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Hungarian Émigrés, Turkish Turanists: Some remarks on Vámbéry's Social Network from Constantinople to Budapest

A scholar's social and scholarly reputation requires more than just talent: it takes a lot of diligence, an often modestly silent financial background and, last but not least, a strong contact network, that is, getting to know people who are at the right place at the right time to get help and support. There can be no doubt about Vámbéry's language skills, but it is also clear from his memoirs that his diligence was even more significant. He rose from an extremely poor milieu, and his first voyages to Constantinople and the East were extremely miserable, though not so long as they brought him world fame, reputation, and wealth. Later he became so respected both in Hungary and abroad that he was invited to different remarkable societies and associations as an honorary member or honorary president. While in the first part of our study we focus on his contact network during his early career, in the second part we will showcase the elderly Vámbéry's involvement in different scientific and Turanist endeavours in Hungary. Who helped the completely unknown, poor, lame man during his first stay in Constantinople? Who were his friends and influential patrons in the Ottoman capital, thanks to whom he could later become an advisor to the sultan? Which were the organisations of which Vámbéry became the honorary member or president? We will seek the answers to these and other similar questions in this article, aiming to reveal Vámbéry's barely known character as a network builder.

The early years

When Vámbéry arrived in Constantinople in 1857, he stood on the shore penniless and without contacts, but almost immediately stumbled upon a Hungarian emigrant, Károly Püspöky. His compatriot gave Vámbéry accommodation in a shabby room, and then took him to the Café Flamm de Vienne, which was very popular among emigrants. Here the young Vámbéry met several Hungarian emigrants, who initially received him in a cold and distrustful manner, as at that time they suspected everyone coming from Hungary to be an Austrian spy, but with his language skills and scientific interest, he soon overcame their initial suspicions.¹

¹ VÁMBÉRY Ármin: *Küzdelemem*, Dunaszerdahely, Liliium Aurum, 2001, 96–99; CSORBA György: “Az 1848–49-es törökországi magyar emigráció története”. *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 112, 1999/2. 385;

Püspöky soon became a ship's cook, so Vámbéry stayed for a short time in the hall of the Hungarian Society, which was set up to unite and help emigrants, but the scholar was looking for a more comfortable accommodation due to the cold nights.²

At that time another Hungarian emigrant helped him, who in his Hungarian memoir was abbreviated to Major “E.,” who also provided him with accommodation and breakfast. Only a barely known letter from Vámbéry, dated 1867, published in a daily newspaper in 1923, helped unveil the identity of this mysterious major. The abbreviation hid the identity of Károly Eberhardt, a military officer of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848, then an Ottoman-Turkish major and a future Italian general, who was still alive at the time of the publication of Vámbéry's first memoir, which fact could be the reason why Vámbéry concealed his identity. In this letter, he was not only grateful for Eberhardt's help in Istanbul, but also provided a very important addition to our story, to which we will return later.³

Beyond the refugee accommodation provider, we must highlight the name of Dániel Szilágyi among those who had a very significant influence on Vámbéry's career in the Ottoman Empire. Szilágyi was a well-known figure of the emigration in Constantinople, who worked hard to become a polyglot and managed to establish his own bookstore. However, he was not only a simple bookseller, but also collected Oriental manuscripts with passion and great competence. Although there are no records for it, we are sure that he was able to obtain or seek several manuscripts and books for Vámbéry, as well as help the young scholar with his local knowledge and contacts. Vámbéry acknowledged Szilágyi's merits to such an extent that he later sent his own students from Budapest directly to him during their field trip to Constantinople. Last, but not least, Vámbéry found his first students in Istanbul through Szilágyi's advertisement in his own shop. After Szilágyi's death, Vámbéry wrote an obituary about him and made every effort to obtain his oriental manuscript and book collection for the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.⁴

Arminius VAMBÉRY: *The Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambéry*, New York, F. A. Stokes, [1914], 17–19; VERESS Sándor: *A magyar emigratio a Keleten*, Budapest, Athenaeum, 1879, II. 233.

² VAMBÉRY: *op. cit.* 99. Regarding the history of the Hungarian Society in Constantinople, see: CSORBA György – FODOR Gábor: “Magyarok a Kelet kapujában: A Konstantinápolyi Magyar Egylet története (1850–1961)”. *Pro Minoritate*, 2021 Summer, 3–51.

