ORIENTALISM FOR THE NATION:
JEWS AND ORIENTAL SCHOLARSHIP IN MODERN HUNGARY

By

KATALIN FRANCISKA RAC

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To the reader
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ABOUT SELF-ORIENTALISM – AN INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Orientalist Careers as Examples of Jewish Paths of Integration in Modern Hungary</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliographical Review</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Orientation as a Language of Hungarian Nationalism and National Identity Discourse</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Hungarian Jewish History</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientalism and Jewish History</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientalism and Self-Orientation</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of the Chapters</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 SELF-ORIENTALISM IN THE MAKING, THE EMERGENCE OF “OTHER” ORIENTS, AND THE JEWISH RESPONSES</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Politics of Scholarship: the Foundation of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habsburg Educational Policies</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergence of the Idea of a Hungarian Learned Society</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian linguistics at the end of the eighteenth century and the emergence of Hungarian Finno-Ugric studies</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Diet’s language politics</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The foundation of the Learned Society, precursor to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberals and Conservatives: East and West on the Hungarian Political Map</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Liberal Understanding of the Orient</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The People of the East</em> and Self-Orientation</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occidentals among the People of the East</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Advocacy for Jewish Integration and Self-Orientation as a Language of Opposition to Jewish Emancipation</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Reactions to the Emancipation Question</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue: the Birth of Hungarian Jewry</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 SELF-ORIENTALISM QUESTIONED: THE BEGINNING OF VAMBERY’S CAREER (1851-1867)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Academy’s Scholarly and Patriotic Program Following 1848: Historians and Linguists</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historians about the <em>Magyarok Őshite</em> - Study of the Hungarians’ Ancient Beliefs</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Linguistics .................................................................................................131
Becoming a Turkologist ........................................................................141
Familial Background and Early Studies ................................................141
Making Connections ...............................................................................145
Integration through Scholarship ..........................................................152
The Beginnings of Vambery’s Career: 1857-1867 .................................155
The First Study Tour to Istanbul .............................................................155
The Second Study Tour of Central Asia ................................................158
Vambery’s changing personal relations with Hungarian linguists ..........160
The Finno-Ugric turn ............................................................................172
Hungarian Scholarship and Minority Integration ....................................179


First Encounter between Goldziher and Vambery: Jewish Studies, Oriental Scholarship, and Jewish Emancipation ..................................188
Family History and Studies ................................................................189
Encounter with Eötvös ........................................................................196
Studies in Germany .............................................................................197
Self-orientalism and Linguistics: the Prelude to the Ugric-Turkish War ..201
Chagatai Studies: Eastern Turkish Linguistic Research Preceding the Turkish-Tartar Comparison .................................................................202
Uyghur Studies ....................................................................................203
The Study of Turkish-Tartar Affinity ....................................................205
Casus Belli: Budenz’s Review of Turkish-Tartar Word Correspondence ...209
History, Myths, and Mythology ............................................................212
Teaching at the University ................................................................215
Hebrew Instruction .............................................................................217
Mythos ...............................................................................................221
Connection between mythology and religion: ethnogenesis ...............225
Hebrew mythology .............................................................................229
Hebrew religiosity .............................................................................234
The role of the prophets ...................................................................236
Nineteenth-Century Nationalism and Mythos ......................................238
Modern Jewish Historiography ..........................................................245
East Reinterpreted .............................................................................247

5 WHO IS ORIENTAL IN HUNGARY? MULTICULTURALISM, JEWISH HISTORY AND SELF-ORIENTALISM 1876-1890 .........................................................251

