders mentioned above. Later, various measures regulating trading activity followed one another. Their implementation, however, depended primarily on foreign policy. For Maria Theresa — during her long wars — the neutrality of the Porte was important, so it often happened that certain restrictions were not published, or the published ones were not enforced¹³. There are several recurring orders among the documents of the *Jászkun Kerület* from this time.

Royal orders increasingly urged the Greeks to settle down, which would have meant the end of their duty concession. In 1741, Maria Theresa decreed that only the foreigners who brought their families out of the Turkish Empire could practise their trade¹⁴. Most of the merchants ignored the order, and in the areas where the Greeks' goods were needed even the local authorities proved to be tolerant.

The inhabitants of Jászberény —together with some other towns and counties— asked the Council of the Governor-General to authorize the trading activity of the Greeks "because there are no royal free boroughs in the area, and thus there are no merchants, and if the Greeks did not come into the village every now and then, the inhabitants would have to neglect their work for days in order to obtain even the most basic household utensils"¹⁵.

It was in 1754 that the national census of the Greeks was conducted for the first time¹⁶. In the *Jászkunság* there lived seventy-five Balkan merchants

latok Északkelet - Magyarországon, ed. Ernő Kunt, József Szabadfalvi, Gyula Viga, Miskolc 1984, p. 168.

12. Peace treaties governing the legal status of Turkish subjects: 1699: Karlovác, 1718: Pozsarevác, 1739: Belgrád. cf. Márta Bur, "A balkáni kereskedők és a magyar borkivitel a XVIII. században", in *Történelmi Szemle*, 1978, p. 282.

13. Ferenc Eckhart, "Kereskedelmünk közvetítői a XVIII. században", in *Századok*, LII (1918), pp. 362-3, 376-7.

14. *Magyar Törvénytár 1740-1835*, ed. Dezső Márkus, Budapest, 1901, Mária Terézia 1741, évi dekrétuma I, 29, cikkely.

15. Eckhart, *op. cit.*, pp. 361-2.

16. Füves, 1972, p. 32.

at that time. Thirty-three of them were independent merchants or family members, nineteen were partner traders (*quaestus socii*), seven were journeymen (*sodales*), eight apprentices (*tyrones*), and eight servants (*famuli*). The census contains only the names of the merchants and their status in trading activity (Table 1)¹⁷. Beside the names of all merchants it was noted that they belonged to the Kecskemét company. The Greek company in Kecskemét was founded in 1708 by twenty-six merchants¹⁸. Similar corporations were never established in the *Jászkunság*. Besides the territorial disunity and the small number of merchants, this fact must have been due to the lack of competition. As for the earlier period, when the *Jászkunság* was under Turkish rule, the Greeks —being Turkish subjects— did not need to safeguard their interests by forming such corporations¹⁹.

Interestingly enough, sometimes it was the councils of the communities that undertook to support the Greeks' interests. In 1753, for example, at the request of Görög Dorian Miklos, the council of Karcag prohibited all trade by non-local merchants²⁰.

It is very difficult to identify the persons because they used various alternatives of their names spelled in diverse forms. Therefore hereinafter we will use the Greek names in the form given in the historical sources.

From the data of the 1769 national census relating to the Jászkunság

Another national census of the Greeks took place under decree No 901 of the Council of the Governor-General issued on 25th April 1769²¹. The decree was made public at the General Assembly of the *Jászkun Kerület* on 19th June, 1769, and by April 1770 all three areas had completed the census of the foreign merchants living there. The results were presented to the General Assembly on 7th April 1770 and the report was forwarded to the Council of the Governor-General²².

17. Országos Levéltár (National Archives), Helytartótanács iratok. Görög nem egyesült osztály, Misc. Fasc. 2, No 8.

18. Edit Petri, "A kecskeméti görög kereskedők története a XVIII. században", in *Cumania*, Kecskemét, 1975, pp. 35-40.

19. Füves, 1972, p. 22.

20. SZML Karcag város protocolluma 1736.1752, p. 184, quoted by Márta Nagy, 1987, p. 239.

21. Füves, 1966, p. 96.

22. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratai, C Capsa, VI. Fasc. 2, No 53; *ibid.*, D Capsa, VI. Fasc. 4, No 24 1/2.

TABLE 1

The Greeks living in the Jászkunság on the basis of the 1754 national census

<i>Nomina et cognomina</i>	<i>Hospites Filii Fratres</i>			<i>Quaestus socii</i>	<i>Sodales</i>	<i>Tyrones</i>	<i>Famuli</i>
Nicolaus Thodor	1			1			1
Martinus Takács	1			2			
Georgius Juhász	1						
Joannes Juhász	1						2
Joannes Pál	1			1			
Georgius Dorian	1			1			
Joannes Constantin	1	1					3
Andreas Demeter	1						
Michaël Nagy	1	1					1
Georgius Kalló	1	2					1
alter Georgius Kalló	1			1			
Ladislaus Zvana	1			1			
Thomas Halacsi	1			1		1	
Georgius Demeter	1			1		1	
Joannes Rusa	1			1			
Michaël Elias	1					1	
Sigismundus Márton	1						
Georgius Demeter	1						
Joannes Ferenczi				1			
Stephanus Damascus	1			1			
Luca Rusa	1						
Georgius Lúka	1			1			
Csoma Sánta				1			
Andreas Kristoff	1				2	3	
Ladislaus Háczi	1			1	2		
Michael Nestor	1			1	2	1	
Joannes Gergel	1						
Michael Juhász	1			2			
Petrus Juhász	1					1	
Georgius Nico	1			1	1		
Thomas Papp	1						
Summa	29	3	1	19	7	8	8