³ VAMBÉRY: *op. cit.* 99–100; HUTTKAY Lipót: “Eberhardt Károly, olasz királyi tábornok”. *Világ*, 1 March 1923. Date of the letter: Pest, 3 May 1867. On Károly Eberhardt, see: CS. LENGYEL Beatrix – MAKAI Ágnes: „Eberhardt Károly életútja és kitüntetései”. In *Folia Historica XXII*, Budapest, 2004, 123–160; *Splény Béla emlékiratai*, Budapest, Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1984, II. 316.

⁴ For more details on Dániel Szilágyi and his activities: CSORBA György – SUDÁR Balázs: “Egy magyar antikvárius Isztambulban: Szilágyi Dániel”. In CSIRKÉS Ferenc Péter – CSORBA György – SUDÁR Balázs – TAKÁCS Zoltán (eds.): *Függökert. Orientalisztikai tanulmányok*, Budapest, 2003, 117–136; CSORBA György – SUDÁR Balázs: “Szilágyi Dániel és a magyar orientalisztika”. In BIRTALAN Ágnes – MASANORI Yamaji (eds.): *Orientalista Nap 2003*, Budapest, MTA Orientalisztikai Bizottság – ELTE Orientalisztikai Intézet, 2003, 10–22; CSORBA György: “Új források Szilágyi Dánielről”. *Keletkutatás*, 2009 Autumn. III–133; CSORBA György – SUDÁR Balázs: “Istanbul'da Macar Bir Sahaf: Dániel Szilágyi”. In

Although among the emigrants in Constantinople, in the European community, and even in certain Ottoman circles, the young language genius and language teacher soon became well known, but this was still not enough to be admitted to the Ottoman political elite as an infidel stranger.

The turning point came when he managed to get a job as a private tutor at the house of Hüssein Daim Pasha: he left Pera and moved to a part of the city mostly inhabited by Turks, which promoted his linguistic development and also deepened his cultural embeddedness. He was also given the name Reshid and the title Efendi by the pasha. From this time on, Ottomans of increasingly higher positions used the services of Vámbéry. He taught Beylikchi Afif Bey's son-in-law, where he also met the later famous Midhat Pasha, and Rifaat Pasha, a former foreign minister as well. Through them he became acquainted with increasingly high-ranking officials and also gained access to the embassies of Constantinople.⁵

But how did Vámbéry get acquainted with Pasha Hüssein Daim of Circassian origin? According to the memoirs published in Hungarian, he managed to get access to the pasha and his household through the intercession of György Kmety, a famous Hungarian emigrant general in Ottoman service. However, in Vámbéry's letter to Eberhardt cited previously, it is mentioned that actually Eberhardt first introduced him to the Pasha. Eberhardt served among the Circassians in the Caucasus during the Crimean War and supposedly learned the Circassian language as well, so his acquaintance with the pasha may have originated from there. In addition, Kmety was not even in the Ottoman Empire at that time, and in a letter addressed to him, Vámbéry was mentioned in a way that made it certain they did not know each other at the time. However, this changed soon and Kmety became the main patron of Vámbéry. Kmety was well known both to the English public and the high society of London for his heroic deeds in the Crimean War. His recommendations thus helped to open the doors of the international scientific circles and the political elite to Vámbéry when the unknown young man arrived in London in 1864 after his trips to the East.⁶

However, in the beginning, with Kmety's recommendations, he could rely on the support of Hungarian emigrants again, for the time being, in London. At that time, Jácint Rónay lived in the English capital; he was a Benedictine monk, a correspondent member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences before the Hungarian Revolution, and a supporter of the Hungarian war of independence. Rónay lived

Türkiye'de Kitap Koleksiyonerleri ve Sabaflar II. Derleyen ve yayına hazırlayan: Rifat N. BALI, İstanbul, Libra Kitap, 2020. 140–166.

⁵ VÁMBÉRY: *op. cit.* 107–124. On Hüssein Daim Pasha: Mehmed SÜREYYA: *Sicill-i Osmanî. Osmanlı Ünlüleri*. 3. Yayına haz. Nuri AKBAYAR. Eski yazıdan aktaran Seyit Ali KAHRAMAN. İstanbul, Kültür Bakanlığı – Tarih Vakfı, 1996. 699; on Afif Iszmail efendi: SÜREYYA: *op. cit.* I. 142–143.

