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PHARMACIES AND MEDICINE-SUPPLY OF "KIS-KUNSÁG" (LITTLE-CUMANIA IN HUNGARY) IN THE 18th AND 19th CENTURIES

It is well-known how underdeveloped the public health of our country was in ancient times. If we add to it that its part lying between the rivers Danube and Tisza lingered in even greater misery, I think it will be interesting to cast a glance into the past of the health conditions of this region.

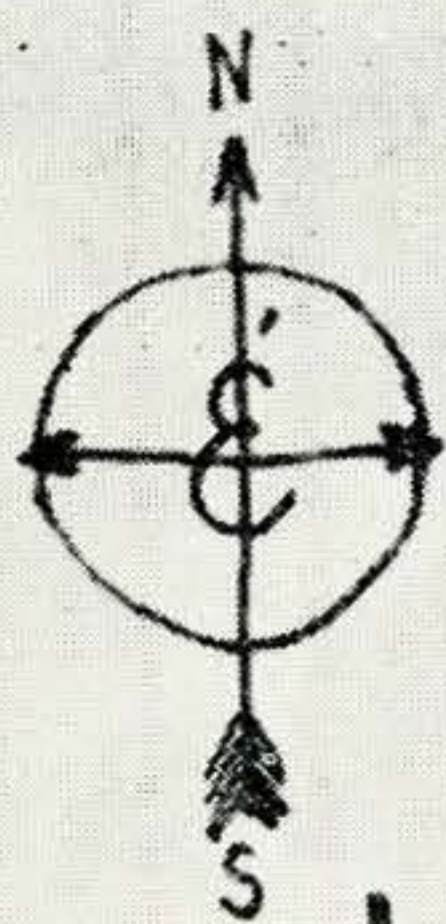
The history of a people begins generally earlier than its written relics, and our searching eye moving into the past is able to perceive less and less out of reality, as it flows together with the world of imaginary legends. Thus, dealing with the past of medical conditions in Little-Cumania, I feel it necessary to remind by some words the historic background of the age and population as well.

After the conquest of Hungary our people did not like the barren, sandy part of area between the Danube and the Tisza, which was quite uninhabited at that time, but in the 13th century Cumanians escaping from the Tartars found shelter here, and King Béla IV marked out this very region to the Cumanian newcomers. So Cumanian settlements were established at the place of today's Fülöpszállás and Kiskunhalas, and actually broke ground for the base of present localities.