(Országos Levéltár - National Archives - Gn.O Misc. Fasc. 8, No 2)

The census, prepared on the basis of a detailed questionnaire, offers a wealth of information about Greek merchants. The following details were filled in: the name of the merchant, his age, religion, physical description, and place of origin, the date of his entering Hungary, various documents (certificate of health, passport, papers proving that he had paid the taxes, residence permit), the route he wished to follow, his present abode, the nature of his commercial activities, the kinds of goods he dealt in, and the number of persons arriving with him.

The census contained the data of all the *Jászkunság* merchants in alphabetical order. There were sixty-five Greek merchants altogether in various areas of the three districts. (Three of them provided very inadequate data.) All of them were Greek Orthodox Christians, and all but one came from Macedonia. (Gergely Joannes came from Romania, was 53 years old, and lived in Jászberény.) Most of the merchants were from two towns of Macedonia: twenty-three from Kozani and twenty from Siatista. And some merchants originated from Doiran, Kastoria and Seres.

Almost all had left their motherland young. Many of them had first arrived in Hungary before the age of fifteen. In these cases they usually did not travel alone but with their parents, relatives, or merchants who had been here before. Family connections and acquaintances played an important role later on, for example, when taking the oath, and settling down afterwards.

According to the census, the Greeks arriving in Hungary crossed the border most of at Pancsova, Zemlin, and Vidin. For those who travelled and crossed the borders frequently, the health certificate was very important and was checked thoroughly because of the Black Death. At the main crossing places quarantine stations were set up, from where they could go on only after satisfactory disinfection of goods and persons²³. Most of the merchants included in the census had spent some time in demurrage, usually forty days in Zimony. Documents certifying the payment of both the Turkish and the toleration taxes were also important. Still, hardly any merchants had them. In most cases, we find a note that they had no documents at all. This refers to the fact that the authorities had not demanded them and at the same time we may suppose that the Greeks very often did not enter Hungary at the official crossing places²⁴.

Luckily, all the personal documents of a few merchants were preserved among the papers of the *Jászkun Kerület*, thus we find here the travel documents

23. Petri, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

24. Füves, 1972, p. 280.

mentioned above. One of them is a remarkable three-metre-long roll held together by thread; it contains fourteen tax certificates, and documents the travels of Andrea Kristóf²⁵. Among the papers of Hadzsi Demeter, a Kun-szentmárton merchant, besides the tax and health certificates we find a document that certifies his swearing the oath of loyalty²⁶ (Pl. 2). The number of travel documents among the papers of merchants indicates the time and frequency of their crossing the border.

A very important point in the census was examining family status. The Government agencies assumed with good reason that those who had family members left in Turkey would keep going back there. Thus the exchange of goods and the business connections would not cease, which resulted in so many restricting orders. At that time it was already strictly ordained that business could be done only by those who had brought their wives and children from the Turkish Empire and had settled here permanently.

Most of the Greeks in the *Jászkunság* were single. Fourteen of them declared that their wives and children lived in the Turkish Empire. Some of them had not decided whether they would settle in Hungary or return to their motherland. Three merchants were widowed and seven had Hungarian wives, five of whom were from Eger and two from Szentendre. These Greeks, of course, were willing to take up residence here.

On the basis of the census, we may state that it was Popovics Demetrius who arrived in Hungary first, in 1717, with a Belgrade passport. He was a seventy-year-old widower from Macedonia, who lived in Kunhegyes, where he sold miscellaneous goods from Vienna and Turkey. Most of the merchants crossed the border for the first time in the 1740s and 1750s.

The Greeks traded mostly in miscellaneous Austrian (Viennese) and Turkish goods and sometimes in wares from Leipzig. Miscellaneous goods and small articles (*merces minutiores*) might mean all kinds of things: optical devices, jewellery, combs, lamps, irons, brush-maker's products, sealing wax²⁷. Oriental silk, fine linen, felt, leather products, and cotton were essential imports. It is these kinds of articles that were found in the shops of *Kiskunság* when an inventory of Turkish goods was drawn up in 1773²⁸ (Pl. 3). Besides the Oriental wares, almost every merchant sold Western goods as well, and some of them stocked only the latter. It is very informative in this respect to

25. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatásai iratai, D Capsa, XIV. Fasc. 11, No 1.

26. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratai, Fasc. 8, No 2268.