⁶ VÁMBÉRY: *op. cit.* 107–124, 204; VÁMBÉRY: *op. cit.* 302; Cs. LENGYEL – MAKAI: *op. cit.* 124; *Splény Béla emlékiratai*, II. 328–329; Lajos Tüköry to György Kmety, İstanbul, 22 June 1857. R 87 György Kmety-papers, National Archives of Hungary, Budapest; Memoir of Kmety: George KMETY: *A Narrative of the Defence of Kars on the 29th September, 1855*, London, James Ridgway, 1856.

in London between 1850 and 1866 as an emigrant. Vámbéry used the old recipe: Rónay helped him find accommodation and then provided him with letters of recommendation. With their help, Vámbéry got into the John Murray publishing house and the Royal Geographical Society, and the rest is history.⁷

Kmety and Vámbéry also remained in close contact in London, and when the general died unexpectedly in 1865, Vámbéry also paid tribute to Kmety at his funeral.

Vámbéry kept track of Hungarian emigrants throughout his life. This is well illustrated by the fact that when the emigrant János Vavrek, who is hardly known to the public, died in 1900, Vámbéry sent a condolence letter to his daughter. Although they had not met in Istanbul for at least four decades, he wrote the following lines: “I knew your late lamented father to be an honest, reputable Hungarian man. I enjoyed his friendship for many years in Turkey and I regret his passing infinitely.”⁸

In summary, Vámbéry recognized and used very smartly the local knowledge and social capital of 48 emigrants both in Constantinople, where he consolidated his language skills, prepared for his travels and established his relationship with the Ottoman leader elite, and in London, where he rose to world fame. We can also suggest that without the help of emigration, the unknown, lame, “little poor son of our homeland”⁹ would have found it much harder to find his place and opportunities in both cities. It is no coincidence that in his writings Vámbéry remembered with great respect the Hungarians living in emigration, who viewed the “lame dervish” of vast knowledge and enormous willpower with similar respect and a kind of admiration.

The social activities of the elderly Vámbéry

It is well known that Vámbéry was honoured internationally by various scientific organisations and societies with memberships or honorary memberships, thus, among others, he became a member or honorary member of the Geographical Societies in Berlin, London, Paris, Madrid, Rome, Amsterdam, Vienna, Dresden, Frankfurt and Geneva (for example: Verein für Erdkunde (zu Berlin), Royal Geographical Society, etc.), the Royal Society of Literature, the Royal Asiatic Society, the Orientalische Museum of Vienna, and he was elected as the secretary of the Anthropology Society’s branch in Pest.¹⁰ He also obtained his honorary doctorate from Trinity College, Dublin.

⁷ RÓNAY Jácint: *Naplótörredék. Hetven év reményei és csalódása. Nyomatott kéziratul 10 példányban. I–VIII.* [Pozsony] [1885–1888] III. 328–329; VÁMBÉRY: *op. cit.* 204–205.

⁸ HU BFL XIII.8 Rezey – Vavrek family correspondence (1855–1900) 18. Budapest City Archives, Budapest.

⁹ VERESS: *op. cit.* II. 233.

¹⁰ Marc FLANDREAU: *Anthropologists in the Stock Exchange: A Financial History of Victorian Science*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2016, 63; *Magyar Tud. Akadémiai Almanach polgári és csillagászati naptárral MCMXII-RE.*, Budapest, Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1912, 79; MUNKÁCSI Bernát: “Vámbéry Ármin”. *Keleti Szemle* II, 1911/3, 197–199.

It is also more or less known how his position improved in his motherland, especially towards the end of his life. First, in 1860 he became an Elected Ordinary Member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, in 1893 he was provided with an honorary membership and the next year, he became a member of the Board of Directors. While he was quite active in international politics, the Hungarian Geographic Society was founded in 1872 on the initiative and with the leadership of János Hunfalvy, and it had ten founding members including Vámbéry. Vámbéry accepted to be the deputy president of the society from 1872 to 1888 and took a decisive role in the work. In many cases he read the yearly account (instead of the president of the society), and he gave lectures and regularly published in the journal of the society, *Földrajzi Közlemények*, published since 1873.¹¹ In 1889 he was elected the president of the society, but in 1890 he resigned. On the proposal of the secretary-general, in 1893 he was elected for his merits as an honorary president, and since 1897 he was honoured with the prestigious title of the constant honorary president together with Béla Széchenyi. While fulfilling his task as an honorary president, Vámbéry took part in events and sessions, accompanied celebrities and worldwide known travellers during their stay in Budapest, and announced their talk in the society.¹²

