

# The context and subtext of Ignác Goldziher's memorial lecture on Ármin Vámbéry

Mari Rethelyi\*

Louisiana State University, United States

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

Received: June 7, 2020 • Accepted: September 29, 2020

Published online: May 13, 2021

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### ABSTRACT

This article analyzes Ignác Goldziher's portrayal of Ármin Vámbéry in his memorial lecture of 1915. Goldziher positioned Vámbéry, his teacher, as a Jewish Hungarian nationalist Orientalist and a foundational figure to Hungarology. Through this portrayal Goldziher opened the door to the notion that he, too, was like Vámbéry, a nationalist Hungarian Orientalist, despite the fact that his own work did not contribute to Hungarology, and did not display nationalist and patriotic tendencies as did Vámbéry's. Goldziher's portrayal of Vámbéry, thus, is a part of Jewish apologetics that emerged as a response to growing anti-Semitism during the early twentieth century.

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### KEYWORDS

Ignaz Goldziher, Armin Vambery, Sandor Korosi Csoma, Hungarian Nationalism, Hungarian Jews, Oriental Studies, Hungarology

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\* Corresponding author. E-mail: mrethelyi@lsu.edu

## INTRODUCTION

Hungary's relation to the Orient<sup>1</sup> has differed considerably from that of other European countries in that the Hungarian nationalist narrative propagated an Oriental history and identity with regard to Hungarians.

The popularity of the Orientalistic trend, which was closely linked to the research of Hungarian origins and seen as a patriotic endeavor, had wide-ranging consequences, including the wide-spread support of Oriental research. Hungarian Oriental Studies fused with nationalist ideas focused on the study of the Orient with the aim of excavating the Hungarian past. Hungarian scholars attempted to solve the mysteries of Hungarian origins and kinship by focusing on Oriental Hungarian geography and language.<sup>2</sup> Scholars took up the study of the Orient in order to contextualize the Asian-Oriental origins of the Magyar people.<sup>3</sup> In the light of their kinship and ethnic connections with other Asian peoples, Hungarians came to see themselves as descended from ancient Central Asian stock. Thus, Hungarian scholars studied different Asian and Middle Eastern languages, literatures, and cultures to find the *Urheimat* [original homeland] and an *Urvolk* [original nation] in Central Asia and, ultimately, to map out the Asian language tree of which the Hungarian language was a part.

Hungary allowed all nationalities and previously excluded groups, like Jews, to “*magyarize*”, i.e. to become Hungarian, and to gain civil and political rights in exchange.<sup>4</sup> This Magyarization

<sup>1</sup>On Jews and Orientalism see, for example: Brown, Jonathan A.C., “How We Know Early Hadith Critics Did Matn Criticism and Why it’s so Hard to Find,” *Islamic Law and Society* 15/2 (2008), 143–184. Conrad, Lawrence I., “Zwischen Juedischer Tradition und Wissenschaft der Ungarische Orientalist Ignaz Goldziher,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3rd series 17/3 (2007), 325–328. Efron, John, “From Mitteleuropa to the Middle East: Orientalism Through the Jewish lens,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 94, no 3 (Summer 2004). Fraisse, Ottfried, “Modern Jewish Scholarship on Islam in Context: Rationality, European Borders, and the Search for Belonging,” in *Modern Jewish scholarship on Islam in Context*, edited by Ottfried Fraisse (De Gruyter, 2018), 1–30. Heschel, Susannah, “Constructions of Jewish Identity through Reflections on Islam,” in *Faithful Narratives* edited by Andrea Sterk and Nina Caputo (Cornell University Press, 2014), 169–184. Kalmar, Ivan D. and Penslar Derek, *Orientalism and the Jews* (Brandeis University, 2004). Lichtenstadter, Ilse, “Research in the West,” *Pakistan Horizon* 62/1 (2009), 51–8. Lop, Jan, “Divine Poetry? Early Modern European Orientalists on the Beauty of the Koran,” *Church History and Religious Culture* 89/4 (2009), 455–488. Miller, Michael, “European Judaism and Islam: The Contribution of Jewish Orientalists,” in *A history of Jewish-Muslim Relations* edited by Abdelwahab Meddeb, Benjamin Stora (Princeton University Press, 2013), 828–833. Pasto, James, “Islam’s ‘Strange Secret Sharer’” Orientalism, Judaism and the Jewish Question,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40/3 (1998), 437–474.

<sup>2</sup>Two distinct, though ideologically interconnected arguments evolved between 1869 and 1885: the Magyars belonged either to the Turkic or the Finno-Ugric race, positions each side defended passionately. Not all historians fell into one of these two camps, however, as theories of Sumerian, Iranian, and Khazar origins were also put forth. The Khazars would become central to the Hungarian Jewish claim for an ethnic connection between Hungarians and Jews. On the origin of the Hungarians and their language relations see the numerous articles in the journal of *Keletkutatás* issued by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Additionally see, for example, Baráth, Tibor, *Őstörténetünk Orientalista szemléletben* (Montreal, 1988). Csepregi, Mária, “Kérdések a nyelvokonságról,” in *Finnugor kalauz*, ed., Csepregi Mária, Budapest: Panoráma (200), 9–18. Erdélyi, István, “A Magyar őstörténet néhány alapproblémája,” *Keletkutatás* (Fall 1989), 14–20. Marcantonio, Angela, “The Ugric-Turkic Battle,” *Linguistica Uralica* (2/2001), 81–102. Marcantonio, Angela, *Az uráli nyelvcsalád. Tények, mítoszok és statisztika* (Budapest: Magyar Ház, 2006). Marcantonio, Angela, *A történelmi nyelvészet és a magyar nyelv eredete* (Budapest: HUN-idea, 2007).

<sup>3</sup>See Györfy, György. *Krónikáink és a Magyar őstörténet* (Budapest: Néptudományi intézet, 1948). László, Gyula, “Emlékezzünk régiokról!”, a Kárpát-medence egykori népeinek története és a magyar honfoglalás (Budapest: Móra, 1979).



was a secular movement that strove not for religious homogeneity, but for ethnic assimilation based on sharing the same language. Most Jewish groups reacted positively to Magyarization. Since language was not crucial to the ethnic identity of Jews, their reaction to Magyarization was different from that of other ethnicities. Thus, Jews became free to choose their national affiliations and were eager to embark on becoming Hungarians: to learn the Hungarian language and, with it, Hungarian cultural norms, that is, to “magyarize”. The possibility of becoming Hungarian turned into a matter of urgency when political and populist anti-Semitism appeared in the 1880s. Anti-Semitism created a need for Jews to stress their admittance into Hungarian society and to emphasize their willingness to assimilate in order to become Hungarian in the cultural and ethnic sense. As a result, we can note the need to embrace narratives of connections between Jews and Hungarians, and for Jews to communicate and articulate their positive stance on Hungarianness.

This was the backdrop to the lives of Ignáz Goldziher (1850–1921) and Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913)<sup>5</sup> – two Orientalist<sup>6</sup> in Budapest who led very diverse lives and engaged in different

<sup>4</sup>On the history of the Hungarian Jewry in the Modern period and their reaction to Magyarization see for example, Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger (ed.), *The Rabbinic Seminary of Budapest* (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1986). Frojimovics, Kinga, “Meeting-Point Between Zionism and the Neolog rabbi-scholars Trend: Cultural Zionism in Hungary in the Interwar Period,” *Studia Judaica* 15 (2,207): 13–14. Frojimovics, Kinga, “Neolog (kongresszusi) és Status Quo Ante rabbik Magyarországon,” *Hungaria Judaica* 19. Budapest: MTA Judaisztika Kutatócsoport (2008). Gyurgyák, János, *A zsidó Kérdés Magyarországon* (Budapest: Osiris, 2001). Karády, Viktor, *A social and economic history of Central European Jewry* (New Brunswick, N.J., U.S.A.: Transaction Publishers, 1990). Karády, Viktor, *Önazonosítás, Sorsválasztás* (Budapest: Új Mandátum, 2001). Karády, Viktor, *The Jews of Europe in the Modern Era* (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2004). Karády, Viktor, *Túlélők és Újrakezdők* (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő, 2002). Katz, Jacob, *Jewish Emancipation and Self-emancipation* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1986). Katz, Jacob, *A House divided* (University Press of New England, 1998). Katzburg, Nathaniel, *Fejezetek az újkori zsidó történelemből Magyarországon* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 1999). Kovács, Mária, *Liberal professions and illiberal politics: Hungary from the Habsburgs to the Holocaust* (Washington, D.C.: Wilson Center Press [Oxford]: Oxford University Press, 1994). Lupovitch, Howard, “Between Orthodox Judaism and Neolog: The origins of the Status Quo Movement,” *Jewish Social Studies* 9, no 2 (2003), 123–153. McCagg, William, “Jewish Nobles and geniuses in Modern Hungary,” *East European Quarterly*. New York: Columbia University Press (1972). Patai, Raphael, *The Jews of Hungary: history, culture, psychology* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996). Pietsch, Walter, *Reform és Orthodoxia* (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő, 1999). Silber, Michael, *Jews in the Hungarian economy 1760-1945* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992). Silber, Michael, “Towards the Cultural Profile of Nineteenth Century Hungarian Jewry,” *Typescript*, Paper presented at the Conference on social issues of th Central European Jewry, Paris (20-22 August 1985).