1876 for Vambery: Return to Hungarian Studies ...................................259
Prologue to The Origins of the Hungarians .........................................259
The Origins of the Hungarians: the Opening of the Ugric-Turkish War ..262
Critics and Debate ...............................................................................267
The First Autobiography: The Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambery 279
Origins and Integration .....................................................................280
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sámuel Kohn: Jewish History and Eastern Origins</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious History as Scholarly Field and Political Program</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Studies on Islam and Muslim Community</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Studies</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 SCHOLARLY SELF-ORIENTALISM, COLONIALISM, AND JEWISH MARGINALITY IN THE MIRROR OF STEIN’S CAREER 1890-1913</strong></td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vambery’s Reversal of Self-Orientalism: Origins and Universal Values in Oriental Scholarship 1895-1905</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>The Emergence and Growth of Hungariandom</em></td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reactions to <em>The Emergence and Growth of Hungariandom</em></td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- My Struggles: the 1905 Autobiography</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldziher and Orientalism in Turn-of-the-Century Hungary: Western Scholarship on the East, Western Colonial Presence in the East, and the East’s Influence on the West</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Professor Horeb, the Marginal Man</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Marginality</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REFERENCES</strong></td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</strong></td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Orientalism For The Nation: Jews and Oriental Scholarship in Modern Hungary”
reconstructs the careers of three world-famous Hungarian Jewish orientalists: the Turkologist Armin Vambery (1832-1913), the Arab philologist and Islamicist Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), and the Sanskritist and archeologist Aurel Stein (1862-1943). An examination of their Hungarian academic milieu and social circumstances reveals the interconnected development of Oriental scholarship and the modern Hungarian national identity discourse. This dissertation examines the ways in which these Jewish scholars actively participated in both, and, therefore, opens a window to different Jewish attitudes toward Jewish integration in modern Hungary.

This dissertation relies on two premises: first, the emergence of the modern Hungarian nation state and Jewish integration in Hungary were parallel processes. Second, in both the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the medieval historical tradition of the Hungarians’ eastern origins defined national identity discourse. Introducing the term “self-Orientalism,” my dissertation argues that modern Hungarians described themselves as an Asian nation in Europe in order to articulate their uniqueness vis-à-vis other ethnic groups in the Habsburg Empire and other European peoples. The Orientalization of the national self led to the politicization of
Oriental scholarship on a level which was comparable with the case of the Western European imperial powers.

This study ultimately demonstrates that these three Jewish scholars developed differing attitudes toward self-Orientalism, and that these attitudes corresponded with their Jewish and Hungarian identifications. Through their works, they contributed to the development of Hungarian and international Oriental scholarship, participated in Hungarian national identity discourse, and both directly and indirectly engaged with British and Austro-Hungarian colonial politics.
CHAPTER ONE
ABOUT SELF-ORIENTALISM – AN INTRODUCTION

Spatial relations are only the condition, on the one hand, and the symbol, on the other, of human relations.

Georg Simmel: The Stranger

On September 2, 1897, Vasárnapi Újság (Sunday News), one of the most popular weekly magazines in Hungary, reported the opening on the international Orientalist Congress of Paris. It listed the Hungarian representatives present at the conference: the Turkologist Armin Vambery (1832-1913), who represented the Hungarian government, the Islamicist Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921) who represented the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and the Sanskritist Aurel Stein (1862-1943), who participated as the representative of an “Indian university.” As it had since the publication of its first issue, the journal informed its readers about both Hungarian and international scholarly events. Its readership needed no introduction to the personalities mentioned in the article. Sunday News referred to these three Hungarian Jewish orientalists, as long-time known and acknowledged Hungarian scholars whose international acknowledgement and personal presence at the conference brought respect both to Hungary and to Hungarian scholarship. However, the article did not mention their Jewishness. This omission might hint on the journal’s intention to illustrate the “success” of Jewish assimilation, which the 1895 law that declared Judaism a state religion made theoretically unimpeded. The so called Law of Reception

1 Vasárnapi Újság (Sunday News) 44, no. 37, September 2, 1897, 609. This newspaper was favored by the more educated middle class and the noble intellectuals, and by the turn of the century was of the highest intellectual and cultural quality among the Budapest newspapers. See in A magyar sajtó története II/2 1867-1892 (The history of the Hungarian press II/2 1867-1892) ed. Miklós Szabolcsi, 2-217 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1979); available from http://mek.oszk.hu/04700/04727/html/481.html; Internet; accessed March 30, 2014.

2 At the time Stein was working in Lahore. According to the article, a fourth orientalist, the Turkologist and Vambery disciple Ignaz Kunos also participated.
of 1895 completed the process of Jewish emancipation: while 1867 Jews were granted equal civil and political rights as individuals, in 1895, they were officially acknowledged as a religious (though not ethnic) minority in multiethnic Hungary. In other words, the presence of these three scholars at the Orientalist Congress as official or acknowledged representatives of Hungarian scholarship could be read as an illustration of the completion of Jewish integration in modern Hungary.