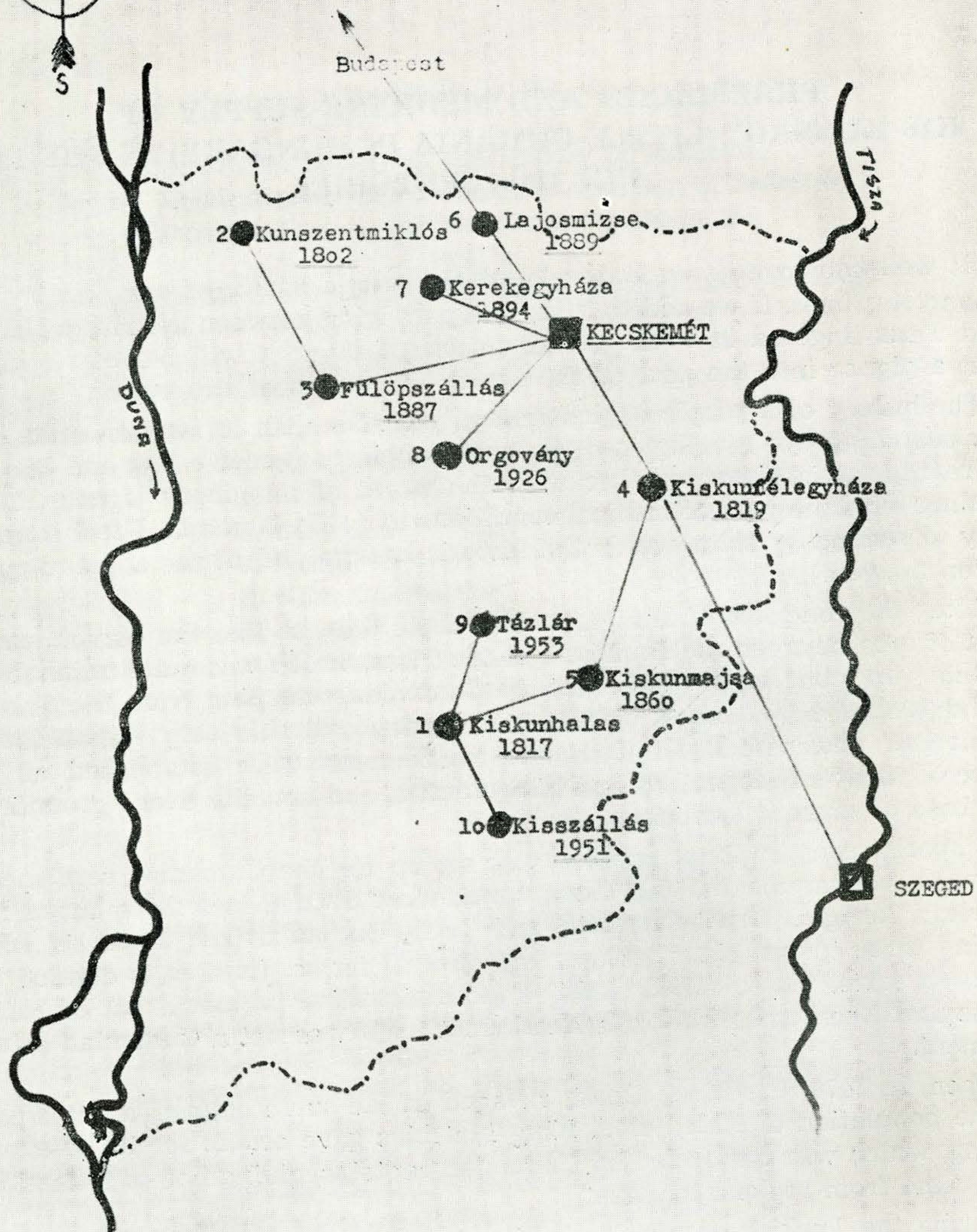
A special constitutional position was set up for the Cumanian settlements between the Danube and the Tisza, which were divided into three larger territories: Jazygia, Great-Cumania and Little-Cumania. The latter is comprising three towns, eight villages and several farms. Its area is divided into three parts, the so-called „szék”-s (administrative regions), that of Halas, Mizse and Kecskemét, although Kecskemét itself was not a Cumanian establishment.

When, in 1470, the Black Death ravaged in the surroundings, a great part of the population of Halas died. King Matthias gave orders for its re-establishing, which was performed by Cumanian captains, giving homes to families who came from regions faraway.

During the Turkish occupation lasting for 150 years, the principal occupation of those living on Cumanian-territories was live stock farming, because live stock was easier to carry away when danger come and could be well sold even in peace-time. Craftsmen were scarcely represented and artisans were to be settled here only after the conclusion of the peace of Szatmár (1711). Commerce was in the hands of Greeks both in Félegyháza and Halas. The news of the first doctor settling down in Kiskunhalas was recorded as a



K i s k u n s á g i g y ó g y s z e r t á r a k .



very important event by a notice in 1778. He found that the Little-Cumanian population was rather indifferent, therefore the establishment of a pharmacy was not worth while. He suggested to buy some medicine from Pest for 200-300 Forints, which he wanted to sell with a little profit. Doctor János Szulykó, however, could not repay the loan he received for the price of the medicines, so his further requests were rejected. In 1810 a decree in Félégyháza proposed to establish at least one pharmacy in every district in Little-Cumania and precisely Halas was considered as the most favourable for it because of its good location and popularity.

However the first pharmacy could not be set up in Kiskunhalas before 1817, and then it was by a chemist called Rudolf Novák. Later, four more pharmacies were set up in Halas, in the years 1888, 1904, 1913 and 1923. At present three of them are functioning.