<sup>5</sup>For example, *A magyarság keletkezése és gyarapodása* [The Origin and Propagation of the Hungarians] establishes his views on Hungarian history, origins, and race. His *Egy Tatar emlékirataiból* [Memoirs of a Tatar] covers the different types of Jews, their history of intermingling with other people, and their current racial and ethnic differences. A Hungarian Jewish Orientalist and traveler who became an expert of Turkish languages, Vámbéry wanted to find the origins of the Hungarian language and firmly believed in the Turkic origin of Hungarian language that set him in opposition to several of his colleagues. He claimed that the purpose of his travels and studies was to find information about Hungarian history and origins. Some of his works include: *Deutsch-Türkisches Taschenwörterbuch*. (Constantinople, 1858). “*Abuska*,” a *Turkish-Chagatai dictionary* (Budapest, 1861). *Reise in Mittelasiien* (Leipzig, 1865). *Meine Wanderungen und Erlebnisse in Persien* (ib. 1867). *Skizzen aus Mittelasiien* (ib. 1868). *Uigurische Sprachmonumente und das Kudatku-Bilik* (Innsbruck, 1870). *Uigurisch-Türkische Wortvergleichungen* (Budapest, 1870). *Geschichte Bocharas* (Stuttgart, 1872). *Der Islam im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1875). *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Turkotatarischen Sprachen* (Leipzig, 1878). *Die Primitive Cultur des Turkotatarischen Volkes* (Budapest, 1879). *Der Ursprung der Magyaren* (Budapest, 1882).

On Vámbéry’s life and motives see: Richard Dalby and Lory Alder, *Dervish of Windsor Castle: Life of Arminius Vámbéry* (Bachman & Turner, 1979). Hazai, György, *Vámbéry Armin: A Mult magyar tudósai* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976). Landau, Jacob M, “Arminius Vámbéry Identities in Conflict,” in *The Jewish Discovery of Islam*, edited by Bernard Lewis and Martin Kramer (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center, 1999). Mandler, David, *Arminius Vámbéry and the British Empire* (Lexington Press, 2016).



scholarly pursuits, yet were connected to each other from start to finish. The character of their relationship has caused scholars to ponder and debate. Goldziher presented the memorial lecture on Vámbéry in 1915 at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In this talk he strongly emphasized that Vámbéry was a foundational and groundbreaking scholar who studied the Orient in service of Hungary. Goldziher compared Vámbéry, though in a brief mention, to Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (1784–1842), the most famous Orientalist in Hungary at the time who had predated Vámbéry by half a century, and praised Vámbéry as an outstanding patriotic Hungarian Orientalist akin to Csoma. The patriotic argument was not hard to make and was supported by the fact that Vámbéry wrote books on Hungarian history and origins alike. Goldziher's mention of Csoma's work was paramount in the nationalist narrative about the significance of Oriental research with regard to Hungarian history. Therefore, when Goldziher compared Vámbéry to Csoma, he placed Vámbéry in Csoma's lineage as an Orientalist who was inspired by Hungarian nationalist narratives of origin. Further, Vámbéry's patriotic stance is fortified by his work for Britain. The author dedicated more than a whole page (out of 18) to the topic and emphasized that Vámbéry was such an outstanding scholar that even the British sought his services. In this way, the mention of Vámbéry's work for England is downplayed in order not to undermine his Hungarian patriotism, but on the contrary, to strengthen Vámbéry's significance because even England recognized his wisdom.

Goldziher's talk, a cautiously diplomatic effort that gave a decent and nuanced appraisal of Vámbéry and his work, also incorporates some tacit and covert criticism, while remaining a respectful homage to his first teacher of Oriental studies and, over all, in my view, has an apologetic accent. Such apologetic motives were highly characteristic of the Hungarian Jewish academic ambiance and are traceable in the life and works of Vámbéry and Goldziher. However, Goldziher's portrayal in his memorial lecture stands in opposition to his portrayal of Vámbéry in his diary, which has provoked extensive reactions from scholarship expounding Goldziher's unfavorable and adverse stance. In the public and scholarly mind,<sup>7</sup> Goldziher was Vámbéry's student whose intellectual lineage was launched by Vámbéry, a fact that Goldziher elaborates on from a personal perspective in the memorial talk as well. By rendering Vámbéry as a Hungarian patriotic Orientalist, Goldziher opened the door to the notion that he, too, was one, despite the fact that his own work was not overtly connected to the research of Hungarian history and origins, and that his work does not display such obvious nationalist tendencies as Vámbéry's. The question arises about a subtext in the talk, that is, whether Goldziher's claim about Vámbéry's Hungarian nationalist motive was articulated with an eye to having a bearing on Goldziher himself? I argue that the subtext of Goldziher's portrayal of Vámbéry as a foundational figure of Hungarian Oriental Studies whose motivation come from his Hungarian identity, and whose first student in Orientalistics was Goldziher, points to a lineage between the two that ties Goldziher to a nationalistic Hungarian Orientalistics.

<sup>6</sup>For a brief introduction to Hungarian Oriental Studies: Köves Margit, "Modes of Orientalism in Hungarian Letters and Learning of the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries," In *Deploying Orientalism in Culture and History* edited by James Hodkins, John Walker, Shaswati Mazumdar, Johannes Feichtinger (Boydell and Brewer: Camden House, 2013), 166–189.

<sup>7</sup>As is attested even in the memorial lecture of Goldziher by Snouck-Hurgronje who positions Goldziher as Vámbéry's student.



## SCHOLARLY REFLECTIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VÁMBÉRY AND GOLDZIHÉR

To highlight the subtext of the memorial talk and its portrayal of Vámbéry as atypical, the connection between Vámbéry and Goldziher needs to be addressed. There is a scholarly tradition that deciphers their relationship, where in the background of widely differing opinions we find a lack of documentation that could give us a more extensive view of this relationship. The question itself stems from the way in which Goldziher related to Vámbéry.<sup>8</sup> It is commonly known to Hungarian scholars of the field that Goldziher was unquestionably linked with Vámbéry. Németh mentions that Vámbéry and Goldziher were both prodigies who started publishing in scholarly journals very young, making names for themselves. In 1857, Vámbéry translated a Turkish story into Hungarian called *Új Magyar Múzeum [New Hungarian Museum]*; in the weekly newspaper *Hazánk és a külföld [Our Country and Foreign Lands]* from 1866 Goldziher published *Egy tizenhat éves Orientalista [A Sixteen-year-old Orientalist]* in which he translated two Turkish tales.<sup>9</sup> The two scholars probably met as early as 1865, while Goldziher was in high school, and Vámbéry allowed him to attend classes in Turkic Literature at the university. Goldziher was impressed by Vámbéry, and registered as his student at the age of

<sup>8</sup>After Goldziher's death in 1922, beside several obituaries, note A. S. Yehuda's memoirs from 1924 and Heller's articles from 1927, to 1932. Goldziher was not recognized or published in Hungary because of the fast and unfavorable historical events for Jews, such as Trianon, growing anti-Semitism, and nationalism. Though the Horthy-era publicly paid some respect to the memory of Goldziher (the celebration of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and the statue of Goldziher in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1933; he left the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1919 due to anti-Semitic attacks), under the post-WWII communist climate the acknowledgment by the nationalist regime backfired, and besides of Gyula Németh's commemoration speech in 1950 which reinstated Goldziher as a scholar, Joseph de Somogyi's recollections of him in 1961, and a commemorative study for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Goldziher's death by Czeglédy in 1971, there was silence until the publication of his diary.

<sup>9</sup>On Goldziher see for example: Németh, Gyula. "Goldziher's Jugend." *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* vol 1. No. 1 (1950): 7–25, 10. His most renowned works include: *Muhammedanische Studien (Muslim Studies 2 vols. 1888–1890)* In this he analyzed and illustrated the history of the development of Hadits, and what influenced their development and acceptance into the religion. In the *Vorlesungen über den Islam (Lectures on Islam, 1910)* he critically analyses how Islamic theology and law had developed and what were the influences that defined its formation. His work "*Über die Entwicklung des Hadith*" (*On the Development of the Hadith*, 1890) became the most influential of his writings. In this Goldziher analyzed ways in which the Muslim community believed in divine legitimation of changing practices and its connection to the prophets. On Goldziher's literary legacy see for example: Conrad, Lawrence I. "A New Volume of Hungarian Essays by Ignaz Goldziher." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17/4 (Oct 2007): 363–379. Dévényi, Kinga, "Scholars in Private on the Correspondence of Goldziher and Vámbéry," *The Arabist, Budapest Studies in Arabic* 36 (2015), 35–45. Somogyi, Joseph de, "A Collection of the Literary Remains of Ignaz Goldziher," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (January 1935), 149–154. On Goldziher see Conrad, Lawrence I. "The Pilgrim from Pest: Goldziher's study trip to the Near East (1873–4)." In *Golden Roads: Migration, Pilgrimage and travel in Medieval and Modern Islam* edited by Ian Richard Netton. Conrad, Lawrence I. "The Near East Study Tour of Ignaz Goldziher." *The Journal of Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (1990): 105–126. Haber, Peter. *Zwischen Juedischer Tradition und Wissenschaft der Ungarische Orientalist Ignaz Goldziher 1919–1921*. Simon, Robert. "Goldziher Ignaz." *Filozófiai Szemle* 3 (1982) 336–379, 339. Simon, Robert. "Goldziher Ignaz utóélete. Egy 19. Századi tudományalapító sorsa a 20. Században." *Magyar Tudomány* 2 (2000): 137–157, 141. On the reception and afterlife of Goldziher's work in Hungary see also, Simon, Robert. "Megjegyzések Goldziher Ignáz: Az Iszlám kiadásához, avagy quis custodiet custodes?" *Történelmi Szemle* 3 (1983): 478–484. Simon, Robert. "Goldziher Ignáz-hetven év múltán." *2000 folyóirat* 12 (1991): 46–57.



fifteen. He was actually Vámbéry's first student, since Vámbéry became a lecturer of Oriental languages in July 1865. Vámbéry enabled Goldziher to study, directed his interest, supplied him with books,<sup>10</sup> and guided him to become passionate about Oriental subjects such as Islam and Arabic. As Feleki explains: "Goldziher became his most ardent student, to whom he was attached with awe. . ."<sup>11</sup>