More interesting, though, is what the article reveals about the process of Jewish integration in nineteenth-century Hungary. According to the report, Hungary was especially honored, since Vambery was the first to greet the delegates after the French minister of education officially opened the convention. Vambery, thus, gave the first address of which Sunday News quoted the following lines:

My nation, the Hungarian people, is of eastern origins. Our ancestors fought for their place in Europe with swords in their hands. Today, however, we work to acquaint Europe with the east and the east with Europe through books.3

These sentences reflected the popular belief that modern Hungarians descended from the Asian warrior tribesmen who, led by the Hungarian chieftain Árpád, a millennia earlier conquered the Carpathian Basin and founded the Hungarian state. Only a year earlier, Hungary celebrated the millennial anniversary of its foundation, and in the festive atmosphere the “memory” of the country’s eastern past was revived with unprecedented fervor. The most illustrious testimony to this glorious past is the Millennial Monument that until today depicts the leaders of the seven Hungarian tribes who led the Hungarian warriors to the Conquest of the future homeland. It was erected to celebrate Hungary’s thousand years of statehood in 1896. The prime minister opened

3 Vasárnapi Újság (Sunday News), Ibid.
the Millennial Festivities in “Attila’s tent” as another symbolic gesture of identification with a once glorious Asian past. The understanding that the Asian nomadic past determined the fate of Hungariandom even after the settlement in Europe and the conversion to Christianity was far from a modern “invention”: it defined medieval notions of nationhood and statehood and remained a crucial element of modern Hungarian national identity discourse as well. The oft-repeated reference to the national self as both the Asian other in Europe and the eastern-most Christian and western nation that defended Europe against its enemies similarly relied on earlier, medieval claims wrapped in modernist garb. As István Széchenyi’s seminal pamphlet from 1841, *A kelet népe* (The People of the East) demonstrates, nineteenth-century Hungarians perfected the medieval eastern consciousness into a self-Orientalizing discourse. Self-Orientalism in modern Hungary defined the ways in which modern Hungarians imagined their past and its legacy. Accordingly, they molded the perceived Asian heritage into their modern national identity politics vis-à-vis other Europeans and Asians in the international and domestic arena alike and built political programs for the future.

By stressing that the special attention that Hungary attributed to Oriental scholarship was due to its association with Hungarian linguistics and research on national origins, Vambery engaged with self-Orientalism. Since the 1850s, the Hungarian Oriental academic field became involved in public discussions on modern Hungarian national identity. On the eve of the international exposition of 1900 that featured the host country’s many exotic colonies, the capital of the French Empire listened as the Hungarian representative argued that the eastern origins lent Hungarians the exceptional intellectual tool to bridge between west and east. Vambery’s words, though neither original nor novel, emphasized not only the specific “gift” Hungarians had for the study of the Orient, but also the contrast between Hungary’s and the Western European states’
political stakes in the study of the east. Orientalism was conducted for the nation, it contributed to Hungarian research on the national self, while the English and French scholars often pointed to their countries’ colonies, which both made possible and justified the scholarly attention directed toward the cultural and social institutions of the non-European Other.

The stress on the political importance of Orientalism in Hungary served the Jewish Vambery as a strategy of identifying as a Hungarian academic, official delegate, and national in an international setting: he defined his participation in Hungarian national scholarship through the Hungarians’ eastern origins. The reporter of the Sunday News relied on this identification and presented the other Hungarian Jewish scholars in the conference accordingly. In doing so, the journal disregarded the three scholars’ differing views on the scope and the political and social roles of Oriental scholarship, and personal identifications as Hungarian nationals, Jewish citizens, and scholars of the Orient. The report depicted them as representatives of a uniform Jewish attitude to integration and a unified Hungarian attitude toward Orientalism, mostly defined by its close connection to the study of Hungarian linguistic and ethnic origins.

This dissertation demonstrates that the three orientalists’ interpretations of the political and scholarly scopes of their academic work, self-understandings as Hungarian nationals and Jewish citizens of Hungary, and paths toward academic career and integration in Hungary were in fact very different. It argues that these differences derived partly from the three academics’ different personal circumstances as well as the different fields in which they specialized, more importantly, however, they manifested in the scholars’ attitudes toward Hungarian self-Orientalism. The dissertation examines how the three scholars’ works corresponded with the Hungarian self-orientalist national identity discourse and its effects on their integration in Hungary. The study of their scholarship, institutional participation, and scholarly attitudes, in
addition, opens a window to the broader history of Oriental research in Hungary and demonstrates the three scholars’ understanding of their own scholarship as a tool that shaped the face of modern Oriental research and academic culture. In addition, it allows for the examination of their and their colleagues’ conceptualization of historical and political notions like ethnogenesis, nationhood, ethnicity and citizenship, assimilation and cultural essentialism. The discussion of such notions in turn made it possible for these scholars to further engage with political arguments that addressed the modernization process in Hungary during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Their careers illustrate the contribution of modern academism to the building of the nation state, the Jewish participation in this creative and political process, and the role of Orientalism in the making of modern Hungary.