27. Eckhart, *op. cit.*, p. 385-90.

28. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratai, D Capsa, IX. Fasc. 2, No 28.

study the wills and inventories of estate, as they reveal the ratio of Eastern goods to Western. After settling it became more difficult for the merchants to obtain foreign goods, so they gradually introduced Hungarian-bought merchandise into their shops. The inventory of the estate of a Kunszentmárton merchant, Vaitz István, taken in 1793, demonstrates the above-mentioned structure of stock. It was drawn up in a period when the Greeks had already settled in Hungary, but their connections with their motherland had not ceased²⁹. The stock must have been well adapted to the needs of local residents. There are no indications that shops were closed down in the *Jászkunság*, and all the restricting ordinances were sent back with the comment that the Greeks did not sell prohibited goods in the area.

Some Greeks in the census did not have their own businesses; they were rather partners or apprentices in a shop. This meant that while one of the partners was travelling around with his goods, which he very often even exchanged for crops, the other was working in the shop, making purchases, and lending money to those in need. There were many moneylenders in the *Jászkunság*, as the local residents could not afford to grant credit and had no experience in financial activities. It was the Greeks who introduced these kinds of financial activities to the region and they became especially important after the 1745 redemption. It placed a great financial burden on the population, who needed various loans to pay it off. At the same time, in almost all larger places there lived a Greek shopkeeper or tenant who could give loans. Very often the Greeks sold goods on credit even in the towns. The fact that all this influenced the good relations developed in the area is proved by the letters and notes in which people asked the Greeks for loans or extensions of loans. Their tone is more friendly than formal³⁰.

The census shows that in 1769 Greeks lived in all major settlements. The largest number of merchants (fifteen) was found in Jászberény, the chief town of the area. This is where their number continued to be the highest, and even though it was not very high their presence had a great influence on local public life. Here too they were most successful in competing against their economic competitors, the Jews. The geographical situation and the administrative function of Jászberény also helped the Greeks. Jászberény was not depopulated even in the Turkish period, and the Turks themselves respected its privileged situation and regarded it as an important centre. The town was

29. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratai. Fasc. 1, No 1698/1797.

30. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratai. Fasc. 11, No 1, Polgári perek. 24. füz. 1, köt. 27, sz. / 1826.

ensured considerable revenue by the fact that it was the chief town of the *Jászkun Kerület* till 1876, when Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County was established. Its location made it possible for the merchants to visit Eger, Tokaj, and Gyöngyös, where they set up not only business but family connections as well. Many of the merchants had wives from Eger. No Greek church was built in the *Jászkunság*, so the Greeks of this area attended the services at the Greek Orthodox church in Gyöngyös.

According to the 1769 census the Greeks were equally distributed throughout the three *Kerülets*: twenty-three, twenty-one, and again twenty-one Greeks lived in the *Jászság*, the *Nagykunság* and the *Kiskunság* respectively.

The loyalty oath

Maria Theresa's edict of 1774, in which she demanded that the foreign merchants willing to settle in Hungary and the hereditary provinces should give up all connections with Turkey and take a loyalty oath, was decisive in the lives of the Greeks in the *Jászkunság* as well³¹. The 1769 census was conducted in preparation for the edict and after it the government authorities urged the taking of the oath. This was all to do with the changing foreign policy, which had always affected the orders concerning the Greeks and the strictness of their implementation. The Turkish Empire did not endanger the Imperial Court of Vienna at that time. The Court also tried to incorporate the privileged Greek merchants into its customary colonizing policy, by making them settle and thus reducing their rights to the level of those of native merchants. They also hoped to put an end to capital exports in this way.

The royal edict of 1774 contained a definite directive concerning the loyalty oath³²: those merchants who were not willing to settle were to sell their goods, shops, and personal property within six months. (The time-limit was later extended to one year.) An official committee was set up in the *Jászkun Kerület* with the following members: Pál Dósa, the "Jazygian captain", András Pethes, and László Várkonyi assessors of the County Court. The merchants who were willing to settle took the loyalty oath in their presence using a set formula (*formula juramenti*).

It was in November 1773, that a list was prepared of the merchants who had taken the loyalty oath. The list enumerated the merchants according to their place of residence³³:

31. Füves, 1966, p. 96.

32. SZML Turkeve iratai. Protocollum Currentalium 1771-1779, pp. 211-215.

33. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratai. D Capsa IX. Fasc. 4, No 5.

Jászberény

Andreas Kristoff
Ladislau Hadzi
Demetrius Kristoff
Joannes Fekete
joannes Juhász
Bernardus Kristoff
Petrus Marczal
Stephanus Marczal
Michael Nestor
Daniel Demeter
Thomas Petrovics
Antonius Bosnyák

Arokszállás

Constantinus Juhász

Jászapáti

Michael Juhász
Joannes Damocsola
Georgius Nicola

Jászladány

Joannes Molnár

Jászkisér

Georgius Pap
Joannes Pap

Jászfényszaru

Thomas Zsigmond

Karcag

Joannes Szappanos
Theodorus Kondoross

Kisujszállás

Michael Miklós

Stephanus Gobovics
Antonius Constantin

Kunhegyes

Christopher Demeter

Kunmadaras

Michael Zakarias
Joannes Kozma

Halas

Demetrius János
Theodorus János

Kunszentmiklós

Stephanus Pap

Fülöpszállás

Georgius Zsigmond

Szabadszállás

Georgius Demeter
Joannes Illés
Theodorus Illés
Stephanus Zabire

Majsa

Nicolaus Demeter

Kunszentmárton

Theodorus Kalló
Stephanus Vajics
Michael Kosztia

Lacháza

Joannes Rosa

Kiskunfélegyháza

Joannes László
Joannes Marko
Georgius Fóti

The same document contains the name and personal data of the merchants who took the oath in the presence of the committee till 1781. The names were made public before the General Assembly of the *Kerület* from time to time and then forwarded to the Council of the Governor-General³⁴.