The history of their relationship often receives attention, including the way in which they continued to be present in each other's lives and participate in one another's life events. For example, the daily journal *Népszava*<sup>12</sup> reported that the world-famous Orientalist, Goldziher, was Vámbéry's student, and has earned worldwide fame for Hungarian Orientalism. His subjects of study were compared to Vámbéry's even though Vámbéry was interested in Oriental peoples and geography, while Goldziher's interest was Islam. It is also repeatedly emphasized that, as his first teacher, it was Vámbéry who made Goldziher fall in love with Oriental subjects.<sup>13</sup> The most revered memorial lecture<sup>14</sup> at the Academy of Sciences for Vámbéry was delivered by Goldziher, his first student. Even at Goldziher's funeral it was mentioned that he was the student of Vámbéry, who had led him to Oriental Studies.<sup>15</sup> At events that celebrated Goldziher's work<sup>16</sup> it was always stated that Vámbéry was Goldziher's intellectual father under whose tutelage Goldziher started his scholarly career, and that, upon Vámbéry's retirement, Goldziher took over his position teaching Oriental languages.<sup>17</sup> Besides this long-long relationship between teacher and student, they also worked as colleagues. For example, they were repeatedly delegated by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to attend the International Orientalist conferences jointly.<sup>18</sup>

The scholarly debate<sup>19</sup> about their relationship was brought to light by Raphael Patai's work on Goldziher, *Ignac Goldziher and the Oriental Diary*, in 1987. The dispute stemmed from the unforgiving tone used in Goldziher's diary concerning Vámbéry. There are primarily two sides to the argument: one where Goldziher was unjust towards Vámbéry in his diary, and the other where Vámbéry had indeed been "a swindler", as Goldziher called him in his diary. Patai had a chance to publish Goldziher's Oriental Diary in English for the first time, to which he added his "psychological portrait" of his subject. This portrait draws a rather bleak character of Goldziher and looks favorably on Vámbéry. It relies on two earlier publications, that of Scheiber who

<sup>10</sup>Simon Hopkins, "The language studies of Ignac Goldziher," In *Goldziher Memorial Conference* edited by Eva Apor, Istvan Ormos (Budapest: MTA, 2005): 83–137, 91.

<sup>11</sup>Feleki, Sándor, "Zsidó Magyar írók es tudósok: dr Goldziher Ignác," *Egyenlőség* (Oct 24 1890): 7–10, 9.

<sup>12</sup>Anonimus, "Goldziher Ignac halála," *Nepszava* (November 15 1921): 4.

<sup>13</sup>Editor, "Goldziher Ignaz szülőházát emléktábla jelöli meg," *Világ* (February 12 1924): 5.

<sup>14</sup>Editor, "Tudomány, Irodalom," *Az újság* (Oct 26. 1918): 16. Editor, *Pesti Hírlap* (Oct 26. 1918): 9.

<sup>15</sup>Editor, "Goldziher Ignáz meghalt," *Pesti Hírlap* (November 15 1921): 5.

<sup>16</sup>Editor, "Tanügyi Rovat: Goldziher Tanár ünneplése," *Pesti Hírlap* (December 21 1911): 9.

<sup>17</sup>Editor, "Dr Goldziher Ignác," *Pesti Hírlap* (June 6 1905): 12.

<sup>18</sup>For example, Goldziher and Vámbéry were both sent by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to the 7<sup>th</sup> Orientalist Congress in Vienna, though Vámbéry didn't show up at the last minute, Goldziher did. However, they were both present at the Parisian Orientalist Congress in 1897. (*Akadémiai Értesítő* 20/6 (1886): 207)

<sup>19</sup>After Goldziher's death there was not much engagement with his work in Hungary. The Trianon Treaty of 1920 changed the situation, then rising anti-Semitism and fascism did not allow a Jew to be recognized and his works to become foundational (except for some exceptions in the Horthy era). During the Communist era Oriental Studies were suppressed due to the political implications and were handled as philology.



published Goldziher's diary in German in 1978, and then an abridged version in Hungarian in 1984, which leaves out, among other things, the negative remarks about Vámbéry, as if they were inadmissible. The alternative view is propagated by Alder and Dalby's biography of Vámbéry, titled *The Dervish of Windsor Castle*, from 1979, which looks unfavorable on Vámbéry. Robert Simon composed his Goldziher biography along the same line in 1986 depicting Goldziher as an outsider and Vámbéry as his adversary who supposedly prevented him from getting a university job. Lawrence Conrad's articles from 1990 along with Simon tried to re-establish Goldziher's character in opposition to Patai's portrayal.

The most authoritative expert on Goldziher's life, Robert Simon wrote several important pieces arguing that the key to understanding the two scholars' relationship lies in the Hungarian context of the time and especially the development of Hungarian nationalism and its relation to Oriental Studies and Hungarian Studies. In Hungary, only those parts of Oriental Studies were supported which served vested interests within Hungarian Studies. The new Hungarian "national disciplines" served national interests "even if they were highly imagined prehistorical theories and even if they served to fulfill the need for the exotic of the general public."<sup>20</sup> The reason why Oriental Studies stood in service of the "national disciplines" was that in Hungary these developed at the same time as the Hungarians' sense of an Oriental national identity. The national disciplines in fact meant a very narrow field which did not align itself with the universal scholarly interest and methods, and where prehistory was studied without adherence to proper scholarly standards. In this new situation the history of Hungary was completely rewritten and reinterpreted in service of "the nation". The ethnogenesis of the Hungarian people was posed as a scholarly question, but in reality it was entirely a function of Hungarian nationalism. The advance of nationalist attitudes towards history interfered with scholarship and subordinated the direction of the various disciplines within the humanities to the service of "Hungarology". Oriental Studies became an ancillary discipline to the national discipline of "Hungarology".

This process is clearly represented in the difference between the careers that Goldziher and Vámbéry made in Hungary versus abroad. Goldziher epitomized universal scholarly interest and Vámbéry Hungarian scholarly interest. While the Hungarian national context appreciated Vámbéry's work, whose scholarly pursuit fitted well with the Hungarian national direction of Oriental Studies and, therefore, he was considered a Hungarologist, his scholarship otherwise served a lost cause – that of the supposed Turko-Hungarian linguistic kinship. Despite Vámbéry's commitment to the losing end in the Ugric-Turkish debate, however, Hungarian Oriental Studies honored Vámbéry. Goldziher, on the other hand, was slighted because he was peripheral since his work was not in service of the national disciplines, even though prized in international scholarly circles. As time went on, past the turn of century, Goldziher's international fame grew, while Vámbéry became more involved with Hungarian Studies and emphasized his own contribution, referring to himself as the greatest Hungarian. As Conrad put it, he was "the explorer-adventurer who managed to parley a gift for languages and a sensational tale of his ten months in Central Asia into a 45-year academic and political career that earned him a fortune."<sup>21</sup> While Vámbéry's contribution to Hungarian Oriental Studies increased, "[w]ithin

<sup>20</sup>Simon, Robert. "Goldziher Ignác utóélete. Egy 19. Századi tudományalapító sorsa a 20. Században." *Magyar Tudomány* 2 (2000): 137–157, 143.

<sup>21</sup>Conrad. "The Dervish's Disciple." 265.



the University of Budapest, [Goldziher] did not figure as a regular member of the faculty until 1905. Within Hungary his stellar career as an Orientalist long passed unappreciated, and within Europe his works on comparative religion, Judaism, and Jewish reform – mostly written in Hungarian – were inaccessible.”<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, Goldziher attempted to become a part of the Hungarian scholarly field of Oriental Studies. For example, his work written in 1873, *The national question among the Arabs (A nemzetiségi kérdés az araboknál)*, is a metaphoric handling<sup>23</sup> of Hungarian ethnicity politics. In Simon’s view, Goldziher’s leading idea in his study of Islam was “deeply rooted in the Hungarian context, and is related to the heterogenous ethnic make-up and empire as it becomes an organic whole.”<sup>24</sup> Simons further argues that “Goldziher was able to lay the foundations for the study of Islam because he wanted to become a Hungarian who tried to blend Judaic ethics with his could-be bourgeoisie existence.”<sup>25</sup> But despite his scholarly efforts, Goldziher clashed with the ruling forces of Hungarian academia.<sup>26</sup> For example, in 1869 when after passing his doctoral examination he asked to be appointed to the University of Budapest, but did not get the position – in his own view due to his association with Vámbéry. Eventually, for religious and political considerations Peter Hatala (1832–1918) was appointed by Trefort to serve as the head of Semitic Philology between 1873–1905, the position Eötvös had meant to give to Goldziher. Goldziher became further distanced from Hungarian academic life when his work and methodology were not directly useful to “Hungarology”. Eventually, Goldziher was forced to take a secretarial position with the Neolog Community of Budapest and became more intertwined with that community, in fact he was even involved with the Neolog Rabbinic Seminary in Budapest ever since its establishment in 1877. In 1885 he received invitations to move abroad to teach at different universities, but he decided to stay in Hungary. Within this context Goldziher started to write a diary in 1890 strictly for his family, and not for intellectual reasons. In Simon’s view the diary was the place of a ‘stressful spiritual battle’ that reflected his emotional reactions to events happening in life and to people present in his life. Simon analyzed the parts of the diary that were left out from the Hungarian translation by Scheiber because Vámbéry’s posthumous image did not allow them to be circulated due to Vámbéry’s position in Hungarology. In opposition to this, he claims that Patai’s psychological portrait of Goldziher depicted him as paranoid, dishonest and with distorted views of Vámbéry. Therefore, Patai’s portrayal is an *ad hominem*, judgment-based evaluation with a clear negative bias.<sup>27</sup>

Lawrence Conrad also critiqued Patai’s book<sup>28</sup> – siding with Simon, he claims that Patai’s evaluation of Goldziher’s suffers from paranoia and an acute anti-Jewish complex and is

<sup>22</sup>Conrad. “The Dervish’s Disciple.” 264.

