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OF THE REFORMED CHURCH**

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**Officer corps of Jászkun District  
and social attachment (1745–1876)**

**Prime captains, sub captains, clerks, jász,  
nagykun and kiskun captains of the Jászkun District**

című doktori (PhD) értekezésének tézisei

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## **The goal of the inquiry**

Numerous scholars have done research on the administration and working of the Jász kun District, but neither they have gathered their officials systematically, nor they have done the analysis of their careers. So I set an aim to examine the Jász kun District's highest officials - a very selected company - in my work. In my dissertation I will assemble the archontology of the district's leading officials from the Redemption, a prominent marker of an era - from 1745 to 1876 - to the termination of the Jász kun District. With my interests and knowledge in art history, I will make an attempt to introduce how and under what circumstances did the privileged district officials lived and functioned in the prerogative districts.

One of the big questions of the research was that after the 20<sup>th</sup> century's wars and revolutions and 140 years after the termination of the Jász kun District, can the relics of the former officials be found.

In the history of Hungary the privileged districts had specific juristic, social and cultural positions. In my work I only examined the Jász kun District, which consisted of three districts. The once administrative unit - although it disintegrated 140 years ago - it lives on in the names of the historical regions because the names Jászság, Kiskunság and Nagy kunság are still very well-known today. Before this research we didn't even know the names of numerous officials in the Jász kun District and nobody examined what levels of knowledge was required for certain positions or the social connections they could be acquired with.

I started with the identification and gathering of the personage of Jász kun prime captains, Jász kun sub captains and the so called district captains, who managed the districts and since in the foregoing examinations, the perishes rather superseded to the periphery - they played a determinant role in the life of the Jász kun District - I expanded my research to their personage, too. Among the lower positions - for example soldiers and midwives - the change in the personnel was frequent, the remaining archivalia hasn't made it possible to process the lower positions whole and correctly. That is why I didn't initiate them into the circle of the examined officials.

I decided that I will try to raise a monument to the memory of the officials, who have left behind a lasting but forgotten life-work on the head of Jász kun District.

After the change of regime, researches in the subject of archontology became lively in the Hungarian historiography and lists of positions appeared in numerous countys, for example in Baranya, Békés and Heves county. The Jász kun District was unprocessed from this aspect, so I wanted to recover this in my work.

### **The sources and methods of the research**

My dissertation is based mostly upon archival sources. It was a fortunate circumstance that the Jász kun District's reports didn't suffer any damage during the times of wars, so the muniments remained in a well-researchable condition. These reports are continuous from 1745 to 1849, so the enormous quantity of these documents provide an excellent source for research. However, the official records of the Kiskun District subsisted only from 1727 to 1761. The official reports of the Nagykun District either didn't survive or didn't exist in the first place. In the official reports they wrote down the happenings on the general assemblies with the time of the meetings and the names and positions of the participants properly from 1767. This helped my research greatly. In 1825 a register of subjects, objects and people has been made to the official reports as an early reference. These were continuous until 1848. The more important reports' selected documents remained intact in the archival material, which has given a unique opportunity to more profound examinations. Because of the II. Joseph-kind national reorganization, reports haven't been made between 1787 and 1789. The language of the reports was Latin from 1745 to 1790, but in a rather altering way, more or less Hungarian parts occur in them. These reports were registered in Hungarian since 1790.

However, the line of reports were interrupted for a long time from the 28<sup>th</sup> of July, 1849. János Nánássy - the archivist of the Jász kun District

- let the prime captain know in his letter written to him in 1851, that the revolutionary government's ordinances has been given to Zsigmond Hegedűs sub captain and „*the scandalous items were deleted from the reports at it's clarification*”. So the period between 1848 and 1849 is strongly incomplete.

Unfortunately, the documents of the Jászkun District are quite penurious between 1850 and 1876 because in 1914, the county's archives sorted out the documents of this perios, though we don't know exactly what because during World War II, this section of the archives suffered war damage. To make matters worse, the prime captains' documents from the 1850's are in really bad shape physically and are hard to research. A smaller part of the documents developed during the Bach-system are in German, but the bigger part was written in Hungarian. The muniments are quite incomplete after 1861, but between 1861 and 1876 the reports are mostly intact. Printed reports were also made from 1868, but unfortunately these are partially imperfect.