34. *Ibid.*

Zavirász György, an outstanding Greek scholar in Hungary, took the loyalty oath in Kunszentmiklós on 1st December 1776. He played an important role in keeping alive the national awareness of the Greeks and he was a writer and translator of grammars, dictionaries and ritual books. He arrived in Hungary at the age of sixteen, and lived first in Ráckeve and then in Kalocsa. Later he moved to Kunszentmiklós, and when living in Szabadszállás he wrote his most important work, *Nea Hellas* ... between 1790 and 1804³⁵.

The loyalty oath of Zavirász György was announced in Jászberény on 11th January, 1777. Compelled by the existing strict orders, he had obtained a certificate from the episcopal vicar in Ráckeve stating that he was a member of his parish, and he had to produce witnesses to attest to his being unmarried³⁶ (Pl. 4).

The Greeks listed below took the loyalty oath in the *Jászkunság* till 1781:
 6th December 1773 Turkeve: Demetrius Szücs, Karcag: Stephanus Pap, Madaras: Antonius Pap, Kunszentmárton: Stephanus Kálló
 7th December 1773 Kiskunfélegyháza: Demetrius László
 14th January 1774 Kiskunfélegyháza: Demetrius Pál, Joannes Marko
 14th December 1774 Kisujszállás: Stephanus Daróczi
 28th December 1774 Jászapáti: Stephanus Kiss
 28th January 1776 Szabadszállás: Georgius Tamásy
 1st December 1776 Kunszentmiklós: Georgius Zabira
 3rd April 1778 Kiskunhalas: Georgius Jánosi
 8th May 1780 Kiskunfélegyháza: Nicolaus Pap
 In 1781 (without further details) Jászberény: Antonius Kristof, Stepanus Kristof, Árokszállás: Joannes Juhász, Kunszentmárton: Pap Demeter, Constans Haris, Kunhegyes: Mathias Demeter, Kisujszállás: Demetrius Daróczy, Christophorus Demeter, Karcag: Michael Velko, Szabadszállás: Christophorus Koszta, Madaras: Stephanus Illés³⁷.

The list reveals that, unlike other parts of the country, the immigration of the Greeks to the *Jászkunság* did not come to an end in 1774-5. They arrived here and swore the loyalty oath thereafter as well, a fact which must have been connected with their favourable reception. In 1792, for example, the oaths of eight merchants were reported to the Council of the Governor-General³⁸.

35. Ödön Füves, "Zavirász irodalomtörténeti művének kéziratához", in *Antik Tanulmányok*, 5(1958).

36. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratai. D Capsa, IX. Fasc. 4, No 5.

37. *Ibid.*

38. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratai. Fasc. 8, No 165/1733.

Four of them settled in Karcag, two in Jászberény, one in Halas, and one in Kiskunfélegyháza. Demetrius Hadzsi, otherwise known as Dimitri Dullo, took the oath of loyalty in Kunszentmárton in 1795. Among his papers are his travel documents and the paper testifying his taking the oath. The text of the oath was written in Hungarian on the basis of the standard formula. The other merchants in the *Jászkunság* took the oath using similar wording³⁹ (Pl. 5).

The list containing the names of merchants who had taken the oath is not as detailed as the census of 1769. Besides the name and the residence, it gives the place of origin, the description of the person, and his marital status. The place of origin of all the merchants but one is Macedonia. The marital status had changed considerably since 1769. Twenty-one merchants out of the forty-four having taken the oath till November 1773, had wives of Hungarian origin. The growing number of family connections between the Greeks and the local residents helped the gradual Magyarization of the Greeks and their integration with the life of the *Jászkunság*.

Returning home or settling down permanently

The royal decree of 1774 forced the merchants to decide between returning home for ever or taking an oath of loyalty to the empire. We have seen that many of the *Jászkunság* merchants had taken the oath of loyalty before. Those who did not want to settle here were compelled to sell their goods and return home. Doreán Miklós, a merchant in Karcag, sold his shop and stock to his partner, Pap István, who had taken the loyalty oath, and he himself returned home⁴⁰.

It frequently happened that one member of the family living here took the oath and the others went home. In Turkeve the three Szücs brothers came to the arrangement that Tamás and Pál should hand over all the stock of their two shops in Turkeve to their brother Demeter, who undertook to settle here, and who would also collect the money owed to them by various local debtors. In Kunszentmárton Kálló Demeter gave his stock, worth 5500 forints, his house, and his other possessions to his brother Kálló István, who had sworn the oath, and he left the country for good⁴¹.