<sup>23</sup>Simon. “Goldziher Ignaz.” 366.

<sup>24</sup>Simon. “Goldziher Ignaz.” 365.

<sup>25</sup>Simon, Robert. *Ignaz Goldziher. His life and Scholarship as reflected in his Works and Correspondence* (Brill, 1986), 23.

<sup>26</sup>Goldziher did not share the Eurocentric colonialist view of the Orient with other scholars, like Noldeke, Vámbéry, Snouck-Hurgronje. Thus, his view on Arab nationalism was different. Simon argued that this was because he was a “member of a handicapped national minority of Eastern Europe. . .” (Simon, Robert. *Ignaz Goldziher. His life and Scholarship as reflected in his Works and Correspondence* (Brill, 1986), 44).

<sup>27</sup>Simon, Robert. “Goldziher Ignaz utóélete. Egy 19. századi tudományalapító sorsa a 20. században.” *Magyar Tudomány* 2 (2000): 137–157, on 147–9.

<sup>28</sup>Conrad, Lawrence I. “The Dervish’s Disciple: On the Personality and Intellectual Milieu of the Young Ignaz Goldziher.” *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* No. 2 (1990): 225–266.





sustained by very limited evidence. Since Goldziher produced a vast body of correspondence and had lots of international scholar friends, he was not an ‘isolated’ person. Therefore, Goldziher’s diary should be looked upon as a personal venting place and not as evidence for deranged mental health.

Conrad also sought to answer why Goldziher would call his teacher a swindler. For this end he analyzed the breach between Vámbéry and Goldziher that occurred in 1881. Goldziher acknowledged his love of the Orient to Vámbéry despite the fact that when he wrote his diary his relationship to Vámbéry had already deteriorated greatly. In that text, Goldziher expressed a very poor opinion of Vámbéry, saying that he had flawed knowledge, he deliberately fabricated and distorted information to prove a point and called him vain and opportunistic. Even the emperor only granted him a university lectureship because of his fame, despite academia’s view of him as a swindler and not because of his scholarly credibility. Patai claimed that Goldziher was ungrateful when denigrating Vámbéry. Conrad raised the question whether one could really know that Vámbéry had acted in Goldziher’s interest. Vámbéry was an opportunist who regarded money highly – something he made no secret of. Vámbéry himself didn’t express a negative bias of Goldziher. This could be seen as genuine support on the part of the former, as Patai did, but could also be interpreted as posturing to promote himself as a nurturer of a genius – this is the view taken by Conrad.

The debate about their relationship is further analyzed based on Vámbéry’s biography by Mihály Dobrovits, who defends Vámbéry. Dobrovits approached the portrayal of Vámbéry by differentiating between his<sup>29</sup> domestic reception as Hungarologist, and his reputation abroad earned by his diplomatic political activity. In Hungary Vámbéry was important because of his studies in Turcology, and abroad he was known due to his travels that enabled his foreign diplomatic activity. In Dobrovits’ opinion the problem is that Alder and Dalby had evaluated him as a foreign diplomat and not as a Turcologist or as a Hungarologist. He argued that in order to understand Vámbéry’s work abroad we need to view it from the perspective of Hungary’s lack of international power, that caused him to travel under the protection of an influential foreign power. He was not a British agent, but he did act as a political advisor for both the Ottoman Sultan and for Britain. Further, Vámbéry was also misunderstood in Hungary, because he was evaluated based on his contribution to linguistics, while in fact he was not a linguist, but a cultural anthropologist – a field that was nascent at the time of his activity. This is one of the main reasons why Vámbéry’s scholarship was simultaneously highly debated and academically unsuccessful, yet highly respected because of his service to Hungarology.

Kinga Dévényi tried to balance both sides of the debate by providing an analysis of the relationship via reading through Vámbéry’s letters to Goldziher. The responses to these letters by Goldziher were lost, therefore, gaining a more balanced impression of their correspondence is only possible based on the latter’s diary and the memorial speech. Goldziher and Vámbéry had a long correspondence consisting of 71 letters that were sent by the ‘dervish’ – the signature he used to Goldziher.<sup>30</sup> Dévényi carefully categorizes the correspondence that contains the letters

<sup>29</sup>On Vámbéry see: Dobrovits, Mihály. “Vámbéry-val 2000-ben.” *2000 folyóirat* 3 (1999): 49–62. Haber, Peter. “Ungarische Assimilationsstrategien.” In *Juedische Identitaet und Nation* edited by Peter Haber, E. Petry and D. Wildmann (Köln: Bohlau Verlag, 2006), 3–49. Hazai, György. *Vámbéry Armin* (Budapest, 1976). Kakukk, Zsuzsa. A turkológus Vámbéry.” In Hazai György, Vámbéry Armin emlékezete, 12–18. Vasary Istvan, Vámbéry es a Magyar ostortenet.” in Hazai György, Vámbéry Armin emlékezete, 19–23.

<sup>30</sup>Goldziher’s letters to Vámbéry, a correspondence that started in 1860 and consisted of letters in German up until 1894 and after that of 37 letters in Hungarian. Dévényi, Kinga, “Scholars in Private on the Correspondence of Goldziher and Vámbéry,” *The Arabist, Budapest Studies in Arabic* 36 (2015), 35–45.



from Vámbéry to Goldziher. She shows how they address the recipient in a very endearing and respectful tone at all times. The contents range from requesting financial support for others (Goldziher was the secretary of the community and was thus in charge of finances), greetings, congratulations, invitations and some professional correspondence about Arabic-Turkic languages.

Dévényi also highlights that the correspondence contains a particularly important section starting in 1897 when Vámbéry requested the University in Budapest to pay Goldziher for his teaching, but the latter declined this. Yet, in her view this shows that Vámbéry did support Goldziher along his academic career. Their dynamics deteriorated when after the Ugric-Turkish controversy Vámbéry's opponents extended their hostility to Goldziher. Nevertheless, Dévényi concludes that "from the above exchange of letters and other gestures of Vámbéry in support of Goldziher – book recommendations, invitations etc. – it appears that Goldziher accused his former professor unjustly of pursuing a negative campaign against his university advancement. The tension may have come from their extremely different disposition". Indeed, the self-taught traveler, who changed his faith several times, published with an easy hand, thereby also opening new fields of research, was in sharp contrast with the well-trained scholar who felt his religion deeply and wrote every single line with great care and consideration. However, upon the death of Vámbéry Goldziher was able to overcome his reservations. He devoted a part of the summer of 1915 to writing the commemorative speech in which he acknowledged at length and in detail the groundbreaking nature of Vámbéry's achievements in several fields.<sup>31</sup> He closed the "Vámbéry chapter of his life", as he wrote in his diary, with this speech that he delivered on October 15th 1915. He employed a personal tone in his remembrance and appreciation of Vámbéry, as if to make up for the hostile tone of his diary.

## GOLDZIHHER ON VÁMBÉRY IN HIS MEMORIAL LECTURE

What did Goldziher say in the memorial lecture about Vámbéry and what does that say about Goldziher himself? Can the talk fill the void left in his opinion of Vámbéry and help us gain a more comprehensive view of their relationship? In the talk there is no mention of Vámbéry as a swindler, but there is as a cautious, diplomatic and, to some extent, respectful remembrance of Goldziher's first teacher which carries a hidden message. He acknowledges his master's scholarship as a service to Hungary, but we can also note moments of occasional covert criticism which allow us to detect the layers of messages as Goldziher's positions Vámbéry within the overall context of Hungarology.

### Vámbéry as a pioneering scholar

The overarching theme of Goldziher's talk is that Vámbéry was a pioneering scholar because of two facts. One, that Vámbéry was "a hero of the heroic era of travel to Central Asia."<sup>32</sup> These trips provided the scientific foundation of his pioneering scholarship since they were not "mere tourist adventures, but a true scholarly achievement."<sup>33</sup> The "pioneering value of Vámbéry's

<sup>31</sup>Dévényi, "Scholars in Private," 44.

<sup>32</sup>Goldziher, "Vámbéry," 149.

<sup>33</sup>Goldziher, "Vámbéry," 149.



travels stem, firstly, from their scholarly goals and results, secondarily, from the fact that he was the first one to travel there.<sup>34</sup> He had been to places where no Europeans had gone before, and gave descriptions of the cultures and people he visited. To underline his argument, Goldziher took the cautious and diplomatic step of utilizing Vámbéry's own terminology for describing his scholarly contribution – the source of his fame. To this end, Goldziher quoted Vámbéry's own autobiographic work, *Küzdelmeim* [My Struggles] to describe his achievement, its pioneering and heroic character, and what his contribution to scholarship consisted in.

The other side of his argument about Vámbéry's pioneering work was based on the latter's international reputation. The “glorious merit of the initiative... is even acknowledged by German critics...<sup>35</sup> This reputation claimed that he was a pioneer because he extended an existing field of study and created a new one. “He did pioneering work in the field of geography, and especially within the scholarly fields of philology and ethnography.”<sup>36</sup> Eventually, these efforts contributed to “the enrichment of Turkic philology by rendering hidden nooks of the Turkic language region of the far East in Asia accessible for research.”<sup>37</sup> As a consequence of laying the foundations of Turkic philology, he also went on to initiate the ethnography of the Turkic people by his book *The Turkish race (Török faj)*, where he enlisted philology in the service of ethnography. In it he introduced Central Asian languages and analyzed cultural influences in an encyclopedic and systematic manner. “His interesting commentary on the influences of the different cultural levels on top of each other is of the greatest merit.”<sup>38</sup> Repeated emphasis on the pioneering character of Vámbéry's scholarly endeavor, and the detailed references to how exactly Vámbéry had contributed something new to academia are present throughout the entire talk as the main theme. His work, delivered in Vámbéry's “unique writing style, definitely not at the expense of scholarly seriousness, is enjoyable, and is accessible, beyond the experts of the field, to the general educated public. It is set in masterful literary language, despite that fact that it deals with dry academic matters.”<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, positioning the book as one that is accessible to the general public and one that is written in literary language, normally associated with fiction, entails a subtle critique concealed between the lines.