Vámbéry took an active part in the preparation of the Hungarian Millennial Celebrations as well, thus he was sent officially to Sultan Abdulhamid II to ask his consent to rent some of those precious artefacts that had been taken from Buda as spoils of war after the Ottoman conquest. He was supported in his mission by Count Ödön Széchenyi, leader of the Firefighter Brigades of Istanbul, who had been working in the Ottoman capital since 1874.¹³ Though his involvement is not clear yet, he must also have had a decisive role in the negotiations between the Hungarians and Turks, aiming to bring back from Istanbul and Izmit the relics of Imre Thököly, Ferenc Rákóczi II, Ilona Zrínyi, and their followers, who had fought for the independence of Hungary against the Habsburgs in the 17th and 18th centuries. The significant event, which was followed by millions of Hungarians, was finally realised in 1906.¹⁴

Later, Vámbéry mostly resigned from international politics and ceased visiting the capitals of the Ottoman and the British Empires. The spread of Turanism and Turkish nationalism paved the way for further involvement in social activities for

¹¹ Ármin Vámbéry and the Hungarian Geographic Society, vambery.mtak.hu/en/10.htm (downloaded: 06.12.2021.).

¹² As happened for example in 1898, when the Norwegian polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen, or in 1903, when the Swedish Central Asia researcher Sven Hedin – both honorary members of the society – read their lectures at the Society, vambery.mtak.hu/en/10.htm (downloaded: 06.12.2021.).

¹³ dr. KRIZSÁN László: “Vámbéry Ármin konstantinápolyi küldetése”. *Földrajzi Múzeumi Tanulmányok*, 8 (1990). 67.

¹⁴ See: *Dokumentumok II. Rákóczi Ferenc és társai újrateremtéséhez (1873–1906)*. Válogatta, szerkesztette, jegyzetekkel ellátta és az előszót írta HALÁSZ Hajnal, KATONA Csaba, Ólmosi Zoltán, Budapest, Magyar Országos Levéltár, 2004.

Vámbéry, which has been barely researched yet. Turkish nationalists, who had been inspired by Vámbéry himself and his works in the field of Turkish grammar and literature, started organising themselves, especially after the proclamation of the Constitution (1908) and the dethronement of Sultan Abdulhamid II (1909). This resulted in the founding of the Turkish Society (Türk Derneği) in 1908, the Turkish Hearth (Türk Ocağı) in 1912, and the Turkish Motherland (Türk Yurdu) (first as a journal and later as a society) in 1911.¹⁵ It should be emphasized that among the founders of the Turkish Society was Imre Karácson, a Hungarian priest and historian, who was sent to Constantinople by the Hungarian State with the mission of researching the Ottoman archives and mapping the possible sources of the history of the Hungarian Kingdom.¹⁶ Thus, it is no coincidence that the strength of Turkish-Hungarian scientific relations were shown by the fact that the only foreign branch of the Turkish Society, the Ottoman Society of Literature (Edebiyyat-ı Osmaniyye Cemiyeti), opened its doors in Budapest in 1909 under the leadership of eminent Turkologist Ignác Kúnos. Gyula Germanus was appointed as the secretary, while Gyula Mészáros became the head librarian of the society. Vámbéry was given the honorary presidency, which he finally accepted.¹⁷ We have very limited information about the activities of the Society, however, it is obvious that a more influential measure was the establishment of the Hungarian Turanian Society. Although there are indications that its founding had been planned in 1905, nothing was done until 1910, and the first two years after its founding were rather uneventful.¹⁸ The Society was modelled on the structure of the Royal Asiatic Society with the purpose of achieving scientific and economic goals. This was reflected both in its sub-name (the Hungarian Asiatic Society) and in the Statutes of the Society, which were confirmed by the strictly economic motivation of the five expeditions that were organised in the first three years.¹⁹ Count Béla Széchenyi and Ármin Vámbéry were given the honorary presidency, while Pál Teleki became the president. In addition, Jenő Cholnoky and Béla Erődi, a former student of Vámbéry, were elected to the presidency, while Alajos Paikert, an eminent Turanist from the

¹⁵ Kemal H. KARPAT: “The Turkish Thinkers. Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura, Fuat Köprülü”. In Kemal H. KARPAT: *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001, 374–396.