We may suppose that in the cases mentioned above not only were family

39. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratai. Fasc. 8, No 2268.

40. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratai. D Capsa, VI. Fasc. 4, No 24 1/2.

41. *Ibid.*

connections maintained, but the businesslike merchants made use of the favourable possibilities for making contracts and transporting goods between the two countries.

The existing contracts are important sources for assessing the financial situation of the Greeks. They are all the more important because we do not have any comprehensive registration of the Greeks' wealth.

Doreán Miklós transferred stock worth 3376 forints to his partner in Karcag in Turkeve. The value of the goods owned by the Szücs family mentioned above was 4406 forints. The wares and personal effects of Daróczi János, István, and György, who lived in Kisujszállás, were worth 6426 forints. Kálló Demeter transferred to his brother his house in Kunszentmárton and his stock, the value of which was estimated at 5500 forints. The above-mentioned sums may be considered quite large, especially when compared to goods owned by the Greeks living in the neighbouring villages. Fifty-eight per cent of the Balkan residents of Arad County had stock worth less than 100 forints and 68% of the traders in Bács County owned goods worth less than 500 forints. Even the property of the more well-to-do 30.5% of merchants in Békés County can be estimated at only between 1000 and 3000 forints⁴².

More detailed data concerning the financial status of the *Jászkunság* merchants may be found in the documents of towns and villages, primarily in wills and inventories of estate. The testament of Andreas Kristóf, for example, made in 1781, involves 8600 forints⁴³. The name of Andreas Kristóf had already appeared in the census of 1754. In 1773 he took the loyalty oath in Jászberény, and he made his will there too. The will not only reveals his financial circumstances, but contains several interesting items of information. The fact that he first of all left money to the Catholic church, its chapels, and the Franciscan friars tells us that there was no religious conflict between the local residents and the Greeks. On the other hand, the legacies mentioned in the will make it clear that for the Greeks living in foreign countries their own religion was very important and expressed their loyalty to their motherland. As there were no Orthodox churches in the *Jászkunság*, Andreas Kristóf bequeathed various sums to almost all of the Greek churches — "our churches" as he called them — in other parts of the country, in Pest, Ráckeve, Eger, Komárom, Esztergom, Győr, Buda, Kecskemét. As well as to his relatives, he left money to the poor and for the expense of his own funeral. The remaining money and other properties were equally divided between his two sons. The

42. Bur, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

43. SZML Jászberény város iratai. Végrendeletek 1759-1848. Capsa 25, Fasc. 10, No 104

testament of Demeter Kyro made in 1807 contains a varied list of heirs⁴⁴ (Pl. 6).

Even the royal edict of 1774 could not solve the "Greek question". In April 1775, another edict issued by the Council of the Governor-General arrived in the *Jászkunság*. On the basis of it, István Illéssy, the governor (capitanus) of Great Cumania started an investigation into the following matters:

- Were there any merchants in business who had not sworn the oath of loyalty?
- Why had those merchants not willing to take the oath not returned to their own country?
- What were the conditions under which the remaining merchants took over the goods of their departing partners?

At the same time, the governor ordered that a list be made of the Greeks who had not taken the oath, and another of those who, though they had taken the oath, had failed to bring their families after them. Finally, those who had not taken the oath were forbidden to engage in any trading activity⁴⁵.

The answers given to these questions proved again the goodwill of the local residents towards the Greeks. Most places reported that all the merchants there had sworn the oath. In the few cases of those who had not, the judge and the council of the town officially confirmed that they did not sell forbidden goods. The question of why those who had not sworn the oath had not returned home usually received the answer that they had not been able to recover the money they had lent to the inhabitants. The town council of Kisujszállás, for example, reported that the last three years had been very difficult and the inhabitants had too little money to pay back their debts⁴⁶. The town of Karcag had only one merchant who was still in the town in spite of the fact that he had not taken the oath. He had not been able to recover the money he had lent, and bad health had delayed his journey as well. He promised, however, to return home for good in the near future⁴⁷.

By this time the question of the Greeks had been settled in other areas of the country. The archives of the *Jászkun Kerület* did not contain similar edicts in later times, though there is evidence of frequent censuses. An investigation of them may show the changes in the Greeks' numbers and the process

44. SZML Jászkun Kerület polgári perek. 21, füzet, 1, kötet, 62, sz.

45. SZML Turkeve iratai. *Protocollum Currentalium* 1771-1779, pp. 253-4.

46. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratai. D Capsa VI. Fasc. 4, No 24 1/2.

47. *Ibid.*

of their assimilation, though their using varying forms of their names may cause problems.

Letters of recommendation are another source of important information. They were written by the councils, when a merchant was to move into another town. Among the papers of Pap Demeter there are two such letters. One of them was written by the judge and council of Törökszentmiklós, when the merchant left the town in 1774. The letter states that he had worked in the town for seven years and had proved to be a "good and honest" man (Pl. 7).

