Activities of a Branch of the Trading Company of the Nikorowicz Family in Istanbul in the Second Half of the 18th Century

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18. Yüzyılın İkinci Yarısında Nikorowicz Ailesi Ticaret Şirketi'nin İstanbul'daki Bir Şubesinin Faaliyetleri

Öz ■ 18. yüzyılda, Müslüman Doğudan Lehistan-Litvanya Birliği'ne yapılan ithalat büyük ticaret şirketlerinin elinde yoğunlaşmıştı. 1772'de Lehistan'ın ilk bölünmesine kadar, Ermeni Grzegorz Nikorowicz ve oğlu Szymon tarafından yönetilen ticaret şirketi, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile ticaret yapan en büyük ve en önemli işletmeydi. Nikorowicz ailesi, Müslüman Doğu'dan mal ithalatında tekel sahibi olmasa da 18. yüzyılın ortalarında diğer Polonya ticaret şirketlerine karşı açık bir üstünlük sağlamıştı. O dönemde Lehistan soylularına ve şehir halkına ait doğu menşeli eşyaların büyük bir kısmının Nikorowicz ailesinin aracılığıyla ulaştığına şüphe yoktur. 1753'ten itibaren, Nikorowicz'in yeni bir şube açtığı İstanbul'un Beyoğlu semti, tüm işletmenin kalbi haline geldi. Burası, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan satın alınan doğu malları için sadece bir depodan ibaret değildi. Nikorowicz, İstanbul'da çalışan ve atölyelerinde onun siparişi üzerine çeşitli kumaşlar üreten çok sayıda zanaatkarla temas kurdu. Ermeni tüccar ayrıca yerel tüccarlardan bitmiş ürünler de satın aldı. El yazması kaynaklara dayanan bu makale, şirketin İstanbul şubesinin organizasyonunu ve faaliyetlerini ele almaktadır: şirket ile İstanbul'daki zanaatkarlar ve tüccarlar arasındaki bağlantı ağı, sipariş türleri ve bunların yerine getirilme yöntemi, şubenin değer ve bakım maliyetleri, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun başkentinden Lehistan'a mal nakliyesinin organizasyonu, mal nakliyesinden sorumlu Nikorowicz'in ortaklarının çevresi ve İstanbul'daki zanaatkarlar ile Osmanlı yetkilileriyle olan bağlantılar. Makalenin büyük bir kısmı, İstanbul şubesinin deposundaki malların türlerini ele almaya ayrılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Lehistan-Osmanlı Ticareti, İstanbul, Nikorowicz Ailesi, 18. Yüzyıl, Halılar, Kuşaklar.

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Introduction

Research on the history of trade between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire in the early modern era has a very long tradition in Polish historiography. The first work on this topic was written in 1792 by the Polish historian and economist of the Enlightenment, Tadeusz Czacki.[1] The research he initiated on Polish-Ottoman trade relations was continued and developed in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. Historians' interest in this topic was influenced not only by the fact that the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire maintained lively political relations in the early modern era, but above all by the process of transferring cultural elements of the Muslim East to the Polish culture.

From the sixteenth century onward, the gradual orientalization of Polish culture resulted in a very high demand for objects originating in the Muslim East.[2] Obviously, these goods reached the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth mainly as a result of trade with the Ottoman Empire and Persia, with the first of the mentioned countries being the main place for Polish merchants to purchase eastern goods. Although the literature on Polish-Ottoman trade is, as mentioned, abundant, researchers focused primarily on the history of this trade in the 16th and 17th centuries, omitting or describing to a negligible extent the trade exchange taking place in the 18th century. Two factors influenced the researchers' approach. In the first decade of the 18th century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth became a place of hostilities during the Great Northern War. The war disorganized trade routes, contributed to the fall into ruin of many Polish cities, including those that were the main centers of trade with the Muslim East, and impoverished the merchants involved in it.[3] These events, combined with the decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that progressed over the subsequent decades of the 18th century, contributed to drawing the wrong conclusion about the gradual decline of Polish-Ottoman trade at that time.[4] This hypothesis was additionally strength-

1 Tadeusz Czacki, „O handlu Polski z Portą Ottomańską", *Dzieła Tadeusza Czackiego*, t. III, ed. Edward Raczyński (Poznań: Łukaszewicz 1845), pp. 327-352.

2 This is evidenced by, among others, building manufactures in Poland specializing in the production of luxury goods following the Turkish and Persian model.

3 Andrzej Dziubiński, *Na szlakach Orientu. Handel między Polską a Imperium Osmańskim w XVI-XVIII wieku* (Wrocław: Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, 1998), pp. 235-236.

4 Jan Reychmann, *Orient w kulturze polskiego Oświecenia* (Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Ossolineum, 1964), pp. 51-52.

ened by the small number of mentions in 18th-century sources. A researcher of the history of Polish-Ottoman trade, Andrzej Dziubiński, noticed that while in the city records of Lwów (Lviv) and Kamieniec Podolski (Kamianets-Podilskyi) from the 16th and 17th centuries, the issues of trade with the East occupy a lot of space, in the 18th century the number of mentions on this subject is negligible.[5]

In fact, after the end of the Great Northern War, the trade between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire reached significant proportions. As Bruce McGowan notes, in the years 1743-1767 the export of goods from the Ottoman Empire via the northern route through Lwów increased tenfold.[6] This tendency was facilitated by the stabilization of the economic situation in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the reign of King Augustus III, which created favorable conditions for a lively exchange of goods with southern neighbor. Sources from that time clearly indicate on this. All customs and tariffs passed by the Polish Sejm during the 18th century included a whole range of oriental goods that came to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from the Ottoman Empire.[7] That these instructions were not just a mechanical repetition of the content of tariffs passed in the 16th and 17th centuries is proven by the preserved 18th century

5 Dziubiński, *Na szlakach*, p. 244.

6 Bruce McGowan, „Epoka Ajanów, 1699-1812", *Dzieje gospodarcze i społeczne imperium osmańskiego 1300-1914*, ed. Halil Inalcik and Donald Quataert (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2008), p. 637.

7 *Instruktarz Celny W. X. L. Tak Cła starego J. K. Mści. iako y Nowo podwyższonego Rzpltey W. X. L. także Donativum Kupieckiego teraz do Druku A. 1724. podany, za wolą ... Pana Stanisława .. Ciołka Poniatowskiego Podskarbiego Wielkiego y Pisarza Ziemskiego W. X. L. Według ktorego Instruktarza Exaktorowie w wybieraniu Ceł W. X. L. na Komorach y Przykomorkach sprawować się powinni,* (np.: 1724), *Instruktarz celny z wyrażeniem taxy wszelkich towarów tam ad Regnum wchodzących, iako też et extra Regnum wychodzących, et in Regno rodzących się, w ktorym praescribitur Regula iak y od czego na Komorach y Przykomorkach Cła tak J. K. M. iako y Rzeczy-Pospolitey wybierane bez żadney Depaktacyi pro Justitia bydź maią, y iako się tak Ichmć Panowie Superintendenci, iako y Panowie Pisarze, Rewizorowie rządziż y sprawować będą powinni, za podskarbiostwa J. W. Jmci P. Jana Anzgarego Czapskiego Podskarbiego W. Kor. etc,* (Warszawa: Collegium Scholarum Piarum, 1738), *Instruktarz Celny : Z wyrażeniem Taxy wszelkich Towarow tam ad Regnum wchodzących, iako też & extra Regnum wychodzących, & in regno rodzących się, wszelakich Manufaktur, iak y od czego na Komorach y Przykomorkach generalnie wszystkich, Cła tak J. K. Mći, iako y Rzeczypospolitey wybierane bez żadney depaktacyi pro Justitia bydź maią, y iako się Jchmć Panowie Superintendenci, Pisarze, Kontraregestranci, Rewizorowie, Strażnicy rządzić y sprawować będą powinni: Za Podskarbstwa [...] Teodora Wessela Podskarbiego Wielkiego Koronnego, Kawalera Orderu Orła Białego* (Warszawa: Collegium Scholarum Piarum, 1761).

custom registers from Podolia, which clearly confirm the significant trade traffic on the Polish-Ottoman border.[8] The scale of this trade was noticed by people of the era. When the envoy of Sultan Osman III, Hajj Ali Aga, arrived in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1755, he noted with great disappointment that there were no typically Polish goods in Warsaw, but only things that could be found in the bazaars of Istanbul.[9] While passing through the town Brody he noticed a large number of merchants from the Ottoman Empire.[10] The widespread presence of Turkish goods on the trade market of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and complaints about the poor treatment of Polish merchants in the Ottoman Empire best prove the vitality of this trade.[11] In turn, the small number of mentions in the sources largely reflects the changes that took place in the organization of trade with the East during the 18th century. As Dziubiński himself noted, in the second half of the 17th century, the era of large merchant caravans traveling between Lwów and Kamieniec and important trading cities of the Ottoman Empire and Persia, characteristic of previous centuries, came to an end.[12] In the 18th century, the import of goods from the Muslim East was concentrated in the hands of large trading companies, not numerous and loosely connected merchants gathering in large caravans.[13]

The small number of sources means that the view of Jerzy Motylewicz, who years ago demand introducing into scientific circulation every, even the smallest, source that would allow us to expand our knowledge about the eighteenth-century trade between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire, is still valid.[14] One of the sources that very well illustrates Polish-Ottoman trade

8 Jerzy Motylewicz, „Wymiana towarowa w rejonie środkowego biegu Dniestru w połowie XVIII wieku w świetle rejestru komory celnej w Kamieńcu Podolskim", *Kamieniec Podolski. Studia z dziejów miasta i regionu*, t. I, ed. Feliks Kiryk (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe AP, 2000), p. 258.

9 Barbara Kucharska, „Polska XVIII wieku w oczach tureckiego dyplomaty Haci Ali Agi", *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, I/41 (1962), p. 40.

10 Kucharska, „Polska XVIII wieku", p. 39.

11 Stanislas August Poniatowski, *Mémoires du roi Stanislas-Auguste Poniatowski*, t. 2 (Leningrad: l'Académie des Sciences de Russie, 1924), p. 536, Dziubiński, *Na szlakach*, pp. 243, 255.

12 Dziubiński, *Na szlakach*, p. 244.

13 Jerzy Motylewicz, „Kupcy z krajów imperium tureckiego w handlu naddniestrzańskim w połowie XVIII wieku", *Annales Academiae Paedagogicae Cracoviensis*, 21, Studia Historica III (2004), p. 376.

14 Motylewicz, „Kupcy z krajów", p. 375.

in the second half of the 18th century is the trade book of the trading company of the Armenian Nikorowicz family from 1753-1775. Until the early 1860s, this book was in the possession of the heirs of the company's owners. In 1861, their descendant Józef Nikorowicz donated the manuscript to the Poturzycka Library of Dzieduszyckis family in Lwów. This source was introduced into scientific circulation before World War II by the Polish art historian Tadeusz Mańkowski. The researcher used some of the book's records in a work on Islamic art in old Poland and in an extensive article on kontush belts produced in the manufactures of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.[15] However, the source was not the subject of a detailed analysis, which Mańkowski limited only to enumerating various types of fabrics imported by the Nikorowicz family and a very cursory presentation of the company's activities. Conducting more detailed research was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II and the post-war change of Poland's borders. As a result of these events, the book was considered lost. Its discovery in the collections of Vasyl Stefanyk's National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv enables an in-depth presentation of the trade in Turkish and Persian arts and crafts in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 18th century and its organization.

This source is particularly important for another reason. Until the first partition of Poland in 1772, the company run by Grzegorz Nikorowicz and his son Szymon was the largest and most important company involved in trade with the Ottoman Empire. Although the Nikorowiczs did not have a monopoly on the import of goods from the Muslim East, in the mid-18th century they clearly dominated other Polish companies. There is no doubt that at that time a large part of eastern objects owned by the nobility and townspeople found their way into their homes thanks to the intermediary of the Nikorowiczs family. Of course, discussing all aspects of the company's operations would significantly impact the length of this study. For this reason, this paper is devoted to the activities of the branch of the company that the Nikorowiczs opened in 1753 in Istanbul.[16] The analysis will focus primarily on three issues: the organization and mode of operation of the Istanbul branch, the role of individual commodities in its trading activities,

15 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu*, pp. 61-76, Tadeusz Mańkowski, „Pasy polskie", *Prace Komisji Historii Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności*, t. 7, z. 2 (1937-1938), pp. 101-218.

16 About the participation of the Nikorowicz trading company in the trade of eastern artistic crafts in the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth see: Marcin Łukasz Majewski, „Spółka handlowa ormiańskiej rodziny Nikorowiczów ze Lwowa i jej udział w handlu Rzeczypospolitej z Orientem w drugiej połowie XVIII wieku", *Kwartalnik Kresowy*, X, 1 (21) (2024), pp. 9-58.

and the value of the Istanbul branch along with the costs of its maintenance. Since the company operated within a specific historical and, above all, cultural context, it seems appropriate to provide a brief overview of the biography of the company's owner, the enterprise's involvement in trade between the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire, the organization of the company, and the phenomenon of the orientalization of Polish culture. The latter aspect is particularly important, as the orientalization of Polish artistic culture created the framework for the wide-ranging activities of the Nikorowicz family company. This phenomenon was, of course, multifaceted and will therefore be addressed here only in outline, in order to facilitate a better understanding of the dynamics of Polish–Ottoman trade relations in the early modern era.

I. The cultural framework of the Nikorowicz trading company's activities: the phenomenon of the orientalization of Old Polish artistic culture

The adaptation of elements of Muslim Eastern culture by the society of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was not, unlike in the countries of Western Europe, an expression of a passing fashion, but became the basic core of the old Polish cultural code.[17] This code was properly read by foreigners who clearly perceived the image of Poles as close to the appearance of Turks.[18] According to Tadeusz Mańkowski – the author of a classic work on the influence of Islamic art in old Poland – the perception of Poles as representatives of Eastern exoticism by Western European societies lasted until the second half of the 17th century.[19] In fact, this tendency was not unique to the 16th and 17th centuries. Although in the 18th century, and especially in its second half, the influence of French culture and fashion increasingly penetrated the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, orientalism was still the basic core of identification of the old Polish society. This is confirmed by the opinions of foreigners visiting the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at that time. The English diplomat Nathaniel William Wraxall wrote in 1778 that in Polish clothing was "something Asian that resembles Greece or Turkey rather than

17 Andrzej Drozd and Marcin Łukasz Majewski, „Ormianie w procesie przepływu kultury Orientu muzułmańskiego do dawnej Rzeczypospolitej", *Transfer kultury arabskiej w dziejach Polski*, t. II: *Ogniwa transferu. O roli pośredników między kulturą arabską a polską*, ed. Agata S. Nalborczyk and Mustafa Switat (Warszawa: Dialog, 2019), p. 82.

18 Drozd and Majewski, „Ormianie w procesie", pp. 83-84.

19 Tadeusz Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu w Polsce w XVII i XVIII wieku* (Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1935), p. 110.