Beside all the praise, Goldziher did not abstain from mentioning the conflicts Vámbéry encountered with Hungarian academia. “At several points his work was in opposition with the findings of foregoing scholars who studied the ethnography of the same Turkic groups.”<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, Goldziher talked about this scholarly conflict in very sparing tones. Even so, these lines may be read as a covert critique when he excuses himself from elaborating on Vámbéry's scholarly work as it has been done by others. Additionally, he quoted Vámbéry's own response to the allegations, and by applying Vámbéry's own defense, Goldziher could avoid expressing his own personal opinion. Instead, Goldziher hid behind Vámbéry's words, saying “in opposition to this I clearly need to exclaim that the majority of these gentlemen do not know the Turkish

<sup>34</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 150.

<sup>35</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 152.

<sup>36</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 150.

<sup>37</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 151.

<sup>38</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 153.

<sup>39</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 153.

<sup>40</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 154.



language, habits and religion, and on top of that as representatives of a foreign power they never have the chance to look at things in their own right.”<sup>41</sup> We can see from this example that Goldziher did not blame or denigrate Vámbéry overtly. But one can find veiled critique in Goldziher’s presentation, such as his references to Vámbéry’s ‘own very engaging writing style’ penned by a heroic traveler and accessible even to wider audiences. These descriptions can be considered a diplomatic neutral ground that bypasses the expression of personal opinion by relying on Vámbéry’s own wording.

### The Csoma connection

Goldziher made a leap from the topic of heroic travelers of Central Asia and Vámbéry becoming a pioneer of a scholarly field to a previous heroic traveler who is an enigma in modern Hungarian Orientalistics, that is Csoma.<sup>42</sup> In connecting Vámbéry, albeit briefly, to Csoma as heroic traveler-scholars, he created a lineage between the two. Through this comparison he elevated Vámbéry into the realm of Orientalists who traveled the Orient because they were seeking to find the origins of Hungarians. Csoma was the most famous example of such traveler-scholars at the time.<sup>43</sup> Goldziher situated Vámbéry within a link to Csoma who pursued scholarly projects out of Hungarian patriotic motivations, something Vámbéry shared with him openly. He set the two scholars beside each other creating a clear genealogy in which traveling to the east occupied a pivotal place, saying Vámbéry “was not the first Hungarian whose interest to find answer to these questions made him travel. . . and whose findings led him to some other place than where he originally intended to go.”<sup>44</sup>

Laszlo Harsh pointed out this peculiarity of Oriental Studies in Hungary, remarking that in this country, Orientalists were travelers,<sup>45</sup> and to some extent that was what made them Orientalists. This phenomenon had a long tradition, whereby exploration of the East was a rite of passage in order to become an Orientalist. In the modern period this had started with Csoma. But “the longing for the cradle. . .”<sup>46</sup> had also turned Vámbéry into an Orientalist who “made up

<sup>41</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 154.

<sup>42</sup>Some of his works include: *A grammar of the Tibetan language in English* (New York: Altai Press, Triad Reprints, 1979). *Buddha élete és tanításai* [The Life and Teachings of the Buddha] (Bukarest: Kriterion könyvkiadó, 1972). *Essay towards a dictionary, Tibetan and English* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984). *Grammar of the Tibetan language* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984). *Sanskrit-Tibetan-English vocabulary* (Akadémia Kiadó, 1984). *Tibetan English Dictionary* (Akadémia Kiadó: Budapest, 1984), XLVII. *Tibetan Studies* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984). About his life, see: Ferenczy Éva, *The life of Alexander Csoma de Kőrös in pictures* (1984). Le Calloch, Bernard, “Mi volt Kőrösi célja?” *Keletkutatás* (1987): 12–24, 12. Kara György, *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor* (Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó, 1970). *Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Emlékezete*, Kőrösi Csoma Archivum (1922), 3.

<sup>43</sup>Sándor Kőrösi Csoma’s romantic-nationalist approach to the study of the Orient was hailed as setting an example for all. A Hungarian who devoted his life to the study of Hungarian origins, he laid out the basic components of the argument to establish the narrative of Hungarian history and origins through Oriental Studies; he also framed the study of the Orient in connection to Hungarian nationalist narratives. He traveled to Central Asia to locate the ‘original’ Hungarians and study their history, ethnic origin, and language. That trip secured Csoma as the modern founder of Hungarian Oriental Studies whose work provided the blueprint for how Hungarian Oriental Studies should be executed: by travel to the Orient to trace the origins of the Hungarians, and to do so out of love for Hungary.

<sup>44</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 154.

<sup>45</sup>For a list of Hungarian Orientalists in the pre-modern period see: Mezey, István, *Kelet Magyar Vándorai* (Budapest: Móra Kiadó, 1963).

<sup>46</sup>Harsh, Laszlo, “Oriental and Islamic Studies in Hungary – A communication,” *Islamic Studies* vol 15, no 1 (Spring 1976): 53–58, 56.



his mind to look for the assumed Magyar country of origin<sup>47</sup> and traveled to Central Asia. In this regard, Vámbéry was akin to Csoma, who traveled to the Orient because of his love of Hungary, and it was precisely these travels that made him an Orientalist. As Goldziher remarked: “[T]he great Csoma did not answer the question he set before himself when he traveled to find the origins of Hungarians and their kinship relations, but he did conquer an unknown world for scholarship: Tibet, its language, people, religion, literature, and culture. Similarly, Vámbéry, when he sought the origins of the Hungarians, . . . became a pioneer of Turkish philology. . . All the country knew the immediate aim of his travels in Central Asia, which led and motivated him to search and study, until the end of his life, the life and language of the Turkish-Tatar peoples, his kinship relations.<sup>48</sup> He was not the first Hungarian whose passion for these questions made him travel and withstand the dangers of travel, poverty, and hardships. And he was not the only scientist whose discoveries led him to results other than what he had hoped to find.”<sup>49</sup> That is, Vámbéry, like Csoma, set out on an Eastern journey to trace Hungarian origins. In his view, Vámbéry’s journey to the East was similar to Csoma’s – a most influential comparison –, and had come out of Hungarian nationalist sentiments despite the fact that their avenues of research did not directly illuminate Hungarian history. Vámbéry’s travel and scholarship reflected his Hungarian patriotic and nationalistic search for the Central Asian nomadic origin of the Hungarians, which is what rendered Vámbéry similar to Csoma.

## Hungarology

Csoma’s figure served as the most important rhetorical tool in Goldziher’s talk because it created a connection between Vámbéry the scholar of Turkic Studies and Vámbéry the Magyar patriot. Goldziher claimed that Vámbéry’s motive to engage in Orientalistics had been not an abstract scholarly interest but had stemmed from very specific personal motivations of Hungarian identity. Through this he directed the attention to Vámbéry’s motivation and true passion for Hungarology, and fundamentally anchored Vámbéry as a Hungarologist. Vámbéry’s patriotic motives he articulated in the following way: “From the beginning, he put his linguistic endeavors to the service of ethnography. He understood it as *ancilla ethnographiae*. How and from where had the Turkic peoples migrated to their present place, what was their “ur-historical” relation to the Finno-Ugric peoples? He analyzed and critiqued the partially fictitious eastern traditions concerning the origins of the Turkic peoples. He claimed that there had been an Iranian cultural influence on the Turkic peoples’ languages, traditions, and religious formulations.”<sup>50</sup> Vámbéry conducted research in the Middle East because he wanted to explore the influences of different people on each other. Yet, “[t]he implicit motivation and aim of Vámbéry was to illustrate and reveal the secret unknown part of

<sup>47</sup>Harsh. “Oriental and Islamic,” 56.

<sup>48</sup>In his writings on the Hungarians, Vámbéry himself was explicit about his motivations for the study of the Orient, saying that he only engaged in such pursuits because he was a Hungarian nationalist. He constantly expressed identification with Hungarians through terms such as: we, us, our [home, nation, love for] Hungary. His Hungarian identification is also manifested in his numerous books on the origin, history, and characteristics of Hungarians, in which he aims to provide ethnic, linguistic, and cultural history and point of identification for his countrymen. Vámbéry elaborated extensively on his view of Hungarian history, origins and identity, i.e. Hungarianness.

<sup>49</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 8.

<sup>50</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 1.



Hungarian history through the study of other nations of the Orient.”<sup>51</sup> The aim of his studies was to “compare other languages to Hungarian. . . he was trying to identify those elements of the languages in question that show a clear similarity and kinship to Hungarian.”<sup>52</sup> Goldziher concluded that the essentially patriotic inspiration behind Vámbéry’s Orientalistics was no secret. “The whole world knows the direct aim of his Central Asian travels which made him enduringly and passionately study the Turkic Tatar languages: the discovery of the origins of Hungarians and their ancient cradle, and the excavation of our linguistic kinship relations.”<sup>53</sup> For Vámbéry Hungarology was the real interest.