Pap Demeter moved to Kunszentmárton from Törökszentmiklós, and in 1780, when he left this town too, the judge and the council attested to his reliability in a similar letter. They put down that "Pap Demeter, shop assistant, has always behaved honestly and soundly, and we commend him to the goodwill of whatever tradesman he meets"⁴⁸.

The Greeks who had settled in the *Jászkunság* did not only follow trading activity. They very often rented shops, inns, and lodging houses. The towns in the *Kerület* had the privilege of setting up inns and meat-houses, and they gladly gave these profitable activities over to the enterprising Greeks. They themselves preferred the more traditional activity of farming and stock-breeding and very often they would not have had enough money to pay the rent. The minute-book of Karcag refers to the fact that Görög János rented a shop in the town as early as 1738⁴⁹. There survives the contract between the town and Dorian Görög Miklós from 1751, who rented shops in Karcag. For them he was to pay ninety forints in cash, two wads of paper, two pounds of pepper, twelve pounds of rice, two rolls of aba cloth, eight halters, and two quintals of salt annually⁵⁰. His activity must have won the satisfaction of the inhabitants, as the lease-contract was extended for several years.

One of the parties in most of the lease-contracts made in 1773 was Greek⁵¹ (Pl. 8). Besides shops, inns, and meat-houses, they also rented brew-houses and lodging-houses. The contracts were usually made for three years in the presence of the local councils. The shops were rented for between thirty and three hundred forints, while the rent for inns and meat-houses could be a thousand forints. At first, the Greeks were only tenants, later they had houses, shops, and inns built for themselves. Görög János had a shop built for him-

48. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratok. D. Capsa XIV. Fasc. 11, No 1.

49. SZML Karcag város protocolluma 1736-1752, p. 30.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

51. SZML Jászkun Kerület közigazgatási iratai. D. Capsa IV. Fasc. 2, No 28.

self in Karcag as early as 1748⁵². The Greeks were not hindered in acquiring property in the *Jászkunság*, indeed the inhabitants very often helped them. In 1772 the town of Jászberény had a house built for the merchants⁵³. The council of Kisujszállás gave financial help for building two Greek shops⁵⁴. The tendency was strengthened by the 1790 edict of Leopold II (1790-2), which made it possible for the Greeks to acquire property and to hold offices. The same decree provided the free practice of their religion⁵⁵. Under the influence of the decree, a Greek Orthodox church of outstanding beauty had been erected by 1794 in Karcag. The money for it was raised from the endowments of the Greeks living in the neighbourhood⁵⁶.

By the end of the eighteenth century, all the important places in the *Jászkunság* had Greek merchants among their inhabitants, and they became honoured members of the community on the basis of their work. The census shows us the pattern of how the Greek merchants were scattered in the Kerület up to 1781:

<i>Name of town</i>	<i>No of Greek inhabitants</i>
Fülöpszállás	1
Jászapáti	4
Jászárokszállás	2
Fényszaru	1
Jászberény	14
Jászládány	1
Karcag	4
Kiskunfélegyháza	7
Halas	3
Lacháza	1
Majsa	1
Kisujszállás	6
Kunhegyes	2
Kunszentmárton	6
Madaras	4
Szabadszállás	6
Turkeve	1
Sum total	68

52. SZML Karcag város protocolluma 1736-1752, p. 182.

53. Ferenc Fodor, *A Jászság életrajza*, Budapest, 1942, p. 203.

54. SZML Kisujszállás városi iratai. G Capsa, Fasc. 3, No 32/1792.

55. *Magyar Törvénytár 1740-1835*, ed. Dezső Márkus, Budapest, 1901, Lipót 1790, évi dekrétuma, 27, cikkely.