French or German fashion".[20] An identical conclusion was drawn by the French Jesuit Hubert Vautrin, who wrote around the same time that the Polish national costume was more Asian than European in origin.[21] The English historian and traveler William Coxe, visiting the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the reign of King Stanislaus Augustus, also stated that Poles, among others, due to their clothing, they looked more like Asians than Europeans.[22] This experience was intensified during official court celebrations. One of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's friends, Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who was in Poland during the interregnum after the death of King Augustus III, recalled magnates and their soldiers dressed in the costumes of Turkish janissaries, sipahs and a whole range of oriental costumes.[23] The influence of Muslim culture in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was also noticed by inhabitants of oriental countries. When in 1763, the Ottoman envoy Ahmed Resmi Efendi passed through Poland on his way to Berlin, he noted that Polish townspeople wore Tatar costumes every day.[24]

The influence of the art of the Muslim East was not only visible in clothing. Throughout the Old Polish era, eastern fabrics were imported to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in large quantities, especially carpets and kilims.[25] They were such an important element of interior design that it is difficult to imagine a Polish nobleman's manor or a magnate's palace without them.[26] These fabrics were ubiquitous in the daily life of the inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, not only the nobility. The townspeople, both those from large and smaller towns, decorated the walls of their houses with carpets and kilims, often very valuable ones.[27] They could also be seen in the headquarters of craft corporations and

20 Nathaniel William Wraxall, „Wspomnienia z Polski", *Polska stanisławowska w oczach cudzoziemców*, t. I, ed. Wacław Zawadzki (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1963), p. 541.

21 Hubert Vautrin, „Obserwator w Polsce", *Polska stanisławowska*, p. 775.

22 William Coxe, *Travels into Poland, Russia, Sweden and Denmark. Interspersed with Historical Relations and Political Inquires* (London: Nichols-Cadell, 1784), p. 163.

23 Jacques Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, „Podróż po Polsce", *Polska stanisławowska*, p. 205.

24 Ahmed Resmi Efendi, *Des Türkischen Gesandten Resmi Ahmet Efendi Gesandtschaftliche Berichte von seinen Gesandtschaften in Wien im Jahre 1757, und in Berlin im Jahre 1763* (Berlin und Stettin: Friedrich Nicolai, 1809), p. 66.

25 Tadeusz Mańkowski, „On Persian Rugs of the So-Called Polish Type", *Ars Islamica*, IV (1937), pp. 456-459.

26 Drozd and Majewski, „Ormianie w procesie", p. 114.

27 Drozd and Majewski, „Ormianie w procesie", pp. 125-126.

merchant guilds,[28] as well as in churches, including Latin ones, where they were a very important and characteristic element of the decor.[29] In the 18th century, the fashion for eastern carpets and kilims did not change. According to priest Jędrzej Kitowicz – a Polish diarist of the Enlightenment – various types of these fabrics, primarily Turkish and Persian, were still a common element of home furnishings.[30] Therefore, a Polish nobleman or townsman came into contact with artistic crafts of the Muslim East almost at every step – in his home and in his neighbor's house, at the headquarters of the merchant guild or craft guild to which he belonged, and while participating in church services. In the church, contact with these objects was not limited only to the carpets decorating the walls or rugs lying on the floor. It was not uncommon for the priest who celebrated the service to be dressed in liturgical vestments made of Turkish or Persian fabrics.[31]

The examples cited show that Turkish and Persian arts and crafts played an important role in the daily life of the inhabitants of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth also in the 18th century. This phenomenon was best summarized by Prince Charles Joseph de Ligne, who, writing about Polish culture, stated that it was characterized by "a French tone combined with a certain Eastern feature, a European flavor married with an Asian one".[32]

The phenomenon of the orientalization of Polish artistic culture thus opened significant opportunities for merchants engaged in trade with the countries of the Muslim East. For many, this trade became a source of considerable fortune and provided a means to rise from the townspeople to the nobility. Grzegorz Nikorowicz of Lwów, hailing from a family with extensive experience in dealings with the countries of the Muslim East, was one such merchant.[33]

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28 Drozd and Majewski, „Ormianie w procesie", p. 128.

29 Mańkowski, *Sztuka Islamu*, p. 20.

30 Jędrzej Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów za panowania Augusta III* (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1985), p. 270.

31 *Ars Armenica. Sztuka ormiańska ze zbiorów polskich i ukraińskich. Katalog wystawy*, ed. Waldemar Deluga (Zamość: Muzeum Zamojskie, 2010), pp. 170-172.

32 Quote from: Jan I. Kraszewski, *Polska w czasie trzech rozbiorów 1772-1799. Studya do Historyi Ducha i Obyczaju* (Warszawa: Gebethner and Wolf, 1902), p. 8.

33 For information on the genealogy of Grzegorz Nikorowicz, see: Marcin Łukasz Majewski, „Genealogia Grzegorza Benedykta Nikorowicza ze Lwowa (1713–1789)", *Kwartalnik Kresowy*, XI, 2 (26) (2025), pp. 91-111.

II. Grzegorz Nikorowicz and the contribution of his company in the trade of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with the Ottoman Empire

Grzegorz Nikorowicz was born in 1713 as the first child of Szymon Nikorowicz from his relationship with his second wife Rozalia née Bernatowicz.[34] During his confirmation, Grzegorz was given the name Benedict.[35] Nothing is known about the first years of his life. Since he was the son of a merchant, we can only assume that in his childhood, like other sons from merchant families, he was sent to the Armenian cathedral school. There, he learned primarily the ability to read and write and the basics of arithmetic, skills necessary in mercantile activities. He probably did not complete the entire school curriculum, because the education of Armenian children, unless the parents intended their descendant for the clergy or university studies, most often ended with the acquisition of these basic skills.[36] Much more important for Grzegorz Benedict was acquiring experience

34 Szymon Nikorowicz's first wife was Konstancja née Anczkówna, whom he married in the first quarter of 1699. The couple had four children: Wiktoria, Katarzyna, Józef and Marcin. Nikorowicz was widowed between 1705 and 1712, see: *Metryka katedry ormiańskiej we Lwowie za lata 1635-1732 w opracowaniu Krzysztofa Stopki (część kipczacka) i Marcina Łukasza Majewskiego (część łacińska i polska)* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2020), pp. 570, 578-579, 585. Szymon Nikorowicz married Rozalia Bernatowiczówna in 1712, see: Biblioteka Narodowego Zakładu im. Ossolińskich (BNZiO), Dział Rękopisów (DR), 1731/II, Protokoł testamentow, krorąkuw, pierscieni, poswięcenia y innych spraw duchownych natiey ormień[skiej] lwowskiey w residentiey slachetnych ichmm. pp. sędziow teyże natiey odprawuiących się ab Anno D[omi]ni 1702 ad 1728, pp. 106-107.

35 *Metryka*, p. 616. Grzegorz Benedykt was baptized and confirmed by his uncle, priest Deodat Nikorowicz, who at that time was the vicar of the Armenian cathedral in Lwów. The boy's godparents were his grandfather Zachariasz Bernatowicz, who was a member of the authorities of the Armenian commune in Lwów, Elżbieta, the wife of Sieradz voivode Jan Aleksander Koniecpolski, Kazimierz Zapolski, vice-voivode of Sieradz, and Barbara Minasiewicz née Jaskiewicz – the wife of Jakub Minasiewicz, a judge of the Armenian nation. Such distinguished godparents indicate that Szymon Nikorowicz achieved a strong position in the Armenian patriciate and maintained close contacts with influential magnate families.

36 Krzysztof Stopka, Andrzej Aleksander Zięba, *Ormiańska Polska* (Warszawa: Fundacja Kultury i Dziedzictwa Ormian Polskich, 2018), pp. 86-87. This was related to the view held at that time that it was unnecessary to extend the study time to include subjects that were not related to future material existence. Simeon Lehacy complained about this approach to education of Armenians already at the beginning of the 17th century, see: Symeon Lehacy, *Zapiski podróżne w tłumaczeniu z języka ormiańskiego i w opracowaniu Hripsime Mamikonyan* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2022), p. 175.

in mercantile activities. He certainly gained this experience under his father's supervision, learning the principles of negotiations, the organization of trade trips, behavior at customs chambers and issues related to exchange rates and credit. An important part of this education consisted in learning about the customs of the countries of the Muslim East and eastern languages.

Young Nikorowicz probably made his first trips to the East alongside his father. Analyzing the contents of the book of the Nikorowicz trading company, Tadeusz Mańkowski rightly concluded that Grzegorz Nikorowicz knew Turkish.[37] He undoubtedly learned it during his first trade expeditions, and his father was his most important teacher. Grzegorz came from a family whose members were fluent in the language of southern neighbor. Grzegorz's brother, Mikołaj, who was two years younger, mastered the Turkish language to such an extent that he not only accompanied Polish legations in Istanbul and translated Turkish trade documents, but also wrote poems in this language.[38] There is no doubt that they owed their good knowledge of the language to their father, who traveled to Istanbul many times during his life, not only for business purposes. In the years 1712-1714, Szymon Nikorowicz was one of the interpreters assigned to Stanisław Chomentowski's legation to Sultan Ahmed III.[39] Szymon Nikorowicz maintained active contacts in the Ottoman Empire, as evidenced by the fact that in 1717 he chose an Armenian merchant from Istanbul, Arzyman Marderosowicz, as the godfather of his daughter.[40] From the information about Grzegorz Nikorowicz's trade trip to Persia, it can be concluded that, in addition to Turkish, he most likely learned Persian and was able to use it at least to the extent necessary for carrying out commercial transactions.[41]

When Szymon Nikorowicz died at the end of 1730 or at the beginning of 1731, his son was about 18 years old, so under the law at that time he was not yet an adult. As stipulated by the statutes of Armenian law, a man achieved this status only when he turned 20.[42] Certainly, during this two-three-year period, Grzegorz

37 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu*, p. 63.

38 Sadok Barącz, *Żywoty sławnych Ormian w Polsce* (Lwów: Wojciech Maniecki, 1856), p. 254.

39 Barącz, *Żywoty*, pp. 244-245.

40 *Metryka*, p. 633.

41 Biblioteka Książąt Czartoryskich w Krakowie (BKCz), Dział Rękopisów (DR), 619 IV Rkps, Actes relatifs aux affaires turques 1740-1746, t. II, nlb.

42 Biblioteka Kórnicka PAN (BKPAN), Dział Rękopisów (DR), BK00797, Prawa y Artykuły Ormian Lwowskich z łacińskiego oryginału pilnie na polski język przełożone roku 1601 a

Nikorowicz's interests were represented by a legal guardian assigned to him by the authorities of the Armenian community.[43]

We know nothing about the beginnings of Grzegorz Nikorowicz's independent activity. He appeared for the first time as an adult on January 22, 1735, accompanying his mother Rozalia in the Armenian court while writing a *krorąk*[44] with Jakub Pirumowicz, who was to marry Nikorowicz's sister – Anna.[45] Undoubtedly, at that time he was independently running the trading company inherited from his father. When *jasachy*[46] was collected in the Lwów Armenian commune in 1735, the contribution was paid by Grzegorz Nikorowicz's mother, and he himself is not on the list of payers.[47] The Armenian must therefore have been absent at that time, and a trade trip seems to be the best explanation for this absence. However, the first direct mentions of his trading activities dates back to the 1740s. In mid-July 1744, he corresponded with Prince Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł regarding sending wagons for the goods he was carrying to Nieśwież (Nesvizh).[48] In turn, in December 1746, at the request of King Augustus III, Grzegorz Nikorowicz set off to Persia, where he was to purchase products of Persian artistic crafts for the royal court.[49] The fact that he received the order from the monarch himself proves that at that time Nikorowicz's activities in trade with the Muslim East were widely known, and the trading company he ran must have enjoyed a considerable reputation.

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przepisane przez [...] Jakoba Wartanowicza, starszego praw Ormian lwowskich [...] 1658 [...], p. 74.

43 Privileges granted by kings in royal towns and by magnates in private towns gave Armenian communities in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth internal autonomy.

44 Krorąk – Armenian prenuptial agreement.

45 Львівська Національна Наукова Бібліотека України імені В.Стефаника/Vasyl Stefanyk National Scientific Library of Ukraine in Lviv (ЛННБУВС), Колекція Олександра Чоловського/The Collection of Aleksander Czołowski (КОЧ), 141, 3, 369, Materiały rodzinno-majątkowe Nikorowiczów, nlb.

46 Jasachy – in Armenian communities, contributions paid by its members.

47 BNZiO, DR, 1647/II, Dzieje Ormian lwowskich od roku 1734 do 1736, p. 47.

48 Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie (AGAD), Archiwum Warszawskie Radziwiłłów (AWR), 5/10496, Listy Domów Obcych, pp. 1-2.

49 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu*, p. 30.

III. Company organization

Nikorowicz operated on a very large scale, and the goods he imported had an extremely wide range of customers. The very good organization of the company contributed to this. Its headquarters were in Lwów, at first probably in the tenement house of Szymon Nikorowicz, and then in the Bernatowicz tenement house located on the eastern frontage of the Market Square and inherited by Grzegorz Nikorowicz.[50] This place served as the main warehouse for goods imported by Nikorowicz, mainly from the Ottoman Empire.

Nikorowicz also opened branches of his company in other cities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. They were located in houses he owned or in premises rented by him. A significant part of the goods went to the branch in Warsaw[51] located at Świętojańska Street in a tenement house adjacent to the Krakowska Gate.[52] It was run by Nikorowicz's cousin, Urszula, and her husband, Michał Łazarowicz, who had been a Warsaw citizen since 1768.[53] Piotrków, Lublin and Tarnopol also played an important role in the trade network created by Nikorowicz. Nikorowicz most likely operated in Piotrków in 1740s. For the needs of his company, he rented premises in the Dutkiewicz family's tenement house located on the southern side of the Market Square at the corner with Łazienna Sucha Street (currently Konarskiego Street).[54] In turn, in Lublin, Nikorowicz rented a property at Grodzka Street from a local Armenian, Grzegorz Faruchowicz.[55] While the mentioned properties in Warsaw, Piotrków and Lublin were only places for selling goods, the branch that Nikorowicz opened in Tarnopol served as a second center for the distribution of goods to other cities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. For example, at the beginning of August 1754, Nikorowicz sent goods intended for sale in Warsaw and Łęczna from Tarnopol, not Lwów.[56]

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50 Ruben Atoyan and others, *Armenians on the Lands of Polish Kingdom and Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 14-18th Centuries* (Warsaw: The Foundation of Culture and Heritage of Polish Armenians, 2020), nlb.

51 ЛННБУВС, Архів Дідушицьких/Dzieduszycki Archives I (АД I), ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, Rachunki i zapiski kupieckie domu handlowego Nikorowiczów we Lwowie 1753-1773, pp. 4v, 18.

52 Krzysztof Stopka and others, *Ormiańska Warszawa* (Warszawa: Fundacja Kultury i Dziedzictwa Ormian Polskich, 2012), p. 46.

53 Stopka and others, *Ormiańska Warszawa*, p. 46.

54 Archiwum Państwowe w Piotrkowie Trybunalskim (APPT), Cech Kupców w Piotrkowie (CKP), 7, Acta congregationis Mercatorum Petricoviensis 1722-1759, p. 243.

55 Archiwum Państwowe w Lublinie (APL), Akta Miasta Lublina (AML), 283, Księga rachunkowa - dochody i wydatki 1760-1776, pp. 4, 32, 77.