Hungarology was a new and developing field with very little solid scholarly foundation. This was also the stage of the disputes that Vámbéry got entangled in. After all these problems, Vámbéry’s theories did not in fact stand test of time; nevertheless, he has proved to have been a motivating force and a foundational figure in Hungarology. Goldziher declined to critique Vámbéry’s scholarly theories, as that had been amply performed by experts in the field. He said, “I am not sitting here tonight to judge those results.”<sup>54</sup> He even claimed he was ill qualified to do so. Yet he maintained that even Vámbéry’s scholarly opponents could be thankful for his studies because “they served as a stimulant to their theories and convictions, and in the midst of battles they did not realize how much worthy material Vámbéry’s work contained. . .”<sup>55</sup> Goldziher emphasized that Orientalistics is a new and changing field, thus theories and expectations could also change. “There was change and development in this field of scholarship, and its tenets today were completely changed and in complete opposition to the views of the previous generation of scholars, because the range of available sources had expanded.”<sup>56</sup> Therefore, Vámbéry was not completely at fault for differing in scholarly opinion from others.’

Goldziher continues his apology in defense of Vámbéry’s theories by saying that the latter “never ceased to search for the key to the problem of the origins of the Hungarians within Turkic Studies. In the midst of a range of other efforts, whether political or other scholarly, he sought to expand the material of this search and bring forth results, clarify arguments with a cult-like awe and an enthusiastic passion.”<sup>57</sup> Though there were conflicts about the origin of Hungarians, Vámbéry’s method was fundamentally connected to “his spirited interest stemming from his youth that did not change directions.” In this way, Goldziher defended Vámbéry’s scholarship, saying that even if Vámbéry’s ideas failed, and went contrary to those of all others in the field, they still served as very worthy building blocks for future scholarship. He also commended the way in which Vámbéry was very serious about his ideas. Continuing his cautious play between critique and respect, Goldziher quoted Vámbéry’s retorts to the criticisms: “We can follow the interesting strand of self-doubt which runs along Vámbéry’s career. On the one hand, he appears completely defensive against the details of the criticisms he receives, while on the other hand, he applies them to his own work in exaggerated self-criticism and self-deprecation.”<sup>58</sup> Goldziher turned things

<sup>51</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 2.

<sup>52</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 5.

<sup>53</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 154.

<sup>54</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 155.

<sup>55</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 156.

<sup>56</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 157.

<sup>57</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 155.

<sup>58</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 156.



around, saying that such self-criticism and lack of confidence can manifest themselves only in true scholars who take their field of study with utmost seriousness.

Goldziher took his concession further, declaring that “fundamentally we need to defend Vámbéry against himself when at several points in his autobiographical work he claimed that he did not engage in the theoretical side of academic work.”<sup>59</sup> “And even if his scholarship does not manifest the rigorous methodology, cautious skepticism and strict attention of those members of academia who had had traditional schooling, we still cannot allow anyone to think that his scholarship is devoid of the education of armchair-scholars. Because with scholarly diligence, and with more sparkling wit and with an easier pen, he struggled to achieve his results that earned him pioneering glory in Oriental Studies.”<sup>60</sup> This defense contained Goldziher’s covert and cautious assessment of Vámbéry’s work in that he pointed out the latter’s irregular and out of the ordinary course of training which had been held against him. Vámbéry was known to be an autodidact and had not had official academic training, but Goldziher claimed he still possessed the same knowledge and skills as other scholars. Moreover, Vámbéry’s way of thinking was more flexible, and his penmanship more creative which did influence his academic methodological investigation but did not undermine it. This type of defense of Vámbéry carries through the talk not as a sign of blinkered devotion but as an enduringly positive appreciation.

### The reference to England

Beside his scholarship, Vámbéry was often confronted by Hungarian scholarly circles for his involvement with British diplomacy. Goldziher addressed the subject in just over a page and in a way where Vámbéry’s contribution to Hungarology downplayed his British intelligence service. Goldziher articulated this by pointing out that Vámbéry was a pioneer not just in Turkic philology and ethnography but in politics, too. Therefore, he was able to provide news on Central Asia. Moreover, Vámbéry’s knowledge and skills were so pioneering and unique at the time that “they offered a deep impression to the political circles of Britain. . . Vámbéry woke up, no, shook up, the British politicians and the British public’s attention to dangers in Central Asia. . . his writings on the subject lifted him into to the circle of the most popular political writers in Britain, where even the government sought out his professional opinion and advice”<sup>61</sup>

The recognition and employment which Vámbéry earned in England through his knowledge were signs of his greatness that did not undermine his Hungarian identity or pride. Goldziher eluded the juxtaposition of British diplomatic work with service to Hungary, instead positioned the matter in such a way as to argue that Hungary couldn’t use this intelligence as did not have territories in Central Asia as England did. Thus, his British service did not take away from his Hungarianness, on the contrary, it contributed to Hungary’s fame. All in all, Goldziher’s lack of blame toward Vámbéry for his ‘Anglo-mania’ and his journalistic support of British diplomacy remains characteristic throughout the talk, despite the fact that at the time of this address, in 1915, Britain was at war with Austria-Hungary. His mention of Britain might be seen as Goldziher’s thinly veiled political criticism of Vámbéry which undermined, or at least counterbalanced, any claim for Vámbéry’s “academic patriotism” and achievements, but in my

<sup>59</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 157.

<sup>60</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 157.

<sup>61</sup>Goldziher, “Vámbéry,” 158.



opinion, he used Vámbéry's political service to Britain to accentuate the latter's knowledge and scholarly expertise concerning Central Asia within international circles.

### The teacher

From the start, the lecture anchored Vámbéry's interest in and passion for Hungaryology. Nevertheless, if at all possible, in the last section Goldziher addressed Vámbéry's place in Hungarian Oriental Studies even more explicitly. Orientalistics was central to studying Hungarian history and origins, therefore there was a special interest in anything Oriental in Hungary. Thus, Goldziher positioned Vámbéry on a very high pedestal when he said "that Orientalistics could take root in Hungary and that the seeds of interest in the Oriental were planted is largely due to Vámbéry."<sup>62</sup> Goldziher stressed again and again that "for us and for our intellectual pursuits the greatest effect of Vámbéry's work was his pioneering influence in establishing such an important field of study in our higher education as Orientalistics, despite the rough conditions of the time. . ."<sup>63</sup> The fact that Orientalistics could even come to existence and take root in our country, the fact that it sprouted and had the opportunity to develop further, is mainly thanks to Vámbéry. This was his greatest, pioneering merit as regards the study of the orient in Hungary."<sup>64</sup> The scholarly conditions in Oriental Studies were rudimentary in the 1850s when Vámbéry started his career. Not only in Hungary, but even in Western Europe Oriental Studies were considered a non-essential field which barely attracted any students. Vámbéry overcame these conditions and therefore, "[i]n this view we can celebrate him as the pioneer of Orientalistics in the academic domestic of this country."<sup>65</sup> As we have shown, in Goldziher's portrayal there is no discrediting of Vámbéry's scholarship or any offensive language – indeed, quite the opposite.

### A personal note

At the end of his lecture, Goldziher reminisced about Vámbéry as his teacher through a line of personal reflections, saying: "[A]s his former student, after half a century I try to analyze the emotional influence he had on me. As I recall, I cannot avoid the strong suggestive influence . . . that stemmed from his own passionate love towards the subjects of his scholarship. For him Oriental things were not only objects of teaching, cold and rigid objects of analysis, but the living world of his own subjectivity. He was not outside of them but lived inside them and with them. And despite his critique and analysis he loved them and was passionate about them."<sup>66</sup> Vámbéry was a spirited teacher<sup>67</sup> with "a strong suggestive teaching style."<sup>68</sup> His animated lecturing style was presented by Goldziher as something that set him apart from others and not as something that would discredit him. This is why Vámbéry was not just a scholar but a 'dervish scholar.' He

<sup>62</sup>Goldziher, "Vámbéry," 160.

<sup>63</sup>Goldziher, "Vámbéry," 159.

<sup>64</sup>Goldziher, "Vámbéry," 160.

<sup>65</sup>Goldziher, "Vámbéry," 164.

<sup>66</sup>Goldziher, "Vámbéry," 163.

<sup>67</sup>Goldziher, "Vámbéry," 16.

<sup>68</sup>Goldziher, "Vámbéry," 17.





lived what he taught because he had a passionate subjective interest in the *métier* of his studies. It was not a ‘dead’ academic field but living reality for him. Everything about Vámbéry the teacher is placed in a positive light. Even the reference whereby comparative linguistics based on German Orientalist theory was missing from his teaching concludes that “in his teaching even the tiniest bit of experience was seen as more valuable than a whole lot of theory.”

In the last section of his talk, Goldziher connected Vámbéry back to the Hungarian Academy by borrowing someone else’s words as if to gain more legitimacy by quoting the journal of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to cement his place in Hungarian Orientalistics. He declared that according to the Academy itself all the most important Orientalists in Hungary were Vámbéry’s students or were motivated by him. Despite the fact that Vámbéry had been Goldziher’s teacher, they had parted ways long before as far as directions in scholarship were concerned. If Vámbéry was a swindler in the eyes of Hungarian academia and this damaged Goldziher’s career, as Goldziher claimed in his diary, why would Goldziher bring up Vámbéry as his teacher (and give a positive appraisal of him in his talk)? Could his commitment to give this address in the first place be a cautious way of walking along the field of Hungarian Orientalistics in 1915 which in fact reveals and exposes Goldziher’s subtext? The subtext behind the portrayal of Vámbéry speaks of a most important founder of Hungarian Orientalistics, whose life and scholarship were motivated by Hungarological interests, who was an internationally recognized scholar (England), like Csoma, a true Hungarian, and the teacher of Goldziher who had raised his interest in Oriental Studies, setting him on his scholarly journey. These claims permanently even if not visible linked Goldziher to Hungarian Orientalistic’s Hungarological interests.