The archival matter of the Jászkun District's settlements subsist unequally because while some settlements' matter is almost completely intact, for example Jászberény, Kiskunfélegyháza, Jászapáti or Kiskunhalas, others' were almost entirely destroyed in World War II. (For example the archives of Jászárokszállás were destroyed and there were significant damage in Jászfényszaru's records, too.)

From the first third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century printed matter related to the Jászkun District appeared. With the significant expansion of printed products - naturally - many interesting sources remained intact (e.g. Installation poems, speeches and reports). Because of the subject of my dissertation, the research of the canonical birth registers have played a great role in my work (Roman Catholic and Calvinistic). Among the written sources, the Jászkun District's reports are prominent. We can read about the district's leaders and their pursuit in them in many cases. Besides these, today's edited local newspapers', publications' and books' source publicating work proved to be very useful help. As it is unravelled from the dissertation, the titled relics as ornaments, monuments and tombs bear significant documentary value.

The starting points of my archontological research were the lists of positions introduced first by the old historical works in the Jászkun District (Péter Horváth 1801, and Imre Palugyay 1854.). For the base research I used Aranka Sugárné Koncsek's „*Jász történelmi arcképcsarnok*”, which was published in 2003. I systematized the data in her work. I found information regarding most of the prime- and sub-captains and the Jász captains in this book. Ferenc Ruzicska's „*Nagykun kapitányok a 16. századtól 1876-ig*” - published in 2012 - proved to be a great help about nagykun captains.

The captain list rosters - published in „*Örömműnne*” in 1845 - were very significant sources, which proved to be very useful starting points because the virtually utterly unknown Kiskun captains' roster could be compiled with this writing. Following the base research, I verified the general assemblys' reports in the Jászkun District and I gathered the researched office-bearers from 1790 to 1849, because in the beginning of the reports they usually gave the participants' names so any change in the office-bearers' person were traceable. It was much harder to reveal the data of the office-bearers between 1745 and 1790 because the reports of the general assemblies didn't give their dates in many cases and didn't tell the names of the attending office-bearers. So the personal indexes belonging to the reports made identifiable the sought office-bearer's person. Besides this, with the thorough study of the reports - in most cases - the office-bearer's innings could be given precisely to the day. With the study of the remaining letters in the Jászkun District, I could further refine the decisions connected to the office-bearers (nominations, resignations, reports). The remaining toms helped with the district captains' time of inning because these contain a person's numerous important biographical data in many cases. Maybe the hardest part of the work was the search of the office-bearers in the term between 1850 and 1867 because of the absence of the reports. There were mostly disordered and rather mixed documents about the captains and the district, that I could rely on.

During my research it was proved again, that it is almost a hopeless effort to reconstruct the Jászkun District's whole personnel because the lesser office-bearers' names (soldiers and midwives) are unfortunately mentioned in the rarest cases.

In my dissertation - in the archontology of the Jász kun District's office-bearers - the first marked dates are the starts of the office positions, the second marked dates are the ends. For the start of the position - if it is known - I chose the election's or the invoke's date, as of the end I chose the time of resignation or, if at the time of the election another person was chosen instead, I considered the day of the election. I marked with † if the end of the position is closed by the death of the person. In the cases of different titles I will notify the names of the functions separately. After the assembly of the archontological list, I made the prosopography of the office-bearers. In my work with the research of Aranka Sugárné Kóncek, Ferenc Ruzicska, Gábor Bagi and Béla Pálmány, I found well-useable data in the case of many people. First and foremost in the cases of the clerks and Kiskun captains I couldn't rely on any preliminary research in my work.