56 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 4v.

The choice of cities where branches of the Nikorowicz family's trading company operated was not a coincidence. Warsaw was the seat of the monarch, the place of his election and, above all, the place of the Sejm sessions, while Piotrków and Lublin were the seats of the Crown Tribunal. Crowds of wealthy nobility, who were the main buyers of goods imported by the Nikorowicz family, flocked to all these cities. Maintaining branches of the company in these cities guaranteed the Nikorowicz family constant contact with their clients. However, the owner of the company did not limit himself to selling his goods only in the branches he established. Some of the goods were also sold through intermediaries. This was the case, among others, in Warsaw, where Nikorowicz gave some of the goods for sale to his brother-in-law Jan Jędrzejowicz and Michał Łyskiewicz.[57]

The size and scale of the company is demonstrated by the quantity and value of goods sent to individual branches of the company. According to the notes in the trade book, the Nikorowicz family sent goods worth from 300 to even 3,098 ducats to their store in Warsaw.[58] Unfortunately, we do not have equally detailed data on the quantity and value of goods sent to the company's branches in Piotrków and Lublin. The surviving mentions from both cities only concern the amount of fees that Grzegorz Nikorowicz paid for the opportunity to trade in these cities. This information gives some idea of the amount of goods brought by Nikorowicz to both branches, because the value of the goods depended on the amount of fee paid. In Piotrków, in the years 1750-1751, Nikorowicz paid the collectors of the local Merchant Confraternity as much as 24 *zlotys* and 26 *groszys*.[59] None of the merchants operating in the city at that time paid such a large fee. The wine importers who were behind Nikorowicz paid 6 *zlotys* each, which best shows the disproportion between them and the Armenian merchant.[60] It was similar in Lublin. In 1760, Grzegorz Nikorowicz paid 79 *zlotys* and 24 *groszys* for the opportunity to trade in the city. Only the Armenian merchant from Lwów, Kasparowicz, paid the same rate.[61] These data indicate a very wide scale of trade conducted by Nikorowicz and the demand for the goods he offers.

57 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 11^{v}, 23. Michał Łyskiewicz also acted as Grzegorz Nikorowicz's partner in some commercial ventures. For example, in 1764, merchants jointly purchased 20 short Istanbul belts, see: ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125 , p. 16^{v}.

58 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 4^{v}-5.

59 APPT, CKP, 7, p. 243.

60 APPT, CKP, 7, p. 243.

61 APL, AML, 283, p. 32.

IV. Activities of the Istanbul branch in the second half of the 18th century

The income generated by the Nikorowicz family in trade with the Ottoman Empire provided the basis for expanding the company's activities by opening a branch in Istanbul. Since 1753, the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul, where Nikorowicz located this branch, has become the heart of the entire company.[62] This place was more than just a warehouse for eastern goods purchased in the Ottoman Empire. Nikorowicz established contact with numerous craftsmen working in Istanbul, who, at his order, made various types of fabrics in their workshops. He mainly used the services of Christian craftsmen, primarily Armenians.[63] Among them were the brothers Owanes and Kichaj Basza, Owanes Name Oglu, Stefan Suzundzy, Bohos Dzamdzy Oglu and Takwor and Aslan, who lived in the Armenian district of Istanbul – Samatya. Nikorowicz also conducted business with an unknown Greek craftsman, Zefir, and in Beyoğlu itself he used the services of a Maronite named Thomas.[64] Everyone, except Bohos, was involved in the production and processing of fabrics. In 1753, Owanes Name Oglu received an order from Nikorowicz to make a carpet and four kontush belts, and the brothers Owanes and Kichaj to make three kontush belts.[65] In the same year, the Armenian Aslan made a mihrab kilim for Nikorowicz.[66] He was a regular supplier of these fabrics. According to a list of goods prepared in 1753, Nikorowicz's warehouse in Istanbul contained as many as 6 mihrab kilims of the best quality made by Aslan.[67] This craftsman also produced kontush belts and curtains.[68] Takwor also produced belts for Nikorowicz in his workshop in Samatya.[69] He also supplied *brokats*.[70] Zefir the Greek and Thomas the Maronite were also belt makers.[71] Bohos, in turn, was a craftsman producing teapots.[72] Nikorowicz also cooperated with Muslim

62 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 1.

63 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu*, p. 65.

64 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 57, 58-58^{v}, 60.

65 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125 , p. 57.

66 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 58^{v}.

67 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2^{v}-3.

68 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2^{v}-3, 58^{v}.

69 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2, 4, 58.

70 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 2^{v}. Brokat (lat. *broccatum*) – a patterned fabric with gold or silver metallic thread in the background or design.

71 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2-2^{v}, 4.

72 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 60.

craftsmen. The associate of the above-mentioned Owanes Name Oglu was the Turk Haji Ahmed, and some of the kontush belts were made for him by the Turkish craftsman Sabri.[73] Nikorowicz's orders were also carried out by a turner from Tophane, Haji Mehmed, who was involved in the production of pipes.[74]

Most often, orders were placed in individual craft workshops by Nikorowicz himself. The type and size of the order, the deadline for completion, the method of collection, and the amount of remuneration and method of payment were then determined. Nikorowicz most often paid the entire amount in advance, as was the case with orders from Owanes Name Oglu and his partner, or the brothers Owanes Usta and Kichaj Basza.[75] Sometimes, however, when placing an order, Nikorowicz paid only a part of the sum upfront and the rest later. This was the case with the kilims that he ordered from Aslan of Samatya in 1753.[76] After paying cash, the placed order was entered by the craftsman into the register book, and Nikorowicz, as the ordering party, received a receipt confirming the payment, describing the type of order and the date and method of its delivery.[77]

Tadeusz Mańkowski rightly noticed that not all of the goods sold by Nikorowicz came from direct orders from Istanbul craftsmen. The Armenian also bought ready-made products from local merchants.[78] This is evidenced by the presence in Nikorowicz's offer of arts and crafts from other parts of the Ottoman Empire: Ankara, Bursa, Kayseri, Aleppo, Jerusalem, Baghdad, Chios, Arabia and Crimea, as well as products of Turkmen and Persian craftsmen, among others from Khorosan and Isfahan.[79] The names of several merchants from whom Nikorowicz purchased goods were recorded in his trade book. He bought *Sakiz* belts from Antonio Walizaria – most likely an Italian or Greek from the island of Chios, from Osman Kaliodzys he bought *dzyryds*,[80] i.e. Turkmen carpets, and from Jakub Czyhazy and Kicorek Ortakow he bought teapots.[81] Eastern goods from other cities of the Ottoman Empire or Persia could be bought either in Istanbul, to which they were

73 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2-2^{v}, 57, 58.

74 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 58.

75 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 57.

76 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 58^{v}.

77 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125 , p. 57.

78 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu*, p. 63.

79 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2-4, 13.

80 Dzyryd – a word of unknown origin used as the name for Turkmen carpets.

81 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2^{v}, 3^{v}.

brought by other merchants, or he could go directly to the great trading cities of Anatolia and Syria. It is known that Nikorowicz rented a merchant ship in Istanbul for his needs, so a sea trip to Chios, the Syrian coast, Crimea or other parts of the country to buy goods became possible.[82] It is known that in mid-1753, a ship rented by Nikorowicz set off on a trade journey from Istanbul to İsmail.[83] He collected the goods purchased in Istanbul in his store in Beyoğlu,[84] and then, depending on the demand of the Polish market, he sent them to Lwów.[85] From there they were transported to other cities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, selling them at fairs.[86]

Although for Nikorowicz Poland was the main market for eastern goods, it is known that he also traded in them in Istanbul itself. From at least 1753 he paid for a place in Istanbul's largest caravanserai, Büyük Valide Han, built in 1651 by Kösem Valide Sultan.[87] The Nikorowicz family sold their goods there for a long

82 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 57.

83 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 60^{v}.

84 It should be noted that Nikorowicz purchased products of Eastern crafts not only in craft workshops and bazaars in Ottoman cities, but also during fairs held in Polish cities. For example, in 1766, while attending a fair in Brody, which was at that time an important center of trade with the Muslim East, Nikorowicz bought, among others, several types of *pesma*, Syrian *kitajka*, small Istanbul belts, kilim from Bursa and a pair of Gordesian carpets, i.e. those woven in the city of Gördes in western Anatolia. This was not an isolated case, because a year earlier Nikorowicz was selling *pesmas*, Istanbul belts and fabrics from Aleppo, which he bought in Brody. In August 1765, he also purchased a certain amount of eastern goods in Tartaków near Sokal during a fair held there. He then bought *kimberents*, Chinese and Istanbul belts, *pesma*, fabrics from Aleppo and a Khorasan carpet. He intended for goods purchased in Poland to be sold locally. For example, the things he purchased in Tartaków in August 1766, i.e. belts, fabrics from Aleppo, a Syrian *kitajka*, kilims from Bursa and rugs, he sent to a store in Warsaw, see: Ibidem, pp. 21-22. He also purchased eastern goods in Poland in emergency situations. For example, in a letter that Nikorowicz wrote on December 23, 1767 to Prince Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, he explained that he ordered the oriental fabrics interwoven with gold ordered by the prince's wife to be sent to his son Szymon from Istanbul because he could not get them in Poland, see: AGAD, AWR, 5/10496, p. 18, Majewski, *Spółka handlowa*, pp. 19-20.

85 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 4^{v}, 57^{v}.

86 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 4^{v}-5, 6^{v}-7^{v}, 9, 10, 11^{v}, 13, 15, 18-19^{v}, 20^{v}-23^{v}, 24, 27. The trade book of the Nikorowicz family's company shows that, apart from Warsaw, Tarnopol, Lublin and Piotrków, Nikorowicz also traded in Brody, Tartaków, Dubno and Łęczna. It is also known that he also sent goods to Gdańsk. These were certainly not the only places where he traded, see: Majewski, *Spółka handlowa*, p. 20.

87 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 62^{v}.

time. From a letter of an Armenian merchant from Brody, recently published by Agnes Ouzounian and Andrzej Pisowicz, it appears that in 1770, Grzegorz Nikorowicz's son, Szymon, still operated in this caravenserai.[88] Eastern goods were sold by the Nikorowicz family, among others, to diplomats residing in Istanbul. It is known that the Moscow and Swedish ambassadors purchased products of Eastern arts and crafts from them. The former conducted business with the Nikorowicz family through his factor David, while the latter was contacted by Nikorowicz's factors.[89] The above-mentioned diplomatic representatives bought products of Eastern arts and crafts not only for themselves or for gifts, but also to earn money. Such activity was carried out by the ambassador of the Swedish king, who in 1753 placed a large order with Nikorowicz for the eastern belts. These were woven by local craftsmen, including the already known Owanes Name Oglu and Haji Ahmed, as well as Zefir the Greek. Then, on Nikorowicz's orders, these goods were sent by a janissary serving the Swedish ambassador to an Armenian merchant, Bedros Dzamdzy Oglu, living in a village near Istanbul (brother of Bohos, a craftsman from Istanbul already known to us), who was to sell them.[90]

In Istanbul, the Nikorowiczs also traded in other goods, e.g. jewelry.[91] Apart from arts and crafts, the Nikorowiczs sold in the Ottoman capital household accessories, balms, playing balls and caviar.[92] The Nikorowiczs also traveled with goods to other cities of the Ottoman Empire. During the mentioned trip to İsmail, unspecified goods were transported on the ship rented by Grzegorz Nikorowicz.[93] In 1753, Nikorowicz sent to this city 150 brooms, which were traded by the Armenian merchant Baindur *mahdesi* (maqdisī)[94] in one of the caravanserais.[95]

The Nikorowicz family's company operated on a very large scale, and although Grzegorz Nikorowicz managed it personally, traveling between Istanbul, Lwów, Lublin and Warsaw, he would not have been able to conduct such extensive

88 Agnes Ouzounian, Andrzej Pisowicz, „Ormiański list z Brodów do Stambułu z 1770 roku", *Lehahayer*, 9 (2022), p. 87.

89 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 60^{v}, 64.

90 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 62.

91 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 63.

92 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 57^{v}-58, 62-63.

93 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 60^{v}.

94 Mahdesi (Ar.: maqdisī) – an honorary title given to Armenians who had made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

95 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 62.

activities without his associates. He had to employ suppliers of goods and people who would supervise the business in his absence in Istanbul or Lwów. Nikorowicz employed at least several factors responsible for transporting goods to individual cities. The trade book lists, among others, Stefan Bogdanowicz, an Armenian from Lwów, Jędrzej Andziułowski and the unknown Dziokowski and Krzysztof.[96] In the first half of the 1770s, after the first partition of Poland and the annexation of Lwów by Austria, the Armenians Babig and Malchas were the factors between this city and Istanbul.[97] Sometimes Nikorowicz also used the services of factors of other merchants who were traveling with goods to the city where he intended to deliver his own goods. For example, at the beginning of June 1764, he sent a certain amount of goods to Warsaw through the carter Wojciech, who was going to the capital to take French cloth for the nobleman Francki.[98] In turn, Szymon Nikorowicz delivered oriental fabrics for Princess Anna Luiza Radziwiłłowa to his father to Chocim (Khotyn- Hotin tr.) near the border with Poland, taking advantage of the fact that one of the merchants was going there.[99] Sometimes Nikorowicz sent with the goods craftsmen with whom he cooperated. In Istanbul, Bohos Dzamdzy Oglu acted as a supplier, while in Poland he used the services of a Jewish goldsmith Lewek, whom he instructed to decorate equestrian equipment.[100] In September 1767, through him, he delivered belts and other fabrics to the Warsaw shop of Urszula Nikorowiczówna Łazarowiczowa.[101]

The above-mentioned factors only acted as suppliers of goods, but apart from them, Nikorowicz also had closer associates who, apart from forwarding, also helped him in managing the company. The first of them was Grzegorz Nikorowicz's son – Szymon, who, on his father's orders, went with the goods from Istanbul to Poland and on his behalf supervised the activities of individual branches.[102] First of all, during his father's absence, he also looked after business in Istanbul.[103] This is how Grzegorz's future heir learned how to run the company. The second associate, Armenian Mikołaj Czerkies, also played a similar role. Czerkies was

96 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 4^{v}, 5^{v}, 9^{v}, 15, 18, 19.

97 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 57^{v}.

98 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 19.

99 AGAD, AWR, sygn. 5/10496, p. 18.

100 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 11, 64.

101 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 20^{v}.

102 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 6^{v}.