¹⁶ See: BENE István: *Karácson Imre élete és művei (1863–1911)*, Győr, Győregyházmegyei Alap Nyomdája, 1936; FODOR Pál: “Karácson Imre (születésének 125. évfordulóján)”. *Keletkutatás*, 1989 Spring. 109–114.

¹⁷ GERMANUS Gyula: “Turk Darnay”. *Keleti Szemle*. 9, 1909/10. 341–344.

¹⁸ The hypothesis stems from the fact that a date of 1905 was included in a Turanist coat of arms plan that eventually decorated the book cover of hard-line Turanist Benedek Baráthosi Balogh, published in 1926, under the title *Turáni regék és Turáni mondák a világ teremtéséről*. See: Nizam Önen: *İki Turan. Macaristan ve Türkiye’de Turancılık*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2005, 58.

¹⁹ Two of the five expeditions targeted Turkish territories: the one that was led by Rezső Milleker and Gyula Mészáros aimed at surveying the mineral resources of the Salt Lake (Tuz Gölü) and the Konya plain, while the other was led by Rezső Milleker with Béla Horváth around Kayseri. The other three expeditions targeted Lake Baikal, the Caucasus and the Aral and Caspian Seas.

Agricultural Museum, was elected as the executive chairman. Furthermore, we find such significant representatives of the political-economic-scientific circles as Mihály Károlyi, Albert Apponyi, István Tisza, Miklós Bánffy, Károly Hieronymi, Lajos Thallóczy, Leó Lánczy, Mihály Kmoskó, Gyula Germanus, Jenő Zichy, and Ferenc Hopp. At the same time, due to the diverse membership, fault lines soon appeared, as three more or less different approaches were present among the members: while for some Turan, which was in the focus, covered a purely geographical concept and they considered the society as a scientific gathering place, the economic-realist approach believed the society as a tool would make it easier for Hungarian products to reach Eastern markets, which later could make possible the “colonization” of the Balkans. The third group was formed by those who said that it was only possible for Hungary, which was trapped between Germanic and Slavic peoples, to develop strong Hungarian advocacy within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and in Europe with the support of the Turanian brothers.²⁰ At the same time, however, everyone agreed that closer ties should be established with the Turkish and other “sister organizations.” Thus, the magazine *Turán*, published since 1913, already included Turkish guest authors and brief Ottoman-Turkish summaries.²¹

Ultimately, however, the Society’s core aims were to stimulate Hungarian-Turkish economic relations. As part of the above-mentioned plans, the implementation of a project for Turkish students to gain professional experience in Hungary had already begun. The idea of which, according to some contemporary press reports, might have come from Izidor Baumgarten, the leader of the Hungarian Society in Constantinople, so the society opened Hungarian language courses in the Turkish capital.²²

To support all these initiatives at home, a Hungarian-Turkish Trade Association was founded in 1910 in the presence of Leó Lánczy, one of the wealthiest Hungarian bankers, at the meeting room of the Hungarian Commercial Bank of Pest. Minister Károly Hieronymi was appointed to be the patron of the organisation that had 132 members. Leó Lánczy accepted to be the president, Consul General Abdul Muktar became the Turkish co-president, while Béla Erődi, Turkish consul Simon Effendi, as well as Mór Gelléri and László Fürst were appointed as vice presidents.²³ The elderly Ármin Vámbéry again became the honorary president of the endeavour.

²⁰ FARKAS Ildikó: “A turanizmus”. *Unpublished* PhD thesis, Budapest, Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar, 2001, 59.

²¹ For further details see: Balázs ABLONCZY: *Go East! A History of Hungarian Turanism*, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2022.

²² Izidor Baumgarten moved to Constantinople around the 1880s, where he soon became the official envoy of the Hungarian Museum of Trade and the National Railways. Later he was appointed as the director of the Constantinople Branch of the Hungarian Commercial Ltd. (Magyar Kereskedelmi Rt.) and the representative of the Austro-Hungarian Chamber of Commerce. Later he was awarded with the Medjidie and the Osmaniye Orders as well as the Knight’s Cross of the Order of Francis Joseph. See: *Budapesti Hírlap*, 24 April 1914. 13.