56. Concerning the building of the church: Márta Nagy, *Görögök a Jászkunságban*,

Conclusion

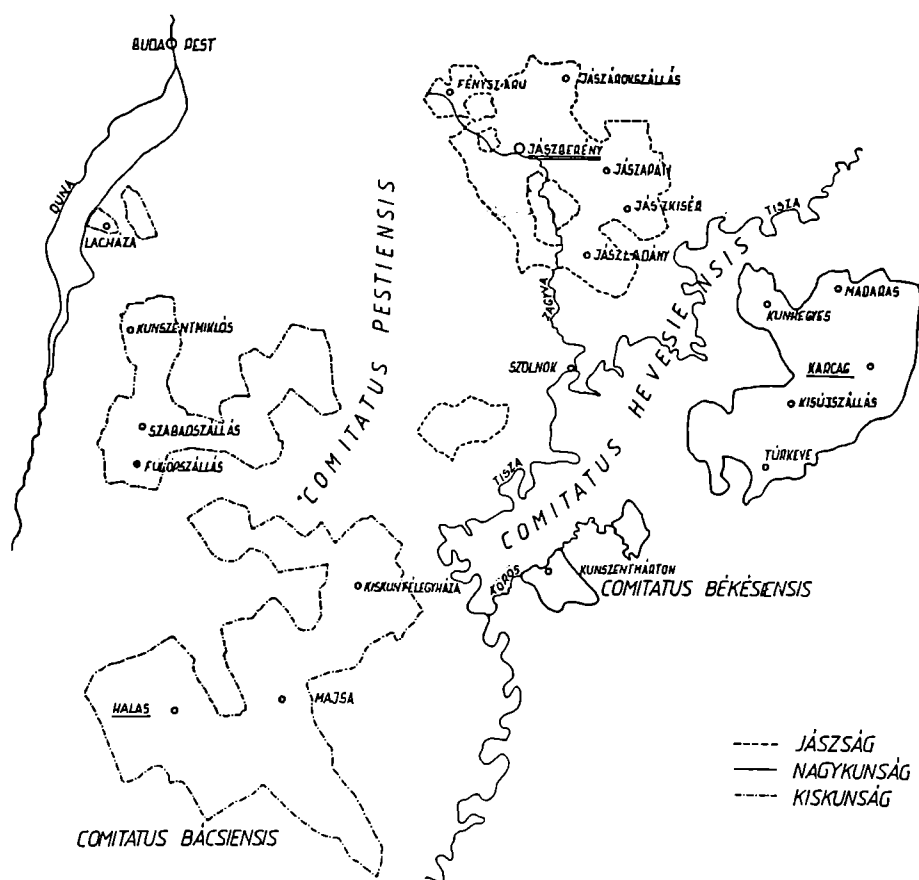
In this paper we have dealt only with some aspects of the Greeks' presence and activity. The documents under investigation unanimously show that the local residents of the *Jászkuság* needed the trading activity of the Greeks, whose presence was profitable for both parties. The commercial and financial activity of the well-to-do and business-orientated Greeks very well complemented the farming and animal husbandry practised by the Jazygo-Cumanians. They often helped the needy with credits and loans for several years. There are no traces of any economic or religious conflicts; the Greeks never had problems with practising their Orthodox religion, so different from that of the Catholic and Calvinist inhabitants. Their favourable reception is proved by the fact that the Greek merchants continually arrived and settled in the *Kerület* even after the decree concerning the loyalty oath.

The many archival documents of the Jász kun Kerület, the papers of the towns and villages (minute-books, inventories of estate, wills, litigation papers) may give much information for further research. They may help research aiming to reveal the role of the Greek merchants in the economic life of Hungary and to show the process of their adaptation to Hungarian circumstances.

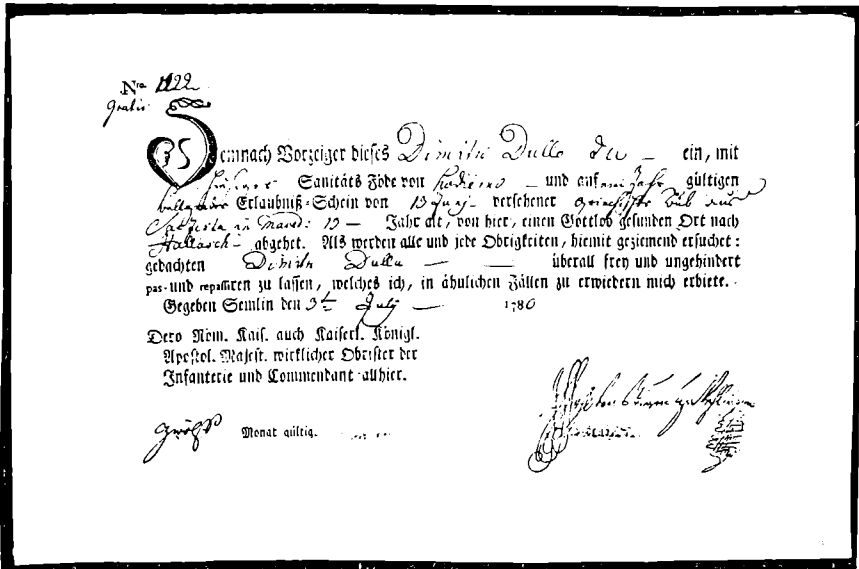
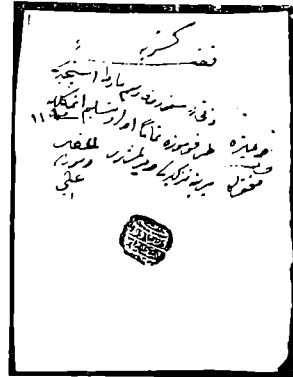
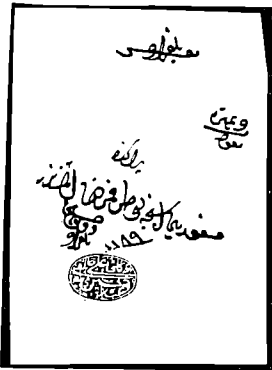
Archives of Szolnok County

(Translated by: KLÁRA KOLTAY)

Györffy István Nagykun Múzeum és a Kecskeméti Szentháromság Magyar Orthodox Egyházközség kiadásában, 1988, p. 41; concerning the iconostasion: Márta Nagy, "The Iconostasion of the Greek Orthodox Church in Karcag", in *Balkan Studies*, 28(1987), pp. 237-58.