103 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 57^{v}.

born in 1713, so he was a contemporary of Grzegorz Nikorowicz, but it is not known when the two Armenians established close cooperation with each other.[104] Certainly, when the branch of Nikorowicz's company was established in Istanbul, Czerkies was already playing the role of his right hand.[105] He was not only responsible for the transportation of goods from the capital of the Ottoman Empire to Lwów, but also for financial settlements with Istanbul craftsmen.[106] For example, when at the beginning of 1753, Grzegorz Nikorowicz was leaving Istanbul, he ordered Czerkies to take the goods ordered from Owanes Usta and his brother Kichaj and Takwor.[107] It is likely that Czerkies was not hired by Nikorowicz solely for his sales skills. At that time, Czerkies lived in Kamieniec Podolski and from the first years of the reign of King Augustus III he served as an interpreter at Polish legations sent to Istanbul.[108] Since the members of the legations were exempt from customs duties, cooperation with Czerkies, who, while assisting the envoy, could transport a significant amount of goods across the border without having to pay customs duties, was extremely beneficial for Nikorowicz. An additional advantage of the Armenian from Kamieniec, important from the point of view of Nikorowicz, was knowledge of the Turkish language. An anecdote described by the sightseer Józef Apolinary Rolle gives an idea of the degree of mastery of the Turkish language by Czerkies. During the Bar Confederation, Czerkies, acting as Ksawery Branicki's messenger to the pasha in Chocim, had serious problems with translating the letter that Branicki sent to Chocim, as well as the answer given by the Ottoman dignitary.[109] In the light of this opinion, it is difficult to agree with Tadeusz Mańkowski, according to whom Czerkies knew the Turkish language perfectly.[110] In fact, this Armenian, like many of his compatriots, knew the language used in the bazaars of Istanbul, i.e. the colloquial language. Without a doubt, Czerkies knew the merchant jargon enabling him to conclude transactions, pay customs duties, and handle matters related to the daily operation of the

104 Aleksander Prusiewicz, *Kamieniec Podolski. Szkic historyczny* (Kijów-Warszawa: Leon Idzikowski, 1915), p. 82.

105 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 4^{v}.

106 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 4^{v}.

107 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 57.

108 Józef Apolinary Rolle, *Zameczki podolskie na kresach multańskich*, t. I: *Kamieniec nad Smotryczem* (Warszawa: Gebethner and Wolf, 1880), p. 252.

109 Józef Apolinary Rolle, *Nowe opowiadania historyczne* (Lwów: Gubrynowicz and Schmidt, 1907), p. 134.

110 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu*, p. 63.

company. So, the elegant court language of the Ottoman chancelleries sounded foreign to him. Moreover, Czerkies could only use Turkish in speech because he did not know the Arabic script, which was reported to King Stanislaus August by Ksawery Branicki in an alarming tone, writing that "Czerkies cannot read Turkish script [...]".[111] However, it was important for Nikorowicz that his associate was able to come to terms with Istanbul merchants, craftsmen and Ottoman officials. Another associate of Grzegorz Nikorowicz was his half-brother Józef, who acted as his trusted factor.[112]

Transporting goods to Poland or other cities of the Ottoman Empire required appropriate preparations. The goods that the Nikorowiczs decided to take to Lwów were carefully packed in tissue paper or blotting paper, and then loaded onto wagons and secured with ropes by Istanbul porters (*hamallar*).[113] Before leaving for a long and dangerous journey, the Nikorowiczs equipped themselves with transport documents and ordered holy masses in the Armenian churches of Istanbul in the intention of successful business dealings and a safe return.[114] When leaving the capital, they had to pay export duty and a tax, also known as a small toll, at one of the city gates. Their amount depended on the type of goods transported, which were carefully inspected by Ottoman inspectors before leaving the city. To make this control as least burdensome as possible, the Nikorowiczs spared no effort to appropriately reward Ottoman officials. In 1753, they gave a 10 *para* bribe to the inspectors, and paid 13 *kurushs* and 30 *para* to the Jew Johuda Lejzor, who was responsible for collecting the small toll.[115] The bribes and gifts provided guaranteed peaceful customs clearance and the fact that Ottoman officials turned a blind eye to the actual quantity and value of the transported goods.

It might seem that the Nikorowiczs and their factors traveled from Istanbul to Lwów along land trade routes, but in the customs registers of Kamieniec Podolski in 1764 there was an interesting annotation. Customs officers reduced the customs duty for Grzegorz Nikorowicz's goods due to getting wet during transport by sea.[116] This means that Nikorowicz made part of his trade journey

111 Rolle, *Nowe opowiadania*, p. 135.

112 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125, pp. 56^{v}, 59.

113 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125, pp. 60-60^{v}.

114 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125, p. 60.

115 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125, p. 60^{v}.

116 AGAD, Archiwum Kameralne (Arch. Kameralne), III/1564, Regestra i percepta komory celnej - Kamieniec Podolski 1764-1765, p. 14.

by sailing along the western coast of the Black Sea. From the notes in the book it can be concluded that the goods were transported by ship to İsmail, and from there they set off by land towards the Polish border.[117] After crossing it, they had to pay customs duties, the amount of which depended on the quantity and type of goods transported. On May 23, 1764, Józef Nikorowicz paid customs duty in the amount of 1,157 *zlotys* and 23 *groszys* in Kamieniec. Two days later, goods transported through the same custom chamber by Grzegorz Nikorowicz were subject to a duty of 675 *zlotys*.[118] In March of the same year, Grzegorz Nikorowicz paid 907 *zlotys* in customs duties in Lwów, and in September 1766 he also paid 204 *zlotys* for weapons and equestrian equipment.[119] In turn, Józef Nikorowicz's factor – Józef Czechowski, carrying goods from Istanbul, paid 1,388 *zlotys* in customs duties in Kamieniec on September 3, 1765.[120]The amount of custom should have been higher, but each time the Nikorowiczs were exempted from part of the fees. Their reasons – apart from one exception, when the customs officers reduced Grzegorz Nikorowicz's duty by 75 *zlotys* because the goods were wet – are unknown. However, we can guess that some of the goods that the Nikorowiczs transported across the border were the property of the nobility, and such goods were not subject to customs duty. Since merchants could significantly reduce or even avoid customs duties when transporting goods belonging to the nobility, it was common practice to be in business with the nobility. The Nikorowiczs themselves also took advantage of this opportunity, as evidenced not only by the preserved customs registers. Grzegorz Nikorowicz had particularly close interests with Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł and Grand Hetman of the Crown Jan Klemens Branicki. In January 1762, Nikorowicz thanked the latter for the pass sent to his son Szymon, who was going to Istanbul for goods.[121] At the beginning of August 1766, in a letter sent to the hetman, Nikorowicz asked for an *asygnata*, i.e. a receipt exempting from customs duties for a piece of *pesmas* and *dyma* for sewing a *żupan*.[122] In turn, the expenses made in 1753 by the Istanbul company included, among others: purchase of a box to transport the envoy's goods.[123] Both sides benefited from this type of connections. The benefits went beyond

117 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 60^{v}.

118 AGAD, Arch. Kameralne, III/1564, pp. 13-14.

119 AGAD, Arch. Kameralne, III/1596, Percepta komory celnej – Lwów 1764-1767, pp. 5, 23.

120 AGAD, Arch. Kameralne, III/1564, p. 18.

121 AGAD, Archiwum Roskie (AR), 1/14.71, Korespondencja, p. 7.

122 AGAD, Archiwum Roskie (AR), 1/14.71, p. 18.

123 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 62.

purely commercial matters. The constant presence of the Nikorowiczs in Istanbul meant that they acted as informants about the political events taking place on the Bosphorus. For example, on April 24, 1765, Nikorowicz informed Branicki about envoy Stankiewicz's audience with Grand Vizier Köse Bahir Mustafa Pasha in February, as well as the vizier's subsequent dismissal.[124]

By conducting trade on such a large scale, the Nikorowiczs traded in significant sums of money. They were also active in the credit market. Little is known about their activities in this field in Istanbul (as opposed to their activities in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). From the notes in the trade book, it is only known that in 1754, among the Nikorowiczs debtors were the well-known Armenian weaver Owanes Name Oglu, who owed the company 228 *kurushs*, and the Ottoman mullah Mehmed, to whom the Nikorowiczs granted a loan of 7 *kurushs*.[125] The source of the success of the entire project was the Nikorowiczs company involvement in importing primarily products of the Turkish arts and crafts, which were extremely desirable in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

V. Goods

V.a Kontush belts

The goods imported by the Nikorowiczs from the Ottoman Empire to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth can be divided into six groups: fabrics, accessories for smokers, coffee and tea making accessories, weapons, equestrian equipment and other goods purchased by the company only occasionally. The first inventory of goods collected by the Nikorowicz family in their branch on Beyoğlu, prepared on August 1, 1753, lists only items belonging to the first three groups,[126] but the fact that at that time the company also traded in weapons and equestrian equipment is proven by notes from 1754 on the transport of these goods for sales in Warsaw.[127]

Among the fabrics, the most important were undoubtedly the kontush belts, carpets and kilims, i.e. those products of Eastern arts and crafts that were in greatest demand in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Since at least from

124 AGAD, (AR), 1/14.71, p. 16.

125 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 61^{v}.

126 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125 , pp. 2-4.

127 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 5.

the beginning of the 17th century, Persian belts, carpets and kilims were the most popular in Poland, it might seem that they should be the dominant goods of the Nikorowicz family's company. Meanwhile, out of 311 kontush belts offered by the Armenian company in 1753, only two came from Persia, while the rest were made by Ottoman craftsmen from Ankara, Chios and Istanbul.[128] Also among carpets and kilims, the products of Persian weaving workshops did not play a major role. Out of a total of 83 fabrics of this type, only one was the product of a weaving workshop in Khorosan, Persia.[129] The offer was dominated by carpets made by Turkmen tribes and those produced by craftsmen in Ottoman Bursa.[130] In the later years of the company's activity, this situation did not change. In 1764, the Nikorowiczs brought 8 Persian belts to Warsaw for sale, while as many as 18 belts produced in Baghdad and 20 in Istanbul.[131] Even belts of Polish production, i.e. produced in a manufacture in Stanisławów (today: Ivano Frakivsk on Ukraine) dominated over those from Persia.[132] However, this should not lead to the conclusion that the fashion for Persian design has ended in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It was still extremely popular, but at that time, instead of belts produced in Persian weaving workshops, belts made by Ottoman craftsmen imitating the design of belts from Persia were purchased. The Nikorowiczs company itself is the best example of such activity. In 1753, their warehouse in Istanbul included as many as 48 belts woven in the Persian style. All of them were created in the workshops of local craftsmen – 38 were made by the Armenian Owanes Name Oglu, and the rest by the Greek Zefir.[133]

128 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2-4.

129 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 3.

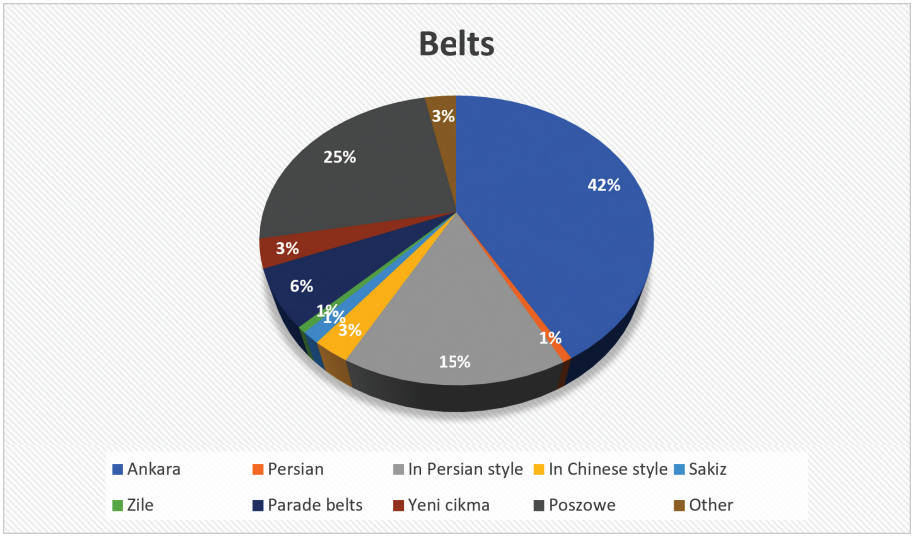
130 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2v-3.

131 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 16-16v.

132 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 16v.

133 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125 , pp. 2, 4.

Chart 1. Types of kontush belts in the Istanbul warehouse of the Nikorowicz company in 1753



The chart above shows the types of kontush belts in the Istanbul warehouse of the Nikorowicz family in 1753. All of them, apart from the two Persian belts mentioned above, were products of Turkish crafts. Belts produced in Ankara clearly dominated. The description in the trade book shows that they did not have any decorations and were sold in three colors: red, white and white-yellow. Red and white-yellow belts must have been the most popular since Nikorowicz bought the most of them (60 and 50 pieces, respectively).[134] The second place in terms of quantity was taken by the so-called *poszowe* belts. According to Tadeusz Mańkowski, their name comes from the Persian noun *pūsh* meaning covering or clothing.[135] A different opinion was expressed by Irena Turnau, an eminent researcher of textiles in old Poland, according to whom the adjective *poszowy* comes from the Turkish noun *pasha* and in fact means a product of Turkish crafts, most often various types of fabrics.[136] Even if we accept Mańkowski's hypothesis about the Persian origin of the *poszowy* belt, the belts of this type offered by the Nikorowiczs were the products of Istanbul craftsmen: 49 of them were made in the workshop of the Maronite

134 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125 , pp. 3-3^{v}.

135 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu*, p. 123.

136 Irena Turnau, *Słownik ubiorów. Tkaniny, wyroby pozatkackie, skóry, broń i klejnoty oraz barwy znane w Polsce od średniowiecza do początku XIX w.* (Warszawa: Semper, 1999), p. 134.

Thomas, 22 in the workshop of Owanes Name Oglu, 6 in the workshop of the Armenian Aslan of Samatya and one in the workshop of the Turkish artisan Sabri.[137] They were made in various colors, e.g. white, crimson, or crimson-navy blue. In contrast to the Ankara belts, the *poszowe* belts had decorations. For example, the fields of belts made by the Maronite Thomas were decorated with silver columns, tiles or red lines. For one of the belts, this craftsman made a red and white border. In turn, the fields of the crimson-navy blue belt that Nikorowicz ordered from Sabri were adorned by him with gold and silver spots.[138] Of the rest belts in Nikorowicz's warehouse, only belts woven in the Persian style accounted a greater number. They were characterized primarily by intricate decorations on the heads of the belt, i.e. its ends. Mostly stars or floral motifs were placed in them.[139]

Persian decorative motifs were not the only foreign patterns imitated by Turkish arts and crafts. Nikorowicz also imported to Poland belts woven in the style of Chinese belts. According to Jędrzej Kitowicz, a diarist from the reign of King Augustus III, these fabrics:

> were made of wool so delicate that although this type of belt was 2 ells wide, it could be threaded through a ring. Such a belt was called a buffalo belt, it was used for the richest clothing, but it had no other decoration except borders, i.e. edges, fancifully decorated with beautiful flowers. The belt was one color: green, orange, crimson and white. It was so appreciated that even though it had nothing expensive or decorative except for borders, people paid 50 red zlotys for one, especially a white one, when it was new and not worn. Such unused belts were difficult to import to Poland. Most of them were brought from Turks and Persians rolled into coils and then cleanly washed, ironed and sold as new by our Armenians.[140]

The description presented by Kitowicz basically agrees with the characteristics of this type of belts offered by Nikorowicz. In all of them, flowers embroidered with gold or silver thread placed in the heads of the belt were the main decorative motif, while the fields of the middle part of the belt were mostly devoid of decorations. The exception was one of the belts, whose fields were filled with cents.[141] Nikorowicz ordered them from the Greek Zefir and the Armenian Takwor.[142]

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137 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2-2^{v}.