The other significant Cumanian-settlement is Kunszentmiklós, which is mentioned by the various charters, issued to the Jazygian-Cumanians. During the Turkish occupation it was completely destroyed, but it figures again among the inhabited locations on the occasion of the registration in 1790, and got letter-patent for holding annual fairs in 1794, which promoted its further development.

However, in the course of its evolution a pharmacy was not set up for a long time in Kunszentmiklós. The population cured itself mostly by home-made drugs. In the best case it was the doctor himself who brought and gave medicine for his patients. This is proved by the bill of credit according to which in the year 1793 the doctor acquired drugs needed for healing from the money advanced from the town-cash. This doctor, János Szulykó, proposed to acquire drugs in the same way in Kiskunhalas three years later, in 1800. Dr. Szulykó was active in both places as official physician.

After several attempts the first pharmacy was established in the year 1802, on the basis of a permission granted for personal use to Ferenc Tóth, a chemist. Some authors put the setting up of the first pharmacy only to 1858, but this date is erroneous. It may take its origin from the fact that Zsigmond Tóth, the son of Ferenc Tóth, who worked as chemist taking over the pharmacy obtained in 1858 the authorization of its establishment, and it was acknowledged in Jászberény on the occasion of the so-called imperial tour. Some people took the date of this document to be foundation-time of the pharmacy as well.

One of the most ancient Cumanian establishments is Fülöpszállás. In its surroundings the findings of tombs unearthed bear witness of extensive settlements from Avar times. During the Turkish occupation of Hungary, the surrounding locations of this Little-Cumanian region were destroyed and their dispersed population principally escaped to this place. Thus, Fülöpszállás became peopled in such a degree, that in 1654 the location took on lease the adjacent farmsteads, Tabdi and Szöcsi. Although the village was spared by the Turks, but a great plague in 1749, then cholera in 1831, later the devastating inundation in 1850 destroyed its population. The pharmacy here has been functioning since 1887.

Another significant Little-Cumanian settlement (a Jazygian one) is Kiskunfélegyháza. It can be proved from the rich results of excavations that at the time of the migration-period a fairly numerous population lived in this area.

The first written relics about the establishment date back to the year 1389, but the community was not to be found at the same site as it is now, rather on top of the long mound extending over the north-easterly part of the town. Later it suffered much under Turkish occupation and soon became a bare lowland plain, which was taken loan by the burghers of Kecskemét together with the neighbouring farms. The fate of Félegyháza did not much improve even after the Turkish times. The Habsburg kings were unwilling to acknowledge the privileges granted to the Cumanians by earlier Hungarian kings. The Cumanians did not submit to their injurious position and took the affair before the Diet. A Jazygian-Cumanian commissioner was nominated by the Palatine of Hungary in the person János Almásy, who did a great deal in the interest of the Little-Cumanians, especially by establishing settlements in the surroundings of the barren Kiskunfélegyháza. To his summons cca 220 Jazygian families settled down, mainly from Jászfényszaru and some neighbouring villages, making in this way the main point of Kiskunfélegyháza of today. It advanced since to one of the most thriving towns of the Great Hungarian Plain. The administrative board of the times endeavoured to promote the settlement of tradespeople, building them premises of shops. The first Pharmacy-house was set up here next to the so-called Greek-shops by the Council. We can read about it in the text of the Council-Protocol collection (*Protocollum politicum*) Vol. 12 page 924 and 925 from the year 1819.

From the above we can see among others that even 60 years after the settlement-notice of Almásy, there arrived settlers to Félegyháza from Cumania, for instance from Kunszentmiklós, when the first pharmacy was established. Later on, five more pharmacies were founded in Félegyháza, in chronological order: in 1875, 1894, 1904, 1916 and 1934, from which three are functioning at present, while two were closed down after the nationalization.

The next pharmacy in Little-Cumania, about which I intend to speak is that of Kiskunmajsa. The community existed already in the Middle-Ages, but it stood then some miles farther from the village of our days, on the place of the so-called "Temple-hill" and its remains are still to be seen there. During the excavations in the early years of the last century, several instruments and jewels of the Middle Ages were brought to the surface, among which the most valuable ones are kept in the Budapest National Museum.