My method of work - if the office-bearer died during the time of his position - was that I searched the Jász kun District's records to find the reference to the death, which - if in most cases they weren't exact in day or month - at least led me to a closer date. During my research I tracked down the office-bearers' graves or tombs, on which there were the year of birth and death. Based on the dates and with the help of the relating settlements' birth records, I could give the precise time and place of births and deaths. In my prosopographical work I aspired after the succinct introduction of the given person. I marked with the usual\* the date of birth and with † the date of death. If there wasn't a birth record because it didn't last or if it hasn't been instituted yet or if the exact birthplace is unknown, I marked the birth's time with „k” after the presumed year. If it is known, I will take the person's religious denomination, the parents' names and the father's occupation. I will briefly review his studies and professional career.

## **The results of the research**

In my work I briefly surveyed the origin and the Hungarian history of Jász and Kun people who comes from the east. I summarized the Kun and Jász people's institution of captains which has roots in the middle

ages and its changes until the investigated era. I analyzed the Jász kun District's history from 1696 to 1745.

As a result of my research I pieced together the archontology of supervising office-bearers in the Jász kun District with the exact time period of their work in the office. I tried to make the prosopography of the found office-bearers.

The dissertation gives an extensive picture about the higher office-bearers in the Jász kun District. As a result of my work, it can be stated that the leading elite of the Jász kun District was interested in the lasting of the privileges, so they were committed to the Habsburg rulers. These office-bearers were privileged among the privileged in the society of the Jász kun District. Although regarding their salary, they didn't earn much, but the officer's tax-free law (alive until 1843) was a great advantage to the office-bearers compared to other residents. It can be defined from the rather fragmented material relics, that in the studied era, the office-bearers in the districts really belonged to society's highest and small group, but on a national level - except a few examples - both their social positions and their financial opportunities were relatively modest and didn't reach the standards of the time's county office-bearers. The office-bearers of the Jász kun District didn't have national recognition so it is not surprising that - except a few exceptions - they didn't play a significant role in the reform parliaments. It seems as the Jász kun District lost its privileges, it's irrevocably weakened by 1867 and partially because the lobby strength of the representatives and office-bearers weakened, by the time of the 1876 national regional rearrangement they couldn't vindicate their own interests adequately. The consequence was that the districts couldn't constitute new countys, but they were distributed into others. The consequence of the rearrangement was that the once office-bearers of the districts could only fill their meaningful county positions in for a very short time.

We have to put the office-bearers of the Jász kun District above the small intellectual layer because they were educated and they had good social positions. In my opinion, with their positions in society and their family, we can consider them to be an independent layer inside the districts.

As a closure of a scientific elaboration in a historical subject, in my essay I introduced today's tradition preserving activities, pained out to the custom of the election of captains in the modern era.

In my archontological research - to ease my work - I started to gather the office-bearers' names in an excell chart for my own use. With the progress of my research I wanted to show the gathered material in a spectacular and plain way, so I took out the chart again. As a result of my archontological research, I named my work „archontological chart” which display my results in chart form. My chart - based upon my knowledge and search results - is utterly patent because I united the classic archontology with an excell chart. This new procedure makes archontology scenic and with it's investigation, It will be easier to put the office-bearers names and their office-time in place. The chart consists of two axles. The normal axle shows the studied era by year, from 1745 to 1876 and every single line is ordered to one year. The horizontal axle displays the studied jászkun prime captains, sub captains, the notaries, the jász captains, the nagykun and the kiskun captains segregated in columns. I also marked the palatines in a separate column, whose feature played a significant role in the life of jász and kun people. Each year's background colour refers to the ruling person of the era. The intersection of the year and the position shows that who beared the position in the given era. I marked each person with a different background colour because of transparency. The office-bearers are well-separable from each other, the length of the position is perceptible and the outstanding of each person's progress becomes possible. I used identical or similar colour shades with people, who belonged to the same family.

The „archontology chart” is partially simplifying. There aren't any references, exact dates with months and days, the changes in the positions names or the office-bearers noble pre-names because of the opportunities. This is why the classic archontology becomes unpassable.