138 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2-2^{v}.

139 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2-2^{v}.

140 Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów*, p. 251.

141 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2, 4.

142 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2, 4.

Based on the types of belts purchased by the Nikorowiczs, it can be concluded that these merchants were not only guided by demand, but also tried to introduce hitherto unknown models to the market. This is evidenced by the purchase of 10 belts described as *yeni cikma*,[143] which, according to Tadeusz Mańkowski, should be understood as belts of the latest fashion, being a novelty on the market.[144] This is confirmed by the order that Nikorowicz placed in the workshop of Haji Ahmed and Owanes Name Oglu in 1753. The order register listed, among others: short kontush belts described as *nowomodne* (new fashion).[145]

V.b. Carpets and kilims

Carpets and kilims were an important part of the Nikorowicz's offer. The Armenian company imported them in large quantities, as in the case of belts, due to the high demand for these goods. Carpets present both in magnate palaces and noble manors, as well as in churches, tenement houses and guild houses were the most easily visible testimony – to use the term used years ago by Mirosława Zakrzewska-Dubasowa – "orientalization of artistic taste in Poland".[146] In 1753, the Nikorowiczs' goods warehouse in Istanbul contained as many as 42 carpets and 40 kilims.[147]

As in the case of belts, the vast majority were products of Turkish arts and crafts. Based on the trade book's notes, we are not able to indicate the places of production of all the carpets and kilims. They came from, among others: from Bursa, Chios (Sakiz), Kula and other Anatolian cities and towns.[148] They were also produced in Istanbul workshops. As we remember, kilims for Nikorowicz were made by, among others, Armenian Aslan of Samatya.[149] In total, the list of goods from 1753 lists 11 types of carpets and kilims.

143 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 3^{v}.

144 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu*, p. 120.

145 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 57.

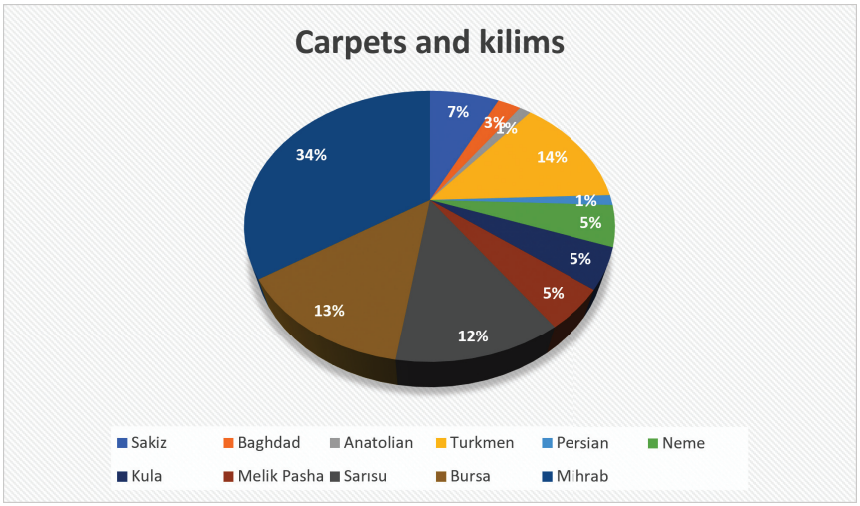
146 Mirosława Zakrzewska-Dubasowa, *Ormianie zamojscy i ich rola w wymianie handlowej i kulturalnej między Polską a Wschodem* (Lublin: UMCS, 1965), p. 122.

147 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2-4.

148 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2-4.

149 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125 pp. 2^{v}-3, 58^{v}.

Chart 2. Types of carpets and kilims in the Istanbul warehouse of the Nikorowicz company in 1753



Among them, the most significant number, as much as 34%, were the so-called *mihrab* kilims taking their name from *mihrab*, i.e. kilims whose characteristic feature was decoration in the form of a niche often surrounded by columns.[150] The producer of some of them was the mentioned Armenian Aslan.[151] Second in popularity, but less popular than *mihrab* kilims, were Turkmen carpets.[152] They were most likely products of Turkmen tribes roaming the Ottoman-Persian border, or fabrics made by Istanbul craftsmen on the model of Turkmen carpets. The fact that at least some of the carpets of this type were made by Istanbul carpet makers is evidenced by the information contained in the Nikorowiczs trade book about their purchase of 3 such carpets from Osman Kaliondzys from Istanbul, who had his workshop among quilt producers.[153]

Apart from them, a large number of kilims were imported to the capital from Bursa – an important center of carpet production – and the so-called *Sarısu* carpets,[154] which Tadeusz Mańkowski associated with southwestern Anatolia.[155] Other types

150 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 3.

151 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 3.

152 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125 , pp. 2v-3.

153 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 2v.

154 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 3.

155 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu*, p. 123.

of carpets and kilims were a significant minority in the Nikorowicz company's offer. Of greater importance were carpets imported from Chios, of which the Armenian company offered 6 pieces, and carpets of the *Neme* and *Kula* type, of which the Nikorowiczs had 4 pieces each.[156] The latter were produced by craftsmen from the city of Kula in western Anatolia, famous at that time for the production of carpets.

It is significant that the Persian carpets, which were supposedly more esteemed in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, were represented in the Nikorowicz offer only by one carpet known as a rug. It was made in Persian Khorasan, but was not imported from there by the Nikorowiczs. The list of goods indicated that it was a used carpet, so it was undoubtedly purchased by them in one of the Ottoman cities, most likely in Istanbul itself.[157] Also in the lists of goods that the Nikorowiczs stored in Lwów or sent for sale to other cities of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, there are no Persian carpets, apart from the one listed in the 1753 list.[158] In the 18th century, this was a characteristic feature of companies specializing in the import of Eastern goods. In the list of goods of the Armenian merchant from Warsaw, Deodat Bogdanowicz from 1790, Turkish, Russian and even Polish carpets were mentioned, but no carpets from Persia. The merchant had only half of a very old Persian kilim, most likely in not the best condition since it had the lowest price, even lower than carpets and kilims produced in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.[159]

From the list of goods sent by Nikorowicz from Lwów to Warsaw on March 22, 1764, it is known that the company imported three more types of carpets from the Ottoman Empire: *giordeskie*, *zile* and *mysyrskie* (*Mısırlı*).[160] They were all products of Turkish arts and crafts. The first two types of carpets were produced in the Ottoman cities famous for carpet production: Gördes in western Anatolia and Zile in the north-eastern part of the peninsula. *Mysyrskie* carpets, on the other hand, were fabrics produced in Egypt. Apart from them, the list of goods from 1764 also lists *w giobek* carpets, i.e. fabrics in which the central ornament was a medalion.[161]

156 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2v-3.

157 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 3.

158 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125 , p. 21.

159 AGAD, Księgi miejskie Starej Warszawy (KMSW), 331, Księga oblat inwentarzów, exdywizjów, tradycjów, regestrów i innych dzieł rozmaitych 1790, pp. 217v-218.

160 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 15, 16.

161 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 15.

V.c Other fabrics

Apart from kontush belts, carpets and kilims, the company's offer also contained other types of fabrics. As in the case of belts and carpets, these were both imports from other cities of the Ottoman Empire and products of local craftsmen. The first group included *dyma*, i.e. fustian imported by the Nikorowicz family from the Chios. In 1753, at the company's warehouse in Istanbul, there were 113 *haleps* of crimson fustian and 43 *haleps* of white.[162] They also imported satin from the island.[163] From Baghdad Nikorowicz imported scarves called *bohaza* in Turkish, from Denizli in Anatolia an unspecified fabric called *dynizła* after the place of production, from Aleppo various types of small fabrics, from Syria *kitajka*, from Diyarbekir *musułbas* (dyed cotton fabric), and saffian from Kayseri and Tokat.[164]

In addition, Nikorowicz bought multi-colored fabric called *ałeszbez* and also *giermesut* (a type of silk).[165] The latter, decorated with floral motifs or gold stripes, was available in several color variants, e.g. crimson, white, blue and multicolored.[166] From Istanbul craftsmen, he ordered *dybas* (called also *brokats*) embroidered with silver thread with the motif of a Persian flower or small flowers. These fabrics were made in the workshop of the Armenian Takwor.[167] In turn, from Aslan of Samatya, Nikorowicz ordered two curtains measuring 8 *andezes* each, made after the style of curtains produced in the Mesopotamian city of Mardin.[168] In Nikorowicz's Istanbul store there were also curtains with a niche open in the middle. In the list of goods from 1753, this type of curtain was described as *mihrab* due to the shape of the niche resembling a *mihrab*.[169] He also imported curtains from Persia. In June 1753, the company sold one of such curtains decorated with unspecified Persian inscriptions.[170] Occasionally, the Istanbul warehouse's assortment contained hats from Crimea and a *berben*, which is a type of fabric headband embroidered with e.g. a floral motif.[171]

162 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 2^{v}.
163 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 15^{v}.
164 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 3, 5, 15-15^{v}.
165 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 3.
166 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 13, 15^{v}, 20^{v}-21.
167 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125 , p. 2^{v}.
168 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 2^{v}.
169 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 3.
170 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 58.
171 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 3, 21.

V.d Accessories for smokers

In the Istanbul warehouse of the Nikorowiczs company, accessories for smokers occupied an extremely important place. Although tobacco and the first smoking accessories came to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from Western Europe, the Muslim East had a decisive influence on the Polish smoking culture. This is best evidenced by the nomenclature itself. The noun *tytoń*, (tütün in Turkish) which was adopted in the Polish language during the 18th century, replacing the term *tabaka* (tobacco) previously used and derived from Western European languages, is of Turkish origin.[172] Also, the old Polish name for the pipe – *lulka*, derived from the Persian noun *lülé* – entered the Polish language via Turkish.[173] Also the Polish noun *cybuch*, (çubuk) which is the name of the part of the pipe connecting its head with the mouthpiece, is a loanword from Turkish.[174] This specific orientalization of smoking culture in Poland, which the most tangible symptom was the replacement of Western European nomenclature with Turkish, was part of a broader process of orientalization of Polish culture.

The development of smoking fashion in the Ottoman Empire after the death of Sultan Murad IV resulted in, among others, significant development of the production of smoking accessories. These accessories were characterized by high craftsmanship, becoming one of the most interesting products of arts and crafts.[175] It is not difficult to conclude that the elites of the Polish-Lithuanian state, fascinated with products of Eastern crafts, during the spread of the fashion for smoking in the country, began to pay attention to pipes made in the Ottoman Empire, which, apart from their utilitarian function, also had significant aesthetic values.

The notes in the Nikorowicz family's trading book confirm the very high demand for these accessories in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Already in 1753, in the company's warehouse in Istanbul were a total of 1,821 pipes, 58 pipe bowls, 52 pipe-holders and 60 tobacco pouches.[176] Grzegorz Nikorowicz's brother, Józef, who was involved in the company's activities, brought one basket of pipes and 25 bowls to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from Istanbul on May

172 Roman Marcinek, *Sławne ziele zwane tabaką* (Warszawa: Muzeum Pałac w Wilanowie, 2012), pp. 57-58.

173 Marcinek, *Sławne ziele*, p. 59.

174 Marcinek, *Sławne ziele*, p. 60.

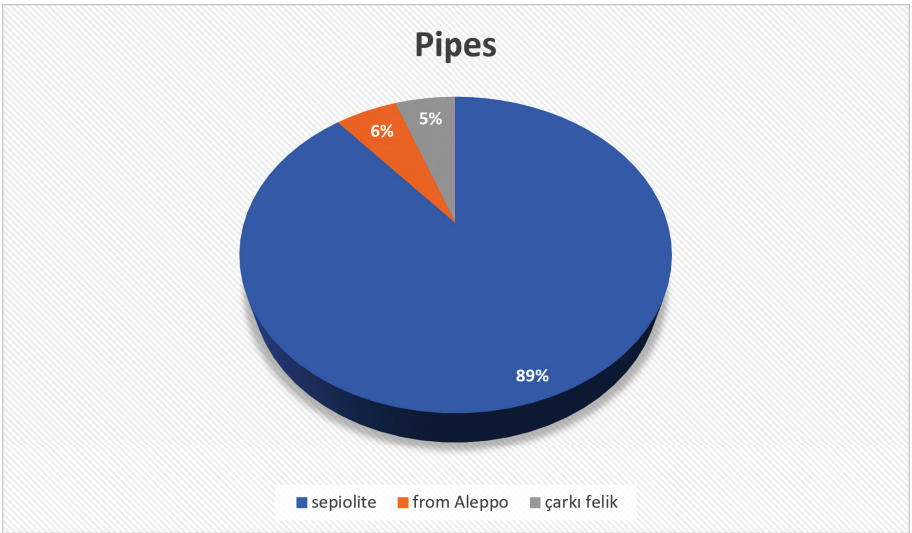
175 Iain Gately, *Kulturowa historia tytoniu* (Warszawa: Aletheia, 2012), p. 102.

176 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 3v-4.

23, 1764.[177] Two days later, Grzegorz Nikorowicz himself, crossing the customs chamber in Kamieniec Podolski, carried with him three dozen Ottoman pipes.[178]

Deduce by the number of pipes purchased by Nikorowicz, the most popular type were the so-called sea foam, i.e. made of a mineral called sepiolite. Pipes of this type accounted as many as 88.9% of the pipes in the company's warehouse in Istanbul in 1753.[179] It is not known whether they were the products of local craftsmen or imports from other cities of the Ottoman Empire. This is possible because Nikorowicz, in addition to sea foam pipes, also purchased pipes produced by craftsmen from Aleppo. Compared to the first type of pipes, they accounted a much smaller part of the offer, just like the pipes referred to in the Nikorowicz book as *çarkı felik* pipes.[180]

Chart 3. Types of pipes in the Istanbul warehouse of the Nikorowicz family company in 1753



One of the lists of goods stored at the company's headquarters in Lwów and the customs registers of the chamber in Kamieniec Podolski mention two other types of pipes imported by the Nikorowicz family to the Polish-Lithuanian

177 AGAD, AKam, III/1564, p. 13.

178 AGAD, AKam, III/1564, p. 14.

179 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 3^{v}.

180 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 4.

Commonwealth. These were pipes made of nacre and simple clay pipes intended for an unsophisticated, mass customer.[181] Unfortunately, these sources do not provide details about the appearance of the pipes mentioned above. In the case of pipes made of sepiolite, they only specify their size (large, smaller and smallest) and quality (good and bad). Records regarding pipes from Aleppo contain slightly more information. Nikorowicz imported three types of them: armored, decorated with gold and also in the color of human skin decorated with noses.[182] While the pipes were purchased by Nikorowicz from local merchants, the pipe bowls were made to his special order by Istanbul craftsmen. This activity of the Armenian merchant is confirmed by the mention in the list of goods from 1753 regarding bowls with yarrow-colored pipe-holders. Nikorowicz carefully noted that one of them was broken by the craftsman fulfilling the order and replaced by him with pipe-holder made of bone.[183] Confirmation of ordering semi-finished products for pipes directly from craftsmen is also a register of money and accessories intended for Istanbul craftsmen fulfilling Nikorowicz's orders. This source mentions a turner from Tophane, Hajj Mehmed, to whom Nikorowicz sent 50 bronze pipe-holders for the production of pipe bowls.[184] In turn, the undated list of goods unsold by Łyskiewicz in Warsaw and the register of goods that Grzegorz Nikorowicz carried to the Polish capital in October 1768 mention Istanbul pipe bowls – undoubtedly the works of Ottoman craftsmen, perhaps even the aforementioned Hajj Mehmed.[185] Mentions about these pipe bowls indicate a large scale of import to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Since Nikorowicz sent Hajj Mehmed 50 pipe-holders, it meant producing the same number of pipe bowls. In 1768, Nikorowicz transported as many as 70 pipe bowls produced in Istanbul to Warsaw.[186] These were significant number.