Goldziher did not have a central place in Hungarian Academia as Vámbéry did, thus, Vámbéry’s contribution to Hungarian Orientalistics, Hungarology, became significant through the latter being fully integrated in that scene. Goldziher commanded much respect in Hungarian academic circles due to his huge international prestige, but – except for some colleagues and students, mostly from the Rabbinical Seminary in Budapest – lacked an academic environment in Hungary that could truly and professionally appreciate his achievements. Thus, Vámbéry remained an important entry point for him. Therefore, Goldziher’s talk acted as an agent of consolidation, to lift back Goldziher to where he set out from, and restore him his place in Hungarian academia. Despite a few side remarks in his lecture, by 1915 he arguably had no illusions about the Hungarian nationalist direction that Oriental Studies were heading towards in Hungary. Thus, it was important to emphasize the Hungarological aspect of Jewish orientalists like himself and Vámbéry, and that was why he stressed the analogy between Csoma and Vámbéry in an effort to link Jews and Hungarians. From the turn of the century onwards the task of Orientalistics was increasingly limited by political and academic elites to serving Hungarian nationalist historical narratives and identity politics. Goldziher did not see himself as part of this sort of “Orientalistic” scholarly program which he had given up on decades before, yet he did want to make a case for his inclusion in this talk.

## THE MISSING LINK OF JEWISHNESS

Is there something missing from the lecture? Why was there a need to emphasize Vámbéry’s connection to Hungarology? Why did Goldziher want to associate himself with Hungarology? In this lecture, Vámbéry’s Jewishness is not mentioned, even though it was well-known to



contemporaries. Goldziher might not have mentioned it because Vámbéry was believed to be a serial apostate who had converted to Christianity and maybe even to Islam, though it is difficult to verify these biographical facts.<sup>69</sup> Goldziher was well aware of anti-Semitism in Hungary and in Hungarian academia, yet the originally Jewish Vámbéry had fared well in this context. Goldziher might have attributed this to Vámbéry's conversion, though in this lecture he clearly argued that Vámbéry had greatly contributed to the study of Hungarian origins, Hungarology – the source of his acknowledgement and fame in Hungarian academic circles.

Goldziher might not have wanted to touch on Vámbéry's Jewish origins in any way, because, first, it had no role in Goldziher's argument that was to highlight his contribution to Hungarology and also to downplay anything else (British diplomatic work and Jewishness) that might create a distance from his Hungarianness. Whether Goldziher despised Vámbéry for his conversions or his resentment, such as it was, had other motives is something one can see from different angles through the analyses of the complexities of their relationship by the authors mentioned earlier. Though Vámbéry's scholarly contribution and place in Hungarian academia stirred much antagonism in Hungarian academic circles, and Goldziher's diary shows his awareness on the matter,<sup>70</sup> the memorial talk does not allude to his Jewishness.

The second reason why Jewishness may have seemed unnecessary to mention is that everyone was well aware of Vámbéry's Jewish background. It was the elephant in the room. Contemporary Turcologist Vásáry summarized Vámbéry's engagement with Orientalistic as related to being a Hungarian Jew: “[T]his results in his becoming honestly patriotic though having started out as a Jewish boy from Dunaszerdahely. No wonder that during his wandering in Persia, upon arriving in Persepolis he writes on the ancient ruins: ‘Long live the Hungarians’ and we should quickly add that after all it is only natural that this young man should show an interest in the origin of the Hungarian people. The same desire urges him to the east as that which spurred on Alexander Kőrösi-Csoma but — from the Hungarian point of view — he chose a more successful path when he devoted his life to the study of the Turks. In his research on the ancient Turkish-Hungarian relation...”<sup>71</sup> the Jewish Vámbéry gained an interest in Hungarian history and made an epochal contribution to it, like Csoma himself.

Vámbéry's Jewish origins being known to Hungarian Orientalists had not always aided his career. As the progressive Jewish (Neolog) weekly journal, *Egyenlőség* mentions, when Vámbéry set out to write a book about Hungarian origins and history, Jewish circles were sure that it would be misunderstood because of his Jewish background. They believed it would be ridiculed for the author's Jewishness, Oits hypothesis dismissed, and that critics would ask, “What does a Jew want to do with Hungarian history?” One anonymous writer at the time said, “[B]ecause Hungarian sagas – this is the latest rule – are like a creed for the Jews. Despite the fact that for a long time now Hungarians themselves have not believed that Árpád had existed in real life, Jews still need to look upon him as their vizier.”<sup>72</sup> That is, Hungarian Jews needed to believe in Hungarian myths because that proved their loyalties and affiliation to Hungary. While

<sup>69</sup>Vámbéry in his *Egy tatár emlékirataiból* (5) claims he was not a member of any ethnicity of religion.

<sup>70</sup>Goldziher, Tagebuch, 27.

<sup>71</sup>Vásáry, István, “Vámbéry és a magyar őstörténet,” in *Vámbéry Ármin emlékezete*, Keleti Értekezések 2 (1986): 19–25, 27.

<sup>72</sup>Anonymous, “Glosszák a hétről,” *Egyenlőség* (Sept 10, 1912): 8–9, 9.



Hungarians themselves did not need to prove their loyalty and affiliation to Hungary, therefore, they could be critical of the myths of Oriental origin of the Hungarians.

Bernát Munkácsi (1860–1937),<sup>73</sup> another of Vámbéry's students of Jewish descent who was an important linguist and Orientalist in Hungary, went further than Goldziher in pointing out the Jewish-Hungarian connection in Vámbéry's work. In some ways he filled in the missing link of Jewishness in Goldziher's later talk. Vámbéry's quest of tracing common Judeo-Hungarian history and kinship, and his scholarly agenda were closely aligned with Jewish and Hungarian intellectual interests, and were a natural outcome of his background. As Munkácsi said, "[H]e provided a foundation for Hungarian Jews to pursue and serve both Jewish and Hungarian needs through the intellectual work of Orientalistics."<sup>74</sup> It was critical to identify Vámbéry as a Jew who claimed that the direction he took in Orientalistics was due to his being Jewish and Hungarian at the same time. Thus, "although Vámbéry and his work are important for scholars around the world, he is first of all ours. He is the pride of Hungarian academia, as when they write or talk about him abroad they always mention him as a Hungarian scholar. He pursued his studies and his trips to Central Asia at the behest of and funded by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Nationalistic and scholarly goals motivated his pursuit of the ethnographic knowledge that revealed the kinship with the eastern Turkish people and the ancient history of the Hungarian language and history."<sup>75</sup> Oriental travels, like Csoma's, are indicators of Hungarian patriotic sentiments, as they are spurred entirely by a desire to discover Hungarian history.

Vámbéry's view of his own Jewishness was not straightforward. Yet, his attempt to figure out how to connect Hungarians and Jews is evident in his work, *Memoirs of a Tatar* dating to the 1880s. In his memoirs, he expresses several contradictory remarks about Judaism. He spends a chapter pondering the identity of Jews and asks, "[I]s Judaism a religion or an ethnicity?"<sup>76</sup> He admits he does not quite know the answer. Nevertheless, he contends that Jews are "of Asian decent with an Asian language and customs."<sup>77</sup> Vámbéry also broached the specific and important possibility of Hungarian Jews being related to Hungarians: "[The] Hungarian people are a mixed nation. It is especially characteristic of the Hungarian people that they are mixed as a nation, and the same is true of their language."<sup>78</sup> Since Hungary was a mixed nation, Hungarians must also have mixed with Jews. In this chain of reasoning, the next logical step is that if Hungarians mixed with other people, including Jews, there must be Hungarians who are Jewish. Thus, no ethnic or historical obstacles exist to the assimilation of Jews into Hungarian society.

Additionally, in his book on the *Origins of the Hungarians (A magyarság eredete)*, Vámbéry set out to prove the non-homogeneous nature of Hungarian ethnicity, and to argue that any newcomer could join through cultural adaptation. He depicted the history of the Magyars as a constant mixing with other ethnicities in Asia. He illustrated both his explicit nationalistic

<sup>73</sup>He was an ethnographer, Orientalist and linguist. In 1892 he became the head of the Hungarian Ethnography Association. He was also an editor of important Oriental scholarly journals in Hungary, such as *Keleti Szemle* and *Ethnographia*.

<sup>74</sup>Munkácsi, "Vámbéry Ármin," 198.

<sup>75</sup>Munkácsi, Bernát, "Vámbéry Ármin," *Keletiszemle* (1911): 198.

<sup>76</sup>Vámbéry, Ármin, "Egy tatár emlékirataiból," *Huszadik Század* (January 1914): 1–22, 1.

<sup>77</sup>Vámbéry, "Egy tatár emlékirataiból," 2.

<sup>78</sup>Vásáry, "Vámbéry és a Magyar," 20.



motives and its connection to the study of the Orient: “[T]he Hungarians have a very well developed national self-awareness or pride, which is a unique feature of all members of the Turko-Tatar nations,”<sup>79</sup> and he goes on: “In the Hungarians as a nation not one drop of ur-Hungarian blood has remained. . . because the Hungarian nation is a mix.”<sup>80</sup> He offers further support: “[W]hether the Hungarians and the Khazars had a significant connection, and whether the Khazars engaged in the conquest of the fatherland of Hungary, [this] is a clear fact when we look at the place names of cities in Hungary.”<sup>81</sup> Just as his numerous books on the Hungarians attested, Vámbéry attempted to offer solutions regarding the connection between Jews and Hungarians through studying the Orient, and to provide scholarly evidence for Jewish and Hungarian coexistence through the Khazars. The Turkic studies, such as the study of the Khazars, i.e. the indirect study of Jews, aimed to exhibit information in terms of ethnicity and national sentiments about the historic connections between Hungarians and Jews for the sake of reconciling their ethnic, religious and historical differences.