Based on my results - in the cases of the examined office-bearers - it can be observed, that in most cases people with noble titles filled in the positions. In the case of the palatine prime captains every one of them came from a family with noble origins. In the examined era, among the

fifteen jászkun prime captains who filled in the position there were only two earls and both of them beared the position after 1867. So the prime captains belonged to the landed gentry and gentry socially. In a religious view, among the fifteen prime captains eleven were catholic and only four protestant, so only 27%. The protestant prime captains beared this position from 1849.

Among the seventeen jászkun sub captains only two weren't noble. Both of them were born in the districts, Imre Balogh in Szabadszállás, Orbán Sipos in Jászberény and at the same time, they were the last sub captains in the history of the Jászkun District. The sub captains' 35% were protestant.

Among the jász captains, all but one were roman catholic. Every person had noble title until 1854. In the examined era, among the twenty captains only four didn't have noble title and except three people they were all born in Jászság.

All sixteen nagykun captains were protestant and except the zendrei and gerendei Zsigmond Hegedűs (originated in Jászkisér), all were born in Nagykurság. Among the nagykun captains, probably four didn't have noble title.

Only 50% of the twenty-four kiskun captains had noble title. The protestant reached 50%. 2/3 of the fifteen clerks had noble title and 2/3 were roman catholic.

A significant elite party is observable among the Jászkun District's office-bearers, who surmanted the distircts' offices. Among them were the palatin prime- and sub captains in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, zsadányi and törökszentmiklósi Almásy family, the Dósa's who beared captain and clerk titles, the Már's from Kunszentmiklós who beared kiskun captain titles, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Pethes and Mihálkovich families. As a matter of fact, though with significant exclusions, the Péter's from Kiskunhalas and the Illéssy's from Nagykurság remained determining in the examined era.

Before 1848 almost every office-bearer had a Hungarian noble title. From the era of absolutism, after 1849, there were more people who didn't have noble title. In the case of the office-bearers religion, the protestants were in absolute domination in the Nagykun District only, but from the

1840s more and more protestant people appeared in other positions of the Jász kun District. We only know about one orthodox person among the office-bearers which makes the dominance of roman catholic and protestant religions unquestionable.

I examined the time office-bearers stayed in their positions. It isn't surprising that because of the pace of historical changes, the position of jász kun prime captain was beared shortest in 1849. Both János Illéssy III and József Patay beared the position for only three months. Among the jász kun prime captains, Pál zsadányi and törökszentmiklósi Almásy were in position for the longest time. He led the districts for 25 years.

The position of jász kun sub captains was beared the shortest by Orbán Sipos, about for a year, and the longest, for almost 22 years by Péter Horváth.

Among the clerks - also because of the 1848–49 revolution and war of independence - ilosvay Imre Varga beared the position for the shortest time: only for one and a half year. For the longest, Ferenc Pintér beared the position for 25 years, he was the clerk of the district until his death.

Among the jász captains, Zsigmond Hegedűs beared the position for the shortest time, who was captain for half a year because of the political situation in 1849. Mátyás Nagy beared the position for the longest time because he was district captain before the examined era - from 1739 - for 28 years. Because of his death, István Várady beared the position of nagy kun captain the shortest, for only 2 months. István Illéssy beared the position the longest, for 25 years. The position of kiskun captain was beared by Antal Bánhidi the shortest. He was captain for less than a year because of his death. Although in two parts, Mihály Herpay beared the position the longest, for 24 years altogether. In case of the examined office-bearers, it can be determined unequivocally that the most stable position were the clerk's. The „classic” era between 1745 and 1848 was suitable for each person to occupy a position all their lives. As it becomes clear from the synopsis, the events led to vast rearrangements and as a result, even the smaller positions changed frequently. In 1849 there were five people working as a Jász kun District prime captain to support this. In the case of jász captains, there were a changes in person 4 times between

1848 and 1849. Among the nagykun and kiskun captains, there were changes 3 times. 1849 is an obvious boundary. It can be well-observed, that until the termination of Jászkun District - until 1876 - the time people were in the positions were shorter and shorter, partially because of the mandatory change in the imperial and royal district captains, partially because of the political changes.