After transporting the semi-finished products to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Nikorowicz handed them over to local craftsmen, who assembled them into pipes in their workshops. They were also a model for Lwów craftsmen who made eastern-style pipes in their workshops.[187] The descriptions in the

181 AGAD, AKam, III/1564, p. 13.

182 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 4.

183 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 4.

184 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 58.

185 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125 , pp. 11^{v}, 24.

186 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 24.

187 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 8^{v}.

Nikorowicz family's trade book show that the pipe bowls ordered from Istanbul craftsmen were varnished, and the pipe-handlers attached to them were most often made of bone.[188] Taking into account that the bowls made by Lwów craftsmen were products based on the Eastern model, it can be assumed that the bowls imported from the Ottoman Empire were also smooth, foldable, turned, etc.[189] Some of them, as shown in the customs registers already mentioned, were roasted.[190] These semi-finished products probably had different colors, but only in the case of six pipe bowls imported from the Ottoman Empire it was stated that they were almond in color.[191] Perhaps the Nikorowiczs also imported the so-called *antypkowe* bowls made of sweet cherry wood and intended for mounting clay pipes,[192] which, as we know, the Nikorowicz family imported from Istanbul.[193] This would be indicated by the order placed in 1756 by Sebastian, a turner from Lwów, to make bowls modeled on *antypkowe* bowls imported from the East.[194]

V.e Tea and coffee accessories and coffee

The Nikorowiczs trading company collected in a warehouse in Istanbul and then sent them to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth also accessories related to two other stimulants – coffee and tea. Although the former initially caused controversy in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, in the 18th century it became one of the most popular drinks.[195]

In 1753, the Istanbul company had 98 teapots, which, as we remember, were made by local craftsmen.[196] Unfortunately, the list lacks any details about their appearance apart from their size, but they were probably not very sophisticated vessels. The list of goods from 1753 contains only general terms regarding the size of teapots – large, smaller and smallest,[197] but the lists of goods sent to various cities in Poland are more detailed. Hence we know that large teapots held from

188 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 4.
189 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 8v.
190 AGAD, AKam, III/1564, p. 13.
191 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 4.
192 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125 , p. 8v.
193 AGAD, AKam, III/1564, p 13.
194 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 8v.
195 Drozd and Majewski, *Ormianie w procesie*, p. 99.
196 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 3v.
197 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 3v.

one to one and a half *garniec* of liquid, smaller ones – half a *garniec*, and the smallest ones – three quarts.[198] In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, they were consistently called Istanbul teapots, which confirms that they were products of the craft workshops of the Ottoman capital.[199] Some of these teapots were sold together with mugs.[200]

Apart from teapots and mugs, the Nikorowiczs also imported Turkish coffe cups to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. In May 1764, Grzegorz Nikorowicz transported 60 pairs of Turkish cofee cups through the customs chamber in Kamieniec, and in September 1765, Józef Nikorowicz's already known servant, Józef Czechowski, transported as many as 210 pairs.[201]

The Nikorowicz family also imported coffee itself, but it is only mentioned in the list of goods that Grzegorz Nikorowicz transported to Warsaw on September 11, 1760. The Armenian was transporting four *okka* of this stimulants, unfortunately it is not known what kind.[202] Without a doubt, Nikorowicz purchased coffee in the Ottoman capital, as shown in the expense register from 1753.[203]

V.f Weapons and equestrian equipment

The passion of the Polish nobility and, in part, the wealthy townspeople for products of Eastern arts and crafts was not limited only to belts, carpets, other fabrics and exquisitely made pipes. No less desirable goods were parade weapons and equestrian equipment, which were an important part of Old Polish culture. The preference for oriental weapons particularly reflected the orientalization of Polish artistic taste.[204] The popularity of Eastern weapons reached its apogee in the 18th century,[205] which is confirmed by numerous sources from that time, including diaries. Priest Jędrzej Kitowicz, describing the costume of Polish noblemen, mentioned that the nobility wore richly decorated Turkish and Tatar sabers or broadswords to their ceremonial attire.[206]

198 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 11v.
199 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 11v.
200 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 21v.
201 AGAD, AKam, III/1564, p. 14.
202 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 14.
203 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 60.
204 Drozd and Majewski, *Ormianie w procesie*, p. 101.
205 Drozd and Majewski, *Ormianie w procesie*, p. 101.
206 Kitowicz, *Opis obyczajów*, p. 250.

The high demand for Eastern weapons could not have left trading companies importing goods from the Muslim East indifferent, hence, for the Nikorowicz family, weapons and equestrian equipment became one of the main goods they traded in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. However, while fabrics were almost entirely imported from the Ottoman Empire, in the case of weapons the matter is slightly more complicated and is related to the issue of the activities of the so-called Lwów Manufactory.

According to Tadeusz Mańkowski, the weapons and equestrian equipment sold by the Nikorowiczs were not products imported from the East, but the product of Polish craft workshops, mainly from Lwów, made to the special order of the Nikorowiczs and imitating various types of weapons used in the East.[207] The basis for Mańkowski's hypothesis was a list of goods sent by the Nikorowicz family to Warsaw on March 22, 1764. This list was titled by Szymon Nikorowicz as "Register of Persian, Turkish Goods and Lwów Manufactory".[208] As Mańkowski rightly noted, the Nikorowiczs clearly distinguished eastern goods imported from the Ottoman Empire from products of the "Lwów Manufactory". This led a pre-war researcher to conclude that, in fact, the Nikorowiczs were not importers of eastern weapons and equestrian equipment, but *de facto* their producers. This should not be understood to mean that the company had an extensive manufacturing plant that employed a larger number of craftsmen. Mańkowski very accurately recognized the nature of the so-called Lwów Manufactory rightly stating that the Nikorowiczs simply ordered weapons and equestrian equipment from various Lwów craftsmen and then had them decorated.[209] At first glance, the analysis of the activities of the company's Istanbul branch seems to confirm Mańkowski's hypothesis. The list of goods in the Nikorowicz warehouse in Istanbul in 1753 lists all types of goods offered by the Armenian company except weapons and equestrian equipment.[210] However, even Mańkowski himself, despite his belief in the Polish origin of weapons and equestrian equipment, when analyzing the list of goods from 1764, had to admit that it also listed weapons that could only have been made in the Muslim East. As an example, he listed various types of broadswords, sabers and maces included in the list.[211] The objects mentioned by

207 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu*, pp. 88-89.

208 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125, p. 15.

209 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu*, p. 89.

210 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2-4.

211 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu*, p. 93. Tadeusz Mańkowski wrongly assumed that the three maces mentioned in the list were the product of Eastern crafts. According to the description, at least

Mańkowski accounted as much as 87% of the cold weapons transported to Warsaw in 1764.[212] The evidence presented by the art historian regarding the Polish origin of the weapons sold by the Nikorowicz family actually contradicts this view. The Nikorowiczs got involved in the import of eastern weapons very quickly. Although it is not included in the list from the Istanbul warehouse of 1753, but on August 16, 1754, Nikorowicz took with him to Warsaw a saber with a Persian blade made of Damascan steel and a hilt made of rhinoceros skin, and in October among the goods imported from Istanbul was a gold cartridge pouch.[213] Not only do the mentions in the Nikorowicz family's trade book confirm that the company imported weapons and equestrian equipment from the Ottoman Empire, but the preserved customs registers also provide clear evidence of these traiding operations. On March 24, 1764, Grzegorz Nikorowicz paid customs duties at the customs chamber in Lwów, among others for eight broadswords, three sabers, six cartridge pouches, four saddles and twelve horse tacks.[214] Two months later, through the customs chamber in Kamieniec, he transported, among others: a dozen stirrups,[215] and on September 11, 1766, he paid again custom diuties at the Lwów chamber for two sabers, a silver Circassian horse tack and two gold-plated Circassian saddles.[216] These mentions irrefutably prove the participation of the Nikorowicz family in the import of eastern weapons and equestrian equipment. This does not mean, however, that the company did not order weapons or saddles to be made from Lwów craftsmen. When analyzing the notes in the Nikorowiczs trade book, what draws attention is the very large number of elements of weapons and elements of equestrian equipment imported from the East.[217] Therefore, Nikorowicz imported semi-finished products from the Ottoman Empire, which were then assembled into weapons or saddles in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth by local craftsmen, and then decorated by them.[218] This was a practice already known

two of them were made of thin plates, which was a characteristic feature of maces made in the so-called Lwów Manufactory. Therefore, they were not imports from the Muslim East, but objects made according to the Eastern model by craftsmen from Lwów.

212 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 15-17^{v}.

213 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 5.

214 AGAD, AKam, III/1596, Percepta komory celnej – Lwów 1764-1767, p. 5.

215 AGAD, AKam, III/1564, Regestra i percepta komory celnej - Kamieniec Podolski 1764-1765, p. 14.

216 AGAD, AKam, III/1596, p. 23.

217 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 15^{v}, 16^{v}-18^{v}, AGAD, AKam, III/1596, p. 5.

218 AKam, III/1596, pp. 9^{v}, 10^{v}.

in previous centuries and used by Armenian merchants settled in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.[219] The main reason for this method of weapons trade was a significant difference in the amount of customs duties.[220]

V.g Other goods

The Istanbul branch of the Nikorowiczs trading company focused primarily on trading in Turkish arts and crafts, but like any merchant company at that time, it was very versatile. Occasionally, the company's assortment includes other goods such as brilliants and diamonds, *kałakuckie* pearls (i.e. pearls from Kolkata), Turkish balls, and balm.[221] The list of goods collected in Istanbul in 1753 also includes devotional items, specifically crosses imported by the Nikorowicz family from Jerusalem. These were not items of great value, but small pendants, similar to those sold today in various pilgrimage places.[222]

The Nikorowiczs were ready to fulfill almost every customer order. Preserved sources indicate that the Nikorowiczs imported horses from the Ottoman Empire at the special order of Polish state dignitaries. For this purpose, they maintained close contacts with Ottoman landowners from the vicinity of Istanbul.[223] After receiving the order, Grzegorz Nikorowicz or his son Szymon visited the stables looking for suitable mares. Sometimes this was not an easy task. In a letter to the Grand Hetman of the Crown, Jan Klemens Branicki, dated April 28, 1753, Grzegorz Nikorowicz reported that he had already visited some stables and only three horses caught his attention, although he did not buy them due to their mediocre height. The Armenian did not limit himself only to looking for horses in the stables of the Ottoman landed gentry. When he learned about a beautiful,

219 Drozd and Majewski, *Ormianie w procesie*, p. 104.

220 In 1738, the amount of custom duty on eastern weapons transported across the border ranged from several dozen zlotys for weapons of lower quality to even several hundred zlotys for weapons made of gold or richly decorated. Meanwhile, for a dozen saber blades transported from the Ottoman Empire, the merchant paid only 6 *zlotys* in customs duty. It was similar in the case of equestrian equipment. For example, for a silver and gold-plated saddle encrusted with precious stones, a merchant had to pay a duty of 96 *zlotys*, but transporting the simplest, least decorative saddles required an expense of at least 24 *zlotys*. Meanwhile, a simple leather saddle, which could be decorated after being transported across the border, had to pay a duty of only 2 *zlotys*, see: *Instruktarz celny 1738*, nlb.

221 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 10, 57^{v}-58, 62^{v}-63.

222 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 4.

223 AGAD, AWR, 5/10496, p. 22.

nine-year-old white horse belonging to the French ambassador, he immediately went to see it. And in this case he did not complete the transaction because, in Nikorowiczs opinion, the horse was too thin and the owner wanted too much for it.[224] Writing to Branicki about the results of his search, Nikorowicz reported that "until I see all the horses in Istanbul, I will not start buying".[225] Therefore, the company fulfilled orders with great precision. This is evidenced by the employment of appropriate experts in certain cases. When in 1768 Grzegorz Nikorowicz was not in Istanbul and his son Szymon, who had no knowledge of horses, had to buy the ordered animals, the company hired an expert who inspected the animals and advised which mares were worth buying.[226]

VI. The value and costs of maintaining the Istanbul branch

Although the information contained in the Nikorowiczs company's accounting book does not allow presenting the company's financial balance, it is possible to determine the value of the Istanbul branch of the company and the costs of its maintenance. In the first case, the conclusions cannot be complete because we only know the value of the goods collected in Istanbul. We do not know what funds the Nikorowicz family had in the form of debentures bonds and cash, so it is not possible to reconstruct the entire capital of the company's Istanbul branch.

The goods that the Armenian company managed to accumulate in Istanbul by August 1, 1753 were worth just over 5,812 *kurushs*.[227] At that time, you could buy in Istanbul for this amount, among others: 8,283.1 *kile* of wheat (212,536.1 kg), 9,057.7 *kile* of flour (232,411.5 kg) or 4,490.9 *kile* of rice (57,609.3 kg).[228] The value of the company in its goods becomes even more visible when compared to the amount of earnings in Istanbul. In 1752, a skilled construction worker earned 40 *akçe* a day in the Ottoman capital, and an unskilled worker earned 25 *akçe*.[229] To earn 5,812 *kurushs*, these workers would have to work for almost 48 and over 76 years, respectively.

224 AGAD, AR, 1/14.71, p. 2.

225 AGAD, AWR, 5/10496, p. 22.

226 AGAD, AWR, 5/10496, p. 22.

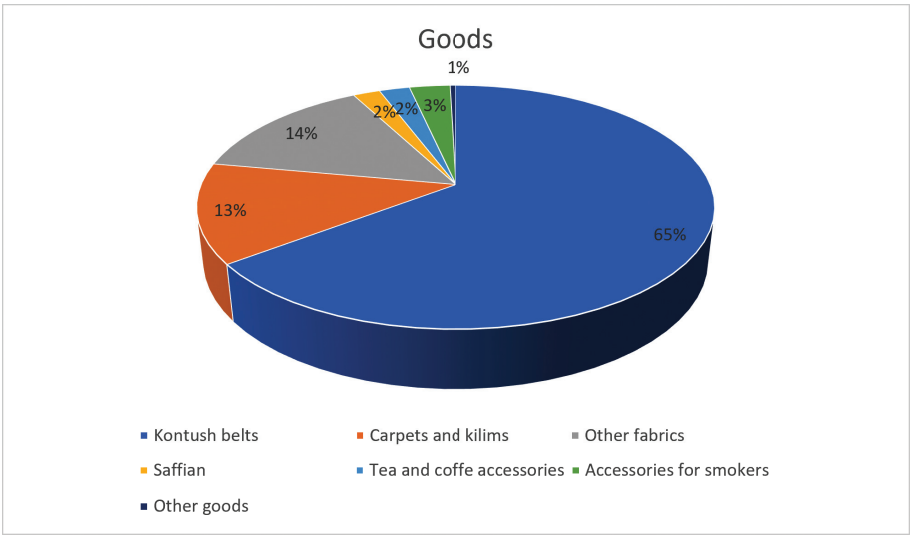
227 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 2-4.