Pl. 1. Towns and villages with Greek inhabitants in the Jászkunság at the end of the eighteenth century. (Drawn by Mihály Szikszai).




Pl. 2. From the travel documents of Dimitri Dullo (Hadzi Demeter).

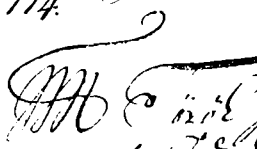
Annus 1773. Di 25. Junij: Az Főlegyes Consiliumnak Presimatuma szerinti
az Főlegyházi Kalmár Szövegkönyv találaton Török Országai
tehát ekegyen inventaltattak:

Főlegyháza.		1.	2.
1 ^o	Tóth György Szövegkönyv találaton Vörös, kék, és fehér Pamuk 15. H. 1. 25. - - - - -	30.	—
	Item 9. H. abrakos társasága a H. 30. - - - - -	4.	30.
	Item 5. H. Török gyolcs, egy H. 6. szig. két H. a H. 1. H. 25. - - - - -	7.	95.
	Item 30. H. Vörös kasa a H. 12. - - - - -	6.	—
	Item 10. H. Masula főtű a H. 12. - - - - -	2.	—
	Summa.	49.	35.
2 ^o	Horvath Mihály Szövegkönyv találaton 22. Főz Vörös, kék Pamuk 12. - - - - -	44.	—
	Item 7. H. fehér pamuk a H. 1. H. 25. - - - - -	9.	55.
	Item 20. H. abrakos társasága a H. 18. - - - - -	8.	—
	Item 40. H. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. - - - - -	2.	45.
	Item 5. H. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. - - - - -	5.	40.
	Item 4. H. Török gyolcs a H. 1. H. 25. - - - - -	2.	—
	Item 10. H. Masula főtű a H. 12. - - - - -	2.	—
	Item 22. H. Vörös kasa a H. 13. - - - - -	4.	40.
	Item 2. H. Török országai kárpit a H. 12. - - - - -	24.	—
	Summa.	107.	80.
3 ^o	László Jánosnál találaton 4. H. Török gyolcs a H. 1. H. 25. - - - - -	5.	40.
	Item 53. H. Vörös, és fehér Pamuk a H. 2. - - - - -	100.	—
	Item 3. H. abrakos társasága a H. 33. - - - - -	1.	39.
	Item 45. H. abrakos társasága a H. 12. - - - - -	9.	—
	Item 7. H. Vörös kasa a H. 12. - - - - -	1.	24.
	Summa.	122.	43.
4 ^o	Maróczy Jánosnál találaton 7. H. Török gyolcs a H. 1. H. 25. - - - - -	9.	55.
	Item 40. H. abrakos társasága a H. 11. - - - - -	7.	20.
	Item 9. H. Vörös társasága a H. 33. - - - - -	4.	57.
	Item 2. H. Vörös kasa a H. 1. H. 15. - - - - -	2.	30.
	Item 15. H. Masula főtű a H. 12. - - - - -	3.	—
	Item 50. H. Vörös kasa a H. 12. - - - - -	10.	—
	Item 33. H. Vörös, fehér, és kék Pamuk a H. 2. - - - - -	60.	—
	Summa.	103.	40.
Záró			
1 ^o	Kása János Szövegkönyv találaton Vörös, kék, és fehér Pamuk, szeg, kárpit, gyolcs, paplannak való Matracok, Mosoly, főtű, Rozs, kárpit, és főtű, szeg, melyekből egyaránt több egyaránt van - - - - -	80.	—
2 ^o	György Jánosnál Török Országai kárpitja tégei - - - - -	22.	—
3 ^o	Tamá Jánosnál tégei - - - - -	100.	—
	Summa.	202.	—

Pl. 3. Inventory of Kiskunság shops in 1773.


 Merő Török font Miklós Párossának mostani
 Admistris fel Biraja, ugymint Királyi Tanács, több
 Birtok Tartalmat egyike a jár lakosai mindenek
 nél a kiknél illik ezen Testimoniális Levelünk
 nél rendiben, Hogy ej előtt Bet elegendővel az
 járák jón Pap Demeter Pácsi ritma. Sugyan
 azon elegendő alate Helységünk lakosa keresztelő
 met Polgárlaban Leven, mellyer is differencia
 végbe vite, most maga Lakosok valógraván
 Hogy jü is igaz ember legyen, másodmal bot
 rangadaza, Söt mindnyájunkal örömeze volt
 bna fűe attesallat. Kit is minden igaz se
 retettel fénylő keresztelővel recommendáltuk
 Mellyer nagyobb is allandóbb erősejere ad
 jü ezen Párossunk elő perszejével meg erősít
 reket Levelünk. Sigt Török P Miklós Die
 24^{te} Feb 1774.

fr nem,


 Török P Miklós Párt
 tanács Biraja Tanácsa

Pl. 7. The letter of recommendation given to Pap Demeter, merchant, by the town of Török-szentmiklós.