I examined the resignations of the office-bearers in Jászkun District. There were only two cases of resignation from the position of prime captain. In 1798, Sándor Boros resigned because of his health status and in 1870, Gedeon Ráday also couldn't bear his position further because of his „damaged” health. According to my research, in the office of the Jászkun District's clerks, 2 people resigned only. In 1812, Pál Kármán resigned because he had to live in Jászberény by reason of his position and this was a great financial burden because his estates were in the Kiskun District, to which he couldn't pay attention because of the great distance.

According to my knowledge, in 1861, the resignation of two elected office-holders weren't accepted, although after the election of Vendel Balajthy jászkun sub captain and József Kalmár kiskun captain, they immediately wanted to give back their positions alluded to their old age, the district public assembly - referring to the two people's meaningful experiences which they needed in the constitutional life that just started up - declined their resignations, so the two office-bearers accepted the positions.

Among the office bearers of the Jászkun District, the routine of resignation can be observed in the case of district captains before 1848. The established custom in the most cases was that as soon as the person reached 40 years in his time of duty, he handed in his resignation. In the era - in a unique way - the emeritus office-bearers got pension for the rest of their life.

I've introduced the festive events in the national news: the ceremony in honour of the Redemption of privileges in 1745, the first palatine visit, the centennial festivals in 1845 and the visit József Ferenc both in 1852 and 1857. The examination of these events is suitable to observe the role of the office-bearers.

In my work, I introduced buildings of the Jászkun District's halls and with the help of the old blueprints I tried to outline the original lay-out of the buildings.

After a long research I managed to gather the remaining relics of the office-holders. I've published the houses and holy erections that are still standing today (the house of Ignác Vágó jász captain, the mansion of Sándor Kálmán palatine sub captain and the house of the Eördögh family). I processed the religious buildings, too (Maria Immaculata columns, stone cross and chapel).

I managed to route out objects from individuals and guarded in public collections, most of them will be reviewed in this dissertation for the first time. The presented relics are rather diverse: furniture, paintings, segments and photographs are among them. The prison relics - made after the 1848–49 war of independence - are especially interesting and the other ornaments as well. I gathered the referenced compositions for district office-holders, too.

I dealt with the burial sites and the tomb engravings in a substantive chapter.

The gathered objects of the Jászkun District's office-holders paint a perceptual picture of the financial status of the once-owners.

I will introduce the titles and honours the office-holders of Jászkun District had and how well they were known on a national level. In my work I examine the office-bearers' literary and historical work separately. My dissertation has professional novelties in store for the researchers of the privileged districts. Both the archontological list and the prosopography of the office-holders could be a useable assistance to the researchers of the topic. In my opinion, the professionals working on lifestyle research will benefit from them. I hope, that the „archontological chart” published in the dissertation's supplement section will help other researchers who work with the examination of similar titles (national, township, urban, worldly and religious) and they will use it with success.

## **Publications relevant to the of the dissertation**

*Adalékok Kiskunfélegyháza jászfényszarusi származású telepeseihez.* In: Jászkunság kutatása 2012. Legújabb eredmények a Jászkunság régészeti, történeti, nyelvészeti és néprajzi kutatásában. Ünnepi konferenciakötet Selmeczi László 70. születésnapja tiszteletére. Kiskunfélegyháza, 2013. Szerk.: Mészáros Márta 140-147.

*A rejtélyes kiskunfélegyházi kézirat.* Jászkunsági évszázadok. A Jászkunság kutatása 2014. konferenciakötet Jászberény, 2014. (megjelenés alatt)

*Hogyan ünnepeltek 170 éve a jászok és a kunok?* 2015. május 21. <http://mult-kor.hu/hogyan-unnepeltek-170-eve-a-jaszok-es-kunok-20150521>

*A redemptio centenáriuma – Egy különleges ünnep 1845-ben.* In: Zounuk Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Megyei Levéltára Évkönyve. Szolnok, 2016. 49-72.