228 Şevket Pamuk, *İstanbul ve Diğer Kentlerde 500 Yıllık Fiyatlar ve Ücretler, 1489-1998* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 2000), p. 126.

229 Pamuk, *İstanbul ve Diğer*, p. 71.

This sum is also impressive when converted into Polish currency. According to the notes in the Nikorowicz family's trading book, 7 *kurushs* and 13.7 *para* corresponded to the sum of two *ducats*, so the exchange rate of one *ducat* in Istanbul at that time was approximately 3.7 *kurushs*.[230] The value of the Nikorowicz family's goods in *ducats* was approximately 1,570.9 *ducats*, which, when converted into *zlotys* (at the exchange rate of 1 *ducat* = 18 *zlotys*), gives an astronomical sum of 28,276.2 *zlotys*. For this amount, in the mid-18th century, Nikorowiczs could buy in Lwów, for example, 141,381 *kłodas* of wheat (44,110.9 kg), 200.5 *kłodas* of barley (62,556 kg) or over 257 *kłodas* of rye (80,184 kg).[231]

Chart 4. The value of goods collected in the Istanbul warehouse of the Nikorowicz company in 1753



The goods of the highest value were kontush belts valued at over 3,759 *kurushs*, which accounted as much as 65% of the value of the entire goods. In second place were various fabrics, and in third place were carpets and kilims worth over 834 and over 767 *kurushs*, respectively. These sums well reflect the profile of the Nikorowicz family's company, focused mainly on the import of fabrics. The value of accessories for smokers, which were an important segment of the company's activity, did not exceed 3%, and the value of coffee accessories and saffian – 2%.

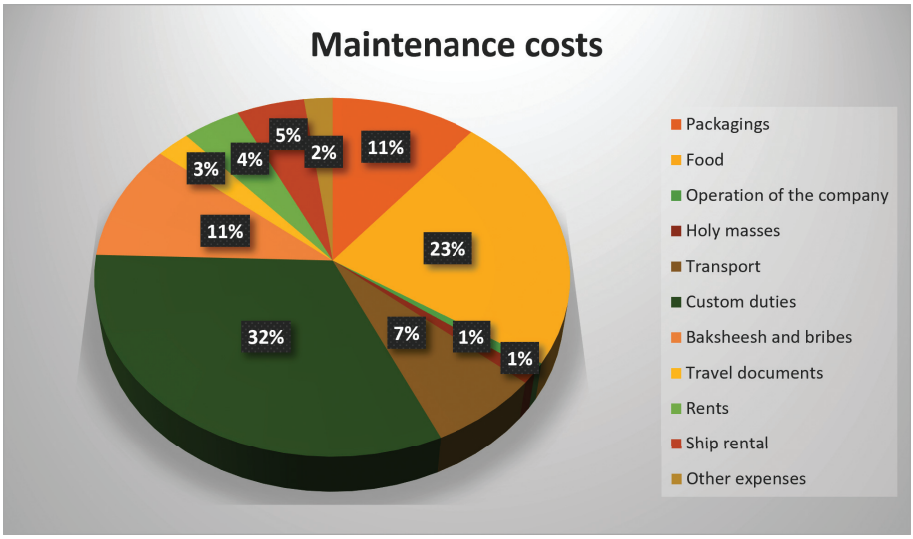
230 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 62.

231 Stanisław Hoszowski, *Ceny we Lwowie w latach 1701-1914* (Lwów: Kasa Mianowskiego, 1934), p. 156.

Other items collected at the company's branch in Istanbul include: devotional items and brooms had the smallest share in the value of the goods.

Thanks to the register of expenses for the operation of the company, we are able to say a little more about the costs of its maintenance. The register was created in the third quarter of 1753 and its entries cover a three-month period from the beginning of June to the end of September.[232] It recorded expenses related to the current maintenance of the company, but also information about outstanding payments for goods ordered from Istanbul craftsmen.[233] When determining the costs of maintaining the Nikorowicz family's company, I took into account only those provisions that concerned matters related solely to the daily maintenance of the company.

Chart 5. Costs of maintaining the branch of the Nikorowiczs company in Istanbul in the third quarter of 1753



In total, during three months, the Nikorowiczs spent 363.4 *kurushs* on maintaining the branch. The largest part of this sum, as much as 32%, were fees they paid as customs duties on exported goods. For example, in September 1753 they paid 7 *kurushs* and over 13 *para* for 32 kontush belts and 1 *kurush* for 150 brooms.[234]

232 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 60-60^{v}, 62^{v}-63^{v}.

233 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 63^{v}.

234 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 60.

In the same month, they paid a custom duty twice, in the amount of 70 and 25 *kurushs* on unspecified goods.[235] Such significant expenses on customs duties indicate the high activity of the Nikorowicz company.

The second largest expense in the budget was the purchase of food, on which in three months the Nikorowiczs spent over 84.7 *kurushs*, which accounted 23% of the costs of maintaining the Istanbul branch. The registers do not list food products purchased by Nikorowiczs, defining food expenses under the common term "for meals". Only once was the expenditure of 4 and 1/3 *para* on bread recorded, but the amount of bread purchased was not indicated.[236] *Boza* may have been bought as a drink, and certainly wine. In 1753, for the needs of the Istanbul branch, the Nikorowiczs bought half *okka* of this beverage.[237]

A significant part of the company's expenses, accounting 11% of the budget, were expenses for the purchase of various types of packaging. They were used to wrap and secure goods. Mainly paper and tissue paper were purchased, but also bags, boxes, baskets, as well as things needed to properly secure the transported items, such as padlocks for boxes, needles and ropes.[238] For these needs, between June and September 1753, the Nikorowiczs spent almost 40 *kurushs*.

They spent almost the same amount on an important element of functioning in the Ottoman reality, i.e. *baksheeshs* (bahşiş) and bribes. Their payment was not only a result of existing custom. By conducting trade on a large scale, thanks to their payment, the Nikorowiczs were able to significantly reduce expenses related to, customs duties. For example, giving inspectors checking goods at customs clearance 10 *para*, which Grzegorz Nikorowicz did in 1753, guaranteed that the packages being transported were not carefully inspected, and therefore the customs fee charged was much lower.[239] A similar role was probably played by a bribe of 20 *para* given at one of the Istanbul gates to a toll keeper, who in return probably turned a blind eye to the real value of the transported goods.[240] The consequences of not paying a bribe or paying it in an unsatisfactory amount could therefore be

235 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125 , pp. 60-60^{v}.

236 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 62^{v}.

237 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 62^{v}.

238 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 60, 62^{v}-63. Some of the purchased paper was also used for writing.

239 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 60^{v}.

240 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 60.

extremely costly for merchants. The Nikorowiczs themselves found this out. They noted in the expense register that the 25 *kurushs* customs duty they paid in Istanbul was collected from them in a sudden, unexpected manner.[241] The inspectors were probably not satisfied with the amounts received and taxed the goods with precise accuracy. Sometimes, however, even a generous *baksheesh* was unable to overcome the formalism of Ottoman officials or their abuses. However, even in such situations, corruption of appropriate, higher-ranking people could have changed the course of the matter. During one of the customs clearances that took place in 1753, the Nikorowiczs encountered some difficulties from the inspectors. Because Nikorowicz's factor, Mikołaj Czerkies, had problems with the officials, he sent one of the servants (*chuhadar, çuhadar*) for a translator (*Tercüman*). *Tercüman*, however, was not supposed to translate the conversation between Czerkies and the officials, but to bring with him *Jasakchi*, (yasakçı) who, having received 30 *para* from the merchants, intervened and settled the matter in accordance with Czerkies's expectations.[242] Because the interpreter brought the janissary and saved the merchants from a serious problem that could have cost them a lot, he also received generous gifts. Also, the servant, thanks to whom *Tercüman* and *Jasakchi* arrived at the custom chamber, was not left out of the *baksheesh* and received as much as 2 *kurushs*.[243]

In addition to reducing the cost of customs duties, bribes also guaranteed merchants' safety on the long and difficult journey through Ottoman lands. Since the route to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth ran through Budjak, inhabited by Tatars, Grzegorz Nikorowicz always presented gifts to the authorities of the Horde to ensure that he and his people would not be disturbed on the way and the goods remain safe. In 1753, these were paper, strings, saffron and pipes with a total value of 22 *para*.[244] Gifts for Budjak Tatars indicate that *baksheesh* did not always have to be in the form of money. In this form, Nikorowiczs handed out *baksheesh* not only in the Ottoman provinces, but also in Istanbul itself. For example, *Tercüman*, who in 1753 sought the intervention of *Jasakchi*, received from the Nikorowicz family 7.5 *andez* of *giermesut* and a teapot. Since it was not appropriate for the given vessel to be empty, Mikołaj Czerkies also placed half *okka* of coffee in it.[245] In total, the company spent over 38 *kurushs* on *baksheesh* and

241 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125, p. 60^{v}.
242 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125, p. 60.
243 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125, p. 60.
244 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125, p. 60^{v}.
245 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125 , p. 60.

bribes over three months. The most, as many as 21 *kurushs* and 9 *para*, i.e. more than half of the amount, they left as tips to Istanbul craftsmen from whom they ordered belts, carpets and other fabrics.[246]

An important item in the expenses of the Nikorowicz company were fees for the transport of goods. They ranged from 2 to even 6 *kurushs*, depending on the size of the transport.[247] In addition to paying the carters and the factors who delivered the goods, the *hamallar*, i.e. the porters who carried the goods purchased by the Nikorowicz family from the wagons to the headquarters of their Istanbul branch, also had to be paid. In September 1753, the Nikorowiczs paid 4 *kurushs* and 6 *para* for the services of porters.[248] In total, matters related to the transport of goods cost over 25.5 *kurushs* in the penultimate quarter of 1753, which accounted 7% of the branch's operating costs.

There was another item in the company's expense list related to the transport of goods, namely the rental of a ship on which, as we know, the Nikorowiczs transported goods at least to the western shore of the Black Sea. The lease of a ship sailing from Istanbul to Ismail with all the necessary items and crew cost Armenian merchants 18 *kurushs* and 13.7 *para*.[249]

The inherent costs of operating the branch were the rent for a place in the Büyük Valide Han Caravanserai and, above all, the rent for the building in Beyoğlu, which was the branch's headquarters. The rates for trading in the largest caravanserai in Istanbul were high, which is best seen when comparing the rent paid by the Nikorowicz family in this place with the rent paid from the house that was the branch's headquarters. While they paid 2 *kurushs* a month to rent a house in Beyoğlu, 9 *kurushs* and 29 *para* (including *baksheesh*) for 18 days for a place in Büyük Valide Han.[250] However, compared to other expenses, rents were not significant, accounting for only 4% of the branch's budget. Other expenses, such as fees for arranging transport documents, ordering masses in churches for a safe journey, or expenses related to the operation of the branch's office (purchase of sealing wax, notebooks, binding a trade book, paying a writer) accounted a negligible percentage of the company's operating costs.

246 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 60^{v}.

247 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 60-60^{v}.

248 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 60^{v}.

249 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, p. 60^{v}.

250 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 60, 62^{v}.

The expenses listed in the register concerned expenses incurred only within three months. The lack of more precise data makes it impossible to precisely determine the costs of maintaining a branch throughout the year. It is not known with what frequency goods were transported in other quarters of the year, what quantity was delivered to the Istanbul warehouse, and what the amount of *baksheesh* and bribes paid to Ottoman officials was. There were also other financial burdens.

It happened that Ottoman officials, contrary to applicable law, imposed additional fees on Polish merchants, including: they demanded that they pay the poll tax. In the mid-18th century, this practice must have been quite common, since in 1760 Sultan Mustafa III issued a *ferman* prohibiting such activities.[251] Abuse also affected the Nikorowicz family. In 1753, before his departure from Istanbul, Grzegorz Nikorowicz left his factor Mikołaj Czerkies 18 *kurushs* and 13.7 *para* for "tribute and travel".[252] However, this amount was deleted and not included in the total expenses incurred. Most likely, Nikorowicz managed to avoid paying the poll tax or paid it personally before he left for Lwów. Expenditures classified as other in the above diagram concerned sums spent, for example, on the purchase of clothes for travel or kitchen equipment.

Conclusions

The development and long-term success of the Nikorowicz company were primarily determined by the activity of its Istanbul branch. The company's profitability resulted from the strong demand for products of Eastern arts and crafts, generated by the orientalization of Polish artistic culture in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Nikorowicz company responded to this demand on an exceptionally broad scale, importing not only a wide range of goods but also offering them at diversified price levels. As a result, its clientele included both the magnate elite and wealthy nobility, as well as less affluent members of the nobility and townspeople. Although the company did not hold a formal monopoly on the import of products of Eastern art and craft into the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, its extensive network of commercial contacts and efficient organizational structure effectively eliminated any real competition.

251 Jan Grzegorzewski, *Dwa fermany z w. XVIII. Z dziejów handlu polsko-tureckiego* (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1917), pp. 3-4.

252 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, оp. 1, спр. 125, p. 60v.

Other trading companies engaged in trade with the Muslim East did exist in the second half of the eighteenth century, most notably those of the Warsaw Armenians Deodat Bogdanowicz and Paschalis Jakubowicz. The latter, originating from Tokat, likewise maintained commercial ties within the Ottoman Empire; however, despite having begun operations in the 1760s, the development of his company was significantly constrained by competition from the Nikorowicz company. The disparity in scale between these companies is clearly reflected in the volume and diversity of their imports. While the Nikorowicz company brought in vast quantities of kontush belts, carpets, textiles, smoking accessories, equestrian equipment, and other goods, Jakubowicz's company remained limited to furs, silk, kontush belts, tobacco and fruits. [253] Moreover, whereas the Nikorowicz company maintained four branches within the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and one in Istanbul, Jakubowicz's company operated exclusively in Warsaw. Using modern terminology, the Nikorowicz company may be described as a large commercial company, whereas Jakubowicz's company functioned as a micro-enterprise. A similar business profile characterized the company of Deodat Bogdanowicz.

It is significant that both of these smaller companies developed only after the First Partition of Poland, when Lwów fell outside the new borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and competition from the Nikorowicz company disappeared. The market niche thus created was subsequently filled by other companies, including that of Paschalis Jakubowicz. The changes in Poland's borders and the resulting difficulties in trade between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ottoman Empire contributed to the emergence of an alternative means of satisfying local demand for products of Eastern art and craft. An increasingly important role was assumed by local manufactories producing kontush belts and other items based on Turkish and Persian designs. One such manufactory, founded by Paschalis Jakubowicz in 1787, became the foundation of his later wealth.[254]

It should also be emphasized that the Istanbul branch of the Nikorowicz family company was not an exceptional phenomenon within the commercial topography of the city. Numerous merchants from various regions of the contemporary world conducted their commercial activities in the capital of the Ottoman

253 Joanna Sławińska, „Paschalis (Arutiun) Jakubowicz i trzy pasy kontuszowe w zbiorach Muzeum Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego", *Lehahayer*, 4 (2017), p. 82.