In Kiskunmajsa the pharmacy came into being rather late. The establishment of the first one is generally put to the year 1852, but that is not true. János Csábrády Jr., a one time chemist of Kiskunmajsa, who among others wrote a monography of this town, made thorough archival researches and stated that the first step was actually done in 1852. A year later the Council complained that the plans of the pharmacy submitted for assent had not arrived yet. In the meantime other applicants made requests for the right of establishing the planned pharmacy, including Mátyás Rozsnyai, the eminent Hungarian chemist, too. However, the authorization for granting the right came as late as 1860, and it was Pál Torjay who got it. The general assembly held in 1861 gave two hectares of field to the chemist for the purpose of creating a botanical gardens, and growing medical plants respectively. That was indicated even on official maps, as the field of "Apothecaros". The development of the community and the claims of the population made it necessary to put up a second pharmacy in 1889. It is that one which provides for the mo-

ment people with medicine, the old pharmacy being closed down after the nationalization.

Lajosmizse of today was also a significant Cumanian establishment, as the center for the former "Mizse-szék". It got its name from the last Palatine of King László IV, "The Cumanian", called Mizse. The settlement came into being by the union of the three farms: Mizse, Bene and Lajos. One of the significant Cumanian centers was the "Mizse-szék", to which formerly even Kunszentmiklós belonged. In the Turkish times this locality was destroyed, and began to develop again in the years about 1800. Its first pharmacy in 1889 got the name of King Stephen the Saint; the other pharmacy was put up in 1928, which was united with the first one after nationalization, thus Lajosmizse and its surroundings is provided now by one drugstore only.

Nearby Kerekegyháza was known formerly as Kunkerekegyháza. It was an estate of landlords already in the middle of the 15th century. In the Turkish times it was completely destroyed and became peopled gradually from the neighbouring Cumanian establishments in the 18th century only, so that in 1858 it was already an independent village. Its pharmacy was founded in 1894 by Lajos Ruttkay and was named after King Stephen. It has been functioning since then.

Orgovány belongs similarly to the Cumanian establishments of the sandy lowland plain. The locality was the property between 1436 and 1501 of the "Halas-szék" and was mentioned among the more populous settlements. It belonged for a long time to Kunszentmiklós, as an outestate and became an independent village in 1901 only. Its pharmacy has been functioning since 1926.

Tázlár had no pharmacy till after the liberation, although it was one of the most famous Cumanian settlements of the Middle Ages. It kept this character for a long time. There was great rivalry for its rich pastures, thus it was in the lease of Szeged, afterwards belonged to Soltvadkert. It became an independent community in 1872. In 1907 its name was changed to Prónayfalva, and got its original name back after the liberation only. Its pharmacy was installed in 1953, the first leader being János Csorba.

The Cumanian past of Kisszállás, in the neighbourhood of Kiskunhalas, is to be found today only in its old name, being known then as Kunszállás. Later it figured as Lőrincpuszta too. The dominial hemp-factory and the distillery—instituted chiefly on quicksand-plain—gave employment to a lot of workers. Their medical needs were met mostly from Halas and were rather complicated until the liberation. It could get a pharmacy of its own only after nationalizing the pharmacies, on the ground-floor of the hemp-factory. Today it can perform its duties transferred into a new building and renovated in its equipment as well.

I want to mention two other settlement in Little-Cumania, although they do not belong to our country-network, one of them is Kiskunlacháza, which existed already in the times of King László the Cumanian. Its pharmacy has been working since 1850. The other is in Kiskundorozsma since 1861.

Shortly summarized I wanted to tell the history of the pharmacies which are to be found between the Danube and the Tisza, which region was for a long period a privileged territory.

Finally, I want to mention that in Kecskemét in our pharmaco-historical collection there is some historical material about every pharmacy in the coun-

ty; their processing is going on. Let us hope that the selections from the region presented here did not tell details only about the old pharmacies of Little-Cumania, but made it perceptible that historic and ethnographic research, as well as the research for history of health policy are not to be separated, cannot be delimited, because health conditions and the other circumstances are closely connected and change together with the life of the settlement.