Vámbéry’s views on Judaism are further illustrated in a lecture he delivered at the Hall of Hungarian Commerce in which he discussed “the terms ‘nation’ (*nemzet*) and ‘ethnicity’ (*nemzetiség*). He explained that the Hungarian Jews are not Semites, and that very few ancestors of present Hungarians have swum across the Volga on sticks. . . that is, there are very few pineapples that used to be onions.”<sup>82</sup> One cannot change and since Hungarian Jews are Hungarian, they were not Semites. The lecture centered on the topic of the Jewish race, and he pointed out that Asian and European Jews were different. The European Jews are of Khazar descent and totally different from Asian Jews. He claimed to know this first hand, since he had seen with his own eyes the largest variety of Jews. As a result of this argument, one scholar concluded that “the expression anti-Semite might be applicable to Asian Jews, but. . . in Europe, from linguistic and ethnographic perspectives, it is wrongly applied.”<sup>83</sup> The Jewish people, Vámbéry argued, are just as mixed as Hungarians, and in Hungary there was no distinct Semitic Jewish race. This was an important point used to tear down racial and ethnic differences between Hungarians and Jews, and pave the way for his vision of mixed Hungarianness.

The missing link in Goldzher’s memorial talk is, thus, Vámbéry’s view on Jews and Hungarians. Vámbéry was of Jewish origin like Goldzher. Jewishness was the force behind his Orientalistics to insert Jews into the Oriental history of Hungarians. This was a covert apologetic manouver to address the place of Jews in the Hungarian nation and their right to Hungarianness (*magyarság*). These works of Vámbéry underline his deep engagement with his Jewish background and raise the idea that behind his study of the Orient there was a struggle with his own Jewish origin and Hungarianness. His argument fitted well with the liberal nationalist idea of the “propagating power” of Hungarianness and the power of Magyarization.<sup>84</sup> In this narrative, Hungarian history was marked by a constant process during which ethnically divergent people were assimilated into the body of the Hungarian nation, which nevertheless preserved its characteristics. These narratives were steeped in the notion that Hungary was constituted, forged, and then molded and led by the Hungarian “race” which everyone could assimilate into.

<sup>79</sup>Vámbéry, Ármin, *A magyarság keletkezése és gyarapodása* (Budapest: Franklin Társulat, 1895), 317.

<sup>80</sup>Vámbéry, *A magyarság*, 369.

<sup>81</sup>Vámbéry, Ármin, *A magyarok eredete: Ethnologiai Tanulmány* (Budapest: MTA Kiadó, 1882), 88.

<sup>82</sup>M.S., “Tarcza: Zsidó magyarok,” *Egyenlőség* (Dec 16 1883): 2–4, 2.

<sup>83</sup>M.S., “Tarcza: Zsidó magyarok,” 3.

<sup>84</sup>Gyurgyák, János, *Ezzé lett Magyar hazátok* (Budapest: Osiris, 2007), 97.



A Jewish Orientalistic attempt to make discoveries into Oriental Hungarian history must have been an open secret among progressive Jewish circles. This is illustrated by an anonymous article in *Egyenlőség* that points to the special relationship between Jews and Hungarians. It claims that “it is rather strange that it is the scholars of Jewish descent who engaged in that unthankful and long-neglected subject of academic research, that of Hungarian comparative linguistics, as if they wanted to express their gratitude and loyalty to the ground that gives them bread, and to the people that took them in as their siblings, and let them partake of their work, whose ideas and way of thinking they came to share and developed love towards the language that became their mother tongue, whose inner values they strived to express and organize with utmost dedication.”<sup>85</sup> In the light of this text, his Jewishness set Vámbéry apart from Hungarians. He wanted to overcome the gap and eliminate any difference, a possibility given by Hungarian nationalist narratives of Oriental history. In this way, Vámbéry’s and also Goldziher’s Jewishness functioned as a deep personal motivating force behind their work in Oriental Studies.

## CONCLUSIONS

The long debate among scholars about the relationship between Goldziher and Vámbéry tackled the question whether an adverse view of Vámbéry had been justified by Goldziher’s experiences or it reflected the latter’s emotional difficulties vis a vis his background. Within this context I read Goldziher’s memorial talk on Vámbéry as not only a respectful homage to his teacher, but also one that saw his scholarly contribution clearly, where there is at most a covert and most diplomatic critique of Vámbéry and a heavy subtext about Goldziher’s relation to Vámbéry and to Hungarian nationalist Orientalistics. When, thus, looking at the complexities of the Goldziher-Vámbéry relationship, Vámbéry’s standing in Hungarian Orientalistics, and Goldziher’s attitude towards Vámbéry’s scholarship and towards Hungarian academia, we can see that behind the balanced, nuanced and decent appraisal of Vámbéry, with little criticism, and behind a belated homage to his mentor and teacher in Orientalistics, there is a trace of apologetic effort to be acknowledged by Hungarian Orientalistics and to reinstitute a place for himself in that context.

In this way, Goldziher’s positive homage to Vámbéry was not about Vámbéry as a role model, but an argument to resituate himself within a heavily Hungarology-centered Orientalistics. From this perspective, mentioning the analogy with Sándor Kőrösi Csoma and Vámbéry’s activity in Britain, marginal as they may seem, were aimed to shed light on his connection to the Hungarologist Vámbéry. To this end, Goldziher brings up the example of Csoma as someone similar to Vámbéry in order to emphasize the latter’s place as a Hungarologist and to deeply anchor Vámbéry to patriotic Hungarologist Orientalistics. Additionally, his contribution to England is mentioned in a way purported not to undermine Vámbéry’s patriotism or service to Hungary, but to emphasize his wisdom and significance due to which he was even appreciated in England. By emphasizing Vámbéry’s role in Hungarology and his own place as Vámbéry’s first student, Goldziher connected himself to the Hungarologist context.<sup>86</sup> This

<sup>85</sup>Anonymous, “A Magyar zsidóság es a Magyar szellem tudományok,” *Egyenlőség* (Nov 15 1919): 9.

<sup>86</sup>Goldziher in this way reconnected to his earlier Hungarologist interest, but he got disillusioned when he didn’t get a university post. So he abandoned his interest in Hungarology.



can be construed as an attempt at ingratiation with the Hungarian scholarly context in the midst of changing nationalism.

From this perspective, Goldziher's talk reflects the complexities of the time, such as rising anti-Semitism, Orientalistics merging into Hungarology, Vámbéry's recognition in Hungary and Goldziher's lack thereof, paired with the increasing vulnerability of Jews, all of which point to a subtext in the address. Added to this is the silence about Vámbéry's Jewishness (although Vámbéry's Jewishness was not a problem, but Goldziher's was), because it would distance them from Hungarologist Orientalistics and reveal the manifold forces at work. Since it was well known that Goldziher was Vámbéry's first, and most famous student despite their problematic connection for decades afterward, and that he had become interested in Orientalistics because of his teacher, Goldziher was also a Magyar who loved Hungary as deeply as Vámbéry, and, thus, his Orientalistics, just as Vámbéry's was a great contribution to Hungary, bringing prestige and fame to Hungarian Orientalistics. In Goldziher's portrayal, Vámbéry's pursuit to study the Orient solidified the impression that they were true Hungarian patriots, like the 'exemplary Hungarian' Csoma. In the peculiar context of Orientalistics inspired by Hungarian nationalism, where rising nationalism emphasized Orientalistics as Hungarology in a gradually accelerating manner,<sup>87</sup> and where Vámbéry was acknowledged as a founder, Goldziher, despite his overtly expressed dislike of Vámbéry in his diary, would not attack him in this public talk.

Interestingly, Goldziher's portrayal of Vámbéry and his similarity to Csoma had a significant afterlife in Neolog circles. Jewish Turcologist Kúnos, for example, called Vámbéry "the famous philo-Turkish Turkologist and a compatriot in Oriental Studies"<sup>88</sup> whose scholarship among the Orientalists was not comparable to anyone else's.<sup>89</sup> Or according to Heller, a Jewish folklorist, and important leader of the Neolog community, Vámbéry's legacy as a great Hungarian Jewish Orientalist derived from his combination of scholarly work and journeys of discovery, in which he followed the example of Csoma to the letter. Heller believed that Vámbéry's aim was to locate the origins of Hungarians linguistically among the Turkic people,<sup>90</sup> whom he considered to be kin. Vámbéry, too, looked to Central Asia, though he focused on different ethnic groups than Csoma. "[H]is travels were the most noble and scientific and he did pioneering work on Turkish philology. The admitted aim of his research was to make a comparative study of the Hungarian language with Central Asian languages: he seemed to find specific similarities between Hungarian and the language spoken by the people of the steppes and cities along the Ox river. He made these findings during his trips to Central Asia, which launched his pioneering research in Turkish philology."<sup>91</sup> Nationalist-inspired Hungarian Orientalistics served as a background for Jewish Orientalists like their Hungarian colleagues, sought to discover the history of Magyars in Asia, the circumstances of the conquest of Hungary, and the mixing of different peoples in the

<sup>87</sup>Orientalistics as Hungarology had such a lasting effect that even the Hungarian translation of Goldziher's diary in the 1980's omitted most comments on Vámbéry as they are very insulting, since Vámbéry had a revered reputation as a Hungarologist.

<sup>88</sup>Hurgronje, Snouck, "Goldziher," *IMIT* (1941): 98–112, 99.

<sup>89</sup>Hurgronje, "Goldziher," 99.

<sup>90</sup>For more on Vámbéry and the development of Turkic studies see: Oláh, Péter, "A török és a magyar turánizmus kapcsolata a 20. század első felében," [Connections between Turkic and Hungarian Turanism in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century]. *Keletkutatás* (Spring 2012): 67–87.

<sup>91</sup>Heller, Bernát, "Goldziher emlékezete," [Memories of Goldziher] *IMIT* (1932), 4.



Orient prior to the Hungarian migration to Europe. Doing so represented Hungarian Jews as *true* Hungarians – something Goldziher in this memorial talk made an allusion to as a plea for a place within Hungarian Orientalistics.