254 Sławińska, „Paschalis (Arutiun) Jakubowicz", p. 83.

Empire.[255] Polish Armenians, who since the Middle Ages had played a central role in Poland's trade with the Muslim East, had already, long before the eighteenth century, established their representatives and company factors on the Bosphorus. This form of activity, however, cannot be equated in terms of scale and scope with the Nikorowicz family company, which was the first and only Polish company in the Ottoman Empire to operate on such an extensive level. A comparative analysis of the activities of the Istanbul branch of the Nikorowicz family company with those of other major trading companies operating in the Ottoman capital and managed by merchants from Western Europe undoubtedly constitutes an interesting research question.

The first partition of Poland in 1772 brought fundamental changes to the activities of the entire company, and in particular its branch in Istanbul. As a result of the partition, Lwów and the southern provinces of the state were separated from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and incorporated into the Habsburg monarchy. The creation of a new border and, consequently, a new customs system made importing eastern goods to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth unprofitable, and Galicia itself was too small a market for eastern fabrics.[256] The company, which made its living from trade with the Ottoman Empire, faced the specter of bankruptcy. It did not take place because, shortly before the first partition, the Nikorowiczs noticed the changing conditions for conducting commercial activities and started looking for new directions of trade. Already in 1771, they turned their attention to northern Italy, exporting wax and linen from Lwów to Milan and Livorno.[257] In return, they imported Italian fabrics, including: from Venice, which they then traded in Lwów, also sending some to Warsaw.[258]

However, the change in trade direction did not mean the liquidation of the branch in Istanbul, but a change in the profile of its activities. While until the early 1770s the branch in Beyoğlu was the center of distribution of eastern goods, after 1772 it became a warehouse for western goods imported from Venice and other Italian cities. The Italian fabrics were then sold in the bazaars of Istanbul by both the Nikorowiczs and Istanbul merchants cooperating with

255 Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West. Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 157.

256 Mańkowski, *Sztuka islamu,* p. 67.

257 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 25, 31-31^{v}, 34^{v}.

258 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, op. 1, спр. 125, pp. 26-27.

them.[259] Despite the change in the nature of the company, its owners managed to maintain its profitability and continue to achieve significant profits, thanks to which Grzegorz Nikorowicz became an important person in the Galician banking environment.[260]

Activities of a Branch of the Trading Company of the Nikorowicz Family in Istanbul in the Second Half of the 18th Century

Abstract ■ In the 18th century, the import of goods from the Muslim East to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was concentrated in the hands of large trading companies. Until the first partition of Poland in 1772, the trading company run by the Armenian Grzegorz Nikorowicz and his son Szymon was the largest and most important enterprise involved in trade with the Ottoman Empire. Although the Nikorowicz family did not have a monopoly on the import of goods from the Muslim East, in the mid-18th century they clearly dominated other Polish trading companies. There is no doubt that during that time a large part of the objects from the East belonging to the Polish nobility and townspeople were obtained for their homes through the Nikorowicz family's business. Starting in 1753, the Beyoğlu district in Istanbul, where Nikorowicz located a new branch, became the heart of the entire enterprise. This location was more than just a warehouse for eastern goods purchased in the Ottoman Empire. Nikorowicz established contact with numerous craftsmen working in Istanbul, who manufactured various types of fabrics in their workshops on his order. The Armenian also bought finished products from local merchants. This article, based on manuscript sources, discusses the organization and activities of the company's branch in Istanbul: the network of connections between the company and craftsmen and merchants from Istanbul, the types of orders and the method of their execution, the value and costs of maintaining the branch, the organization of the transport of goods from the capital of the Ottoman Empire to Poland, the environment of Nikorowicz's associates responsible for the transport of goods, and the traders' contacts with craftsmen from Istanbul and Ottoman officials. Much of the article is devoted to discussing the type of goods in the warehouse of the branch in Istanbul.

Keywords: Polish-Ottoman Trade, Istanbul, Nikorowicz Family, 18th Century, Carpets, Kontush Belts.

259 ЛННБУВС, АД I, ф. 45, оp. 1, спр. 125, p. 57v.

260 Franciszek Wasyl, *Armenians in Old Poland and Austrian Galicia: A Demographic and Historical Study*, trans. Mark Aldridge (Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, 2021), p. 242.

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AGAD, Księgi miejskie Starej Warszawy (KMSW), 331.

APB, Teki Glinki (TG), 315.

APL, Akta Miasta Lublina (AML), 283.

APPT, Cech Kupców w Piotrkowie (CKP), 7.

BKCz, Dział Rękopisów (DR), 619.

BZNiO, Dział Rękopisów (DR), 1647/II, 1731/II

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Instruktarz Celny W. X. L. Tak Cła starego J. K. Mści. iako y Nowo podwyższonego Rzpltey W. X. L. także Donativum Kupieckiego teraz do Druku A. 1724. podany, za wolą ... Pana Stanisława .. Ciołka Poniatowskiego Podskarbiego Wielkiego y Pisarza Ziemskiego W. X. L. Według ktorego Instruktarza Exaktorowie w wybieraniu Ceł W. X. L. na Komorach y Przykomorkach sprawować się powinni, np.: 1724.

Instruktarz celny z wyrażeniem taxy wszelkich towarów tam ad Regnum wchodzących, iako też et extra Regnum wychodzących, et in Regno rodzących się, w ktorym praescribitur Regula iak y od czego na Komorach y Przykomorkach Cła tak J. K. M. iako y Rzeczy-Pospolitey wybierane bez żadney Depaktacyi pro Justitia bydź maią, y iako się tak Ichmć Panowie Superintendenci, iako y Panowie Pisarze, Rewizorowie rządziż y sprawować

będą powinni, za podskarbiostwa J. W. Jmci P. Jana Anzgarego Czapskiego Podskarbiego W. Kor. etc in publicum 1738 anno wydany, Warszawa: Collegium Scholarum Piarum 1738.

Instruktarz Celny : Z wyrażeniem Taxy wszelkich Towarow tam ad Regnum wchodzących, iako też & extra Regnum wychodzących, & in regno rodzących się, wszelakich Manufaktur, iak y od czego na Komorach y Przykomorkach generalnie wszystkich, Cła tak J. K. Mći, iako y Rzeczypospolitey wybierane bez żadney depaktacyi pro Justitia bydź maią, y iako się Jchmć Panowie Superintendenci, Pisarze, Kontraregestranci, Rewizorowie, Strażnicy rządzić y sprawować będą powinni: Za Podskarbstwa [...] Teodora Wessela Podskarbiego Wielkiego Koronnego, Kawalera Orderu Orła Białego, Warszawa: Collegium Scholarum Piarum 1761.

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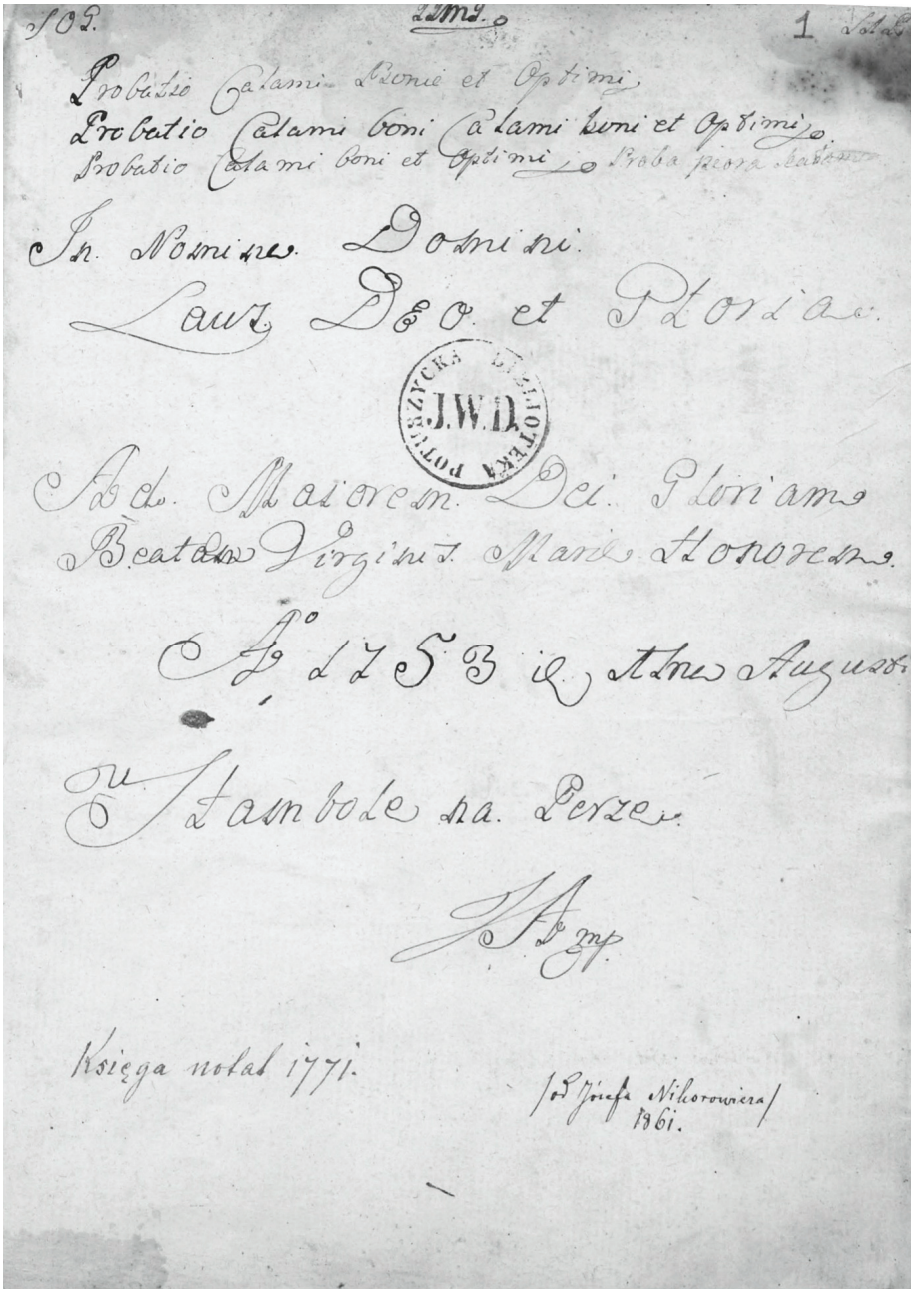
Maps and illustrations

Trade Networks
of the Nikorowicz family company
in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth
in the second half of the 18th century



Probatio Calami Bonie et Optimi
Probatio Calami boni Calami boni et Optimi
Probatio Calami boni et Optimi Proba pieora [illegible]

In Nomine Domini
Laus Deo et Gloria

Ad Maiorem Dei Gloriam
Beatam Virginis Mariae Honorem

Aº 1753 die Anno Augusti

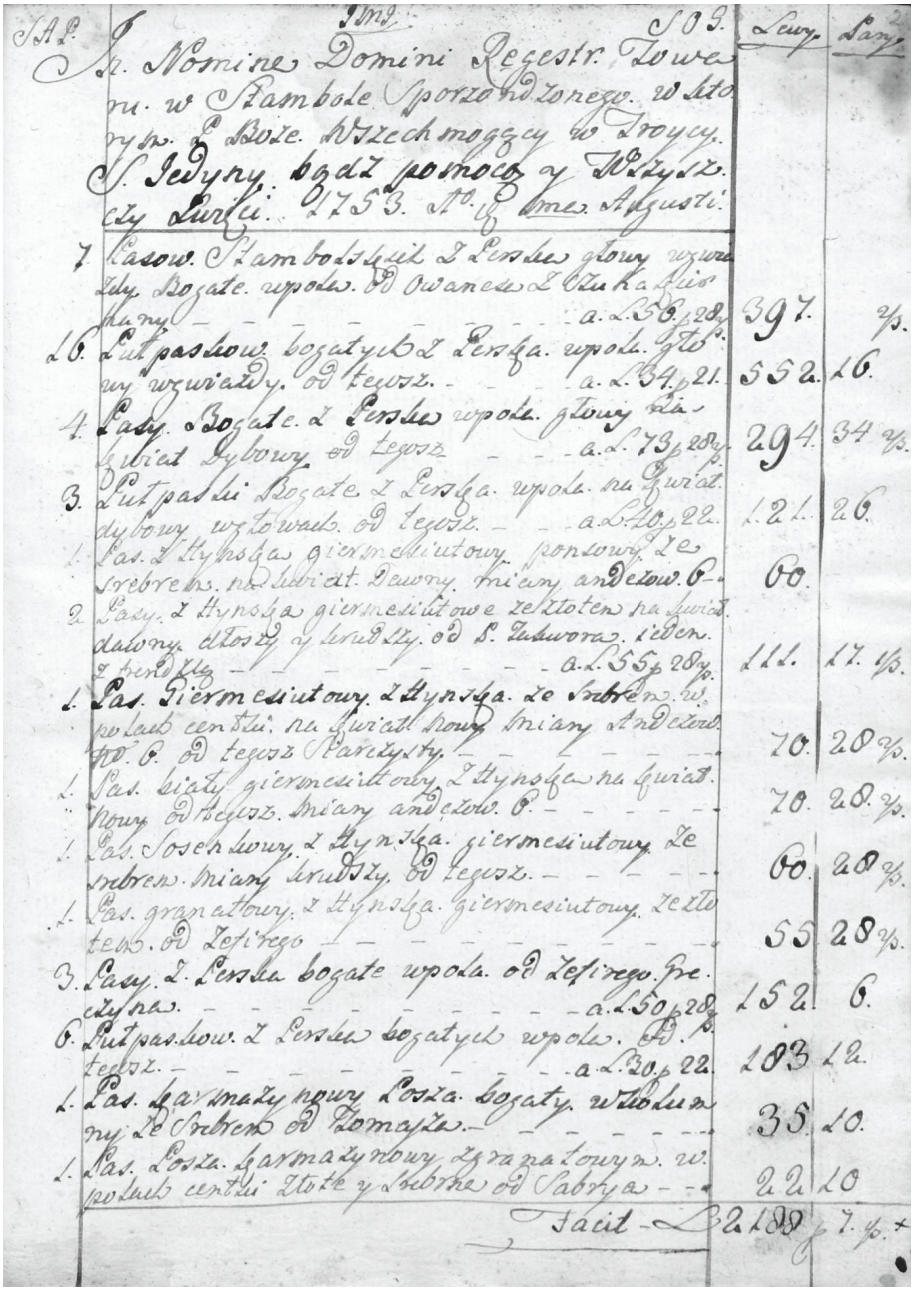
Stambole na Perze

J. A. mp.

Księga notat 1771.

(od Józefa Nikorowicza)
1861.

Title page of the Nikorowicz family company's trade book
Source: ЛННБУВС , АД I, ф. 45, ор. 1, спр. 125.



Fragment of the inventory of goods of the Istanbul branch of the Nikorowicz family company in 1753
Source: ЛННБУВС , АД I, ф. 45, оп. 1, спр. 125.