**Jewish Orientalist Careers as Examples of Jewish Paths of Integration in Modern Hungary**

The examination of Hungarian Jewish orientalists’ careers as pathway to understanding Jewish integration in Hungary goes back to the interwar period. The Hungarian Jewish novelist and playwright Dezső Szomory interpreted Vambery’s and Goldziher’s careers as illustrations of Hungarian Jewish scholars’ different paths of integration. In 1926, less than three decades after the appearance of the article in *Sunday News* and only five years after Goldziher’s death, Szomory published his novel *Mr. Professor Horeb*, the story of two Hungarian Jewish scholars whose characters Szomory shaped after Vamberry and Goldziher.

Szomory titled his novel after Homer Horeb, his main character, a Hungarian Jewish philologist, a literary transmutation of Goldziher. Szomory shaped Varjassy’s character after Vambery, who in reality was Goldziher’s professor and mentor, however, in the novel, Varjassy is Horeb’s student. The two represent two different types of scholars: Horeb, as his name suggests, is heir to the Greco-Hebrew classical literacy, is an exceptionally well-read thinker with broad intellectual and cultural horizons, who, while refuses to give up his Jewish identity,
fully commits himself to the Hungarian state and academism.⁴ To Szomory, Horeb is the positive example of the ethical scholar, as it becomes clear from the argument Szomory “puts” into Horeb’s mouth:

Those teachers in Gottingen and Jena whom you mention were not Catholics like you. Moreover, they were happy to be born Protestants, because this way they could become philosophers without stopping being Christians. I, in contrary, would not think, that one stops being an Israelite by converting to Christianity. However, I would believe that by doing this, one stops being a philosopher.⁵

Whereas the real Vambery converted to Protestantism, which provoked the Catholic state university board’s disapproval, Varjassy’s ambition is characterized by his conversion to Catholicism. He is less educated than Horeb and power- and position-driven, and in addition to converting to Christianity, preaches nationalist arguments. Szomory compares the two personalities not very differently from how Goldziher compared himself to Vambery in his diary. “Against this column,” as Szomory refers to Horeb,

Varjassy was a creation of opportunist nature and construction. He exchanged his bitter confession for state religion very early with such a cool and sharp perception that in the poetry and metaphysics of Christianity recognizes mainly the practical possibilities of advancement.⁶

The fictional Varjassy desperately thirsts fame and acknowledgement. The story develops as the narrative follows Horeb across the streets of Pest sitting in coffee houses, lecturing his student Varjassy, aka Vambery, and sitting at home and gazing at his beautiful wife, Dora Zukkermandel. In his quest for academic advancement, Varjassy unsuccessfully tries to seduce her. Literary critics found the book a poor novel pointing toward its underdeveloped plot, and

⁴ Dezső Szomory, *Horeb Tanár Úr* (Mr. Professor Horeb) (Budapest, Múlt és Jövő, 2007). The last chapter of the dissertation discusses this book in further details.

⁵ Szomory, 16.

⁶ Szomory, 14.
doubted whether Szomory’s curious secessionist ornamental language corresponded with the requirements of literary Hungarian. Nevertheless, they praised Szomory for the richness and palpable depiction of his characters.

Szomory’s portrayal, even if of fictional characters in a literary universe, complements the academic, and therefore inevitably selective and unilateral, reconstruction of the scholars’ lives. In the novel, Horeb converses with orientalists like Ignaz Goldziher and the French Ernest Renan, which reveals Szomory’s familiarity with the two scholars’ scholarships and their significance in the scholarly discussions related to antisemitism. In so doing, Szomory also argued that Jewish scholars’ integration in Hungary involved their engagement with the shaping of Hungarian culture and scholarship as opposed to the passive act of acculturation to Hungarian cultural patterns and leaving the Jewish cultural and social sphere behind. Through the examination of the two characters, Szomory depicted two distinct Jewish scholarly attitudes toward assimilation and integration in modern Hungary, ultimately demonstrating that the path Vambery chose was not a universal one for Hungarian Jewish scholars. Szomory’s interest in the Hungarian Jewish academics’ lives – not failing to underline his own personal stakes - allows the historical examination of the discrepancy between