²³ *BME Honi Ipar*, 15 June 1910. 19.

This hitherto almost completely unknown undertaking's mission was to develop Hungarian export trade to the Ottoman Empire, thus a few months later it succeeded in convincing the Ottoman Minister of Trade, Bedros Haladjian, to be its Turkish patron, and as a result of an initiative that was taken by Ziya Balji, a Hungarophile Turkish wholesaler, even the first Turkish branch was also formed. The secretary of the association, Géza Egyesy, who took over the presidency from Lánoczy in the following year, was present at the opening ceremony, where the local office was established under the name of *Club Commercial Turco-Hongrois* with a Turkish and a Hungarian director.²⁴

The goal continued to be supporting the export of Hungarian industrial products and the import of Turkish agricultural products. In January 1911, Egyesy gave a lecture at the National Chamber of Industry, where he said that the Danube was an excellent route to boost Hungarian trade to the Ottoman Empire, and that the railways could only be reasonable for more expensive goods. However, all this would require a Hungarian colony in Turkey and the appearance of pettiness should be avoided.²⁵ The only problem with this was that Egyesy did not prove to be the best choice for this position either. As early as 1912, the Turkish Consulate General signalled to the Turkish Foreign Ministry that no one should take the inquiries that were sent on behalf of the association seriously, as the former president was trying to make deals for his own benefit.²⁶

As a result of the misunderstandings and other difficulties, very few of the outstanding plans could be realised. First Lánoczy resigned, and then in May 1912 the association dissolved itself. At the same time, we cannot say that the attempt was completely ineffective, since under the auspices of the association, a Turkish-Hungarian school was established in 1911 to support the Turkish students who had been studying in Hungary in developing their knowledge of the Hungarian language. The school was also open to those Hungarian merchants who wished to join Eastern trade by learning Ottoman Turkish. With the permission of the Ministry of Religion and Public Education, in the presence of Jenő Balogh and Viktor Molnár, Secretaries of State, Ahmet Muktar, Consul General of Turkey, and Egyesy, under the directorate of Vámbéry's ex-student Béla Erődi, the school was opened on 15 January 1911, aiming to support the Hungarian political and economic goals in the Orient. This was even openly proclaimed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Religion and Public Education.²⁷

²⁴ *Budapesti Hírlap*, 23 November 1910. 17.

²⁵ *Budapesti Hírlap*, 25 January 1911. 17.

²⁶ Başkanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Ottoman Archive of the Presidency of the Turkish Republic – BOA), DH.MUI. (Dahiliye Nezareti Muhaberat-ı Umumiye İdaresi Evrakı) 159/122/1/1. (Haziran 1328 [June 1912]) BEO (Bâbüli Evrak Odası Evrakı) 4057/304235/1/1. (17 Haziran 1328 [30 June 1912], DH.MB. HPS. (Dahiliye Nezareti Mebâni-i Emriye ve Hapishaneler Müdüriyeti) M. 6/4/1/1. (2 Haziran 1328 [15 June 1912]).

²⁷ *Budapesti Hírlap*, 29 December 1910. 8.

Although it began operating in close cooperation with the association, from March 1912 onwards, thanks to the Turkish Consul General Fahrettin Bey, the school continued to operate free of charge and was sponsored by the Turkish representation. The teacher was Gyula Mészáros, who, in addition to his studies and research trips in Turkey and his expeditions to Central Asia, was already known among the Turks due to his Hungarian translation of the new Turkish constitution.²⁸ Next to him, a certain Ömer Feridun Effendi worked as a teacher.²⁹ However, the school, with 60 Turkish and 40 Hungarian students, was not as successful as it might have been. We know from the personal correspondence of the next Consul General, Ahmet Hikmet [Müftüoğlu], that he did not want to run the whole institution. In a letter dated 29 July 1913, Hikmet expressed his incomprehension that the Turkish Ministry of Public Works had not ceased insisting on maintaining the school and paying 3,000 Kurush per month, while from 1913 onwards the students needed to be enrolled in the school in the building of the Consulate General. As Hikmet wrote in one of his letters: “As if I don’t have enough to do, I even have to deal with this damn school.”³⁰ However, Mészáros, who ultimately worked as a Turkish employee, offered to publish the collection of his articles in a book dealing with the massacres against the Turks during the Balkan Wars – again on the basis of the Consul General’s private letters – in exchange for money.³¹ However, the experienced diplomat found an elegant solution to the problem: instead of giving him money, he arranged the 4th class of the Ottoman Order of Merit for the Hungarian Orientalist.³²

After spending decades in international diplomacy and backing every Hungarian endeavour that aimed at bringing closer the Hungarians and Turks at the political, economic, and cultural levels, Vámbéry passed away before the outbreak of WWI. He was commemorated throughout the Western world and in the Orient. His legacy was preserved by his students and different Hungarian scientific and political associations and societies of which he was a member. The Turanian Society, which became a government actor in 1916, succeeded in strengthening Turkish-Hungarian relations during the war years by giving the opportunity of Hungarian education to hundreds of Turkish students; Turkish-Hungarian and Hungarian-Turkish Friendship Societies were found, while a Hungarian Science Institute

²⁸ *A török alkotmány alaptörvényei*. Török eredetiből fordította: MÉSZÁROS Gyula Dr., Kolozsvár, Az Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület Jog- és Társadalomtudományi Szakosztálya, 1912.

²⁹ *Pesti Hírlap*, 9 January 1912. 4. The original name of Ömer Effendi was Jónás Elek, who returned to Hungary after a long stay in the Ottoman Empire, and then later became the Turkish teacher of the Eastern Academy and the Turkish-Hungarian School.

³⁰ Nil Türker TEKİN: *Peşte Günleri. Ahmet Hikmet Müftüoğlu’nun Özel Mektupları*, İstanbul, Ege Yayınları, 2011, 76.

³¹ The book was finally published: MÉSZÁROS Gyula: *A Balkáni háború kegyetlenségei (Eredeti török források alapján). Különnyomat az Alkotmány c. napilapból!*, Budapest, Stephaneum Nyomda, 1913.

³² TEKİN: *op. cit.* 56, 78, 85, and: (17 Eylül 1329 [30 September 1913]).

was opened in the Turkish capital in 1917.³³ In addition, it is worth mentioning that the son of Ármin Vámbéry, Rüstem Vámbéry, visited the Turkish capital in 1916, but there is very limited information about the nature and afterlife of the so-called Hungarian-Turkish Friendship of Arms initiative.³⁴

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³⁴ BOA, HR SYS 2426/41. (29 September 1916). Hungarian priest Pál Schrotty also briefly mentioned the visit in one of his dispatches: “Likewise I met with Professor Dr. Ruzstem Vámbéry, who as a representative of the Military League that had been found by Count Gyula Andrássy gróf came for propagate it in Constantinople. He held a lecture behind closed doors to the members of the ‘Union et Progrés.’ Until now I haven’t heard anything about the outcome.” Kalocsai Főegyházmegyei Levéltár (Archive of the Archdiocese of Kalocsa), I. 1.a 132.ND Missio 1901–1918. Constantinople, 4 November 1916.

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Abstract

Our study shows two aspects of Armin Vambéry’s social network. In the first part, we will show how the Hungarian emigrants of 1848–1849 helped him during his first stay in Constantinople and how he established a relationship with the Ottoman elite through them. Moreover, he also owed his easy access to the academic circles in London to the same émigré circle. In the second half we focus on Vambéry’s involvement in different scientific and civil organizations through which he managed to boost the diffusion of Turanism in Hungary and the Turkish-Hungarian bilateral relations.

Keywords: social network, Károly Eberhardt, György Kmety, Dániel Szilágyi, Jácint Rónay

Rezümé

A tanulmányunk Vambéry Armin kapcsolati hálójának két aspektusát mutatja meg. Az első részben azt mutatjuk be, hogy az 1848–1849-es emigránsok hogyan segítették első konstantinápolyi tartózkodását és rajtuk keresztül hogyan épített ki kapcsolatot az oszmán littel. Sőt, ugyanennek az emigráns körnek köszönheti a londoni tudományos körökbe való könnyű bejutását is. A tanulmány második részében Vambéry tudományos és civil szervezetekben betöltött pozícióit tekintjük át, melyen keresztül aktívan segítette a turanizmus hazai szűrbe szökkenését, illetőleg a török-magyar kétoldalú kapcsolatok fejlődését.

Kulcsszavak: kapcsolati háló, Eberhardt Károly, Kmety György, Szilágyi Dániel, Rónay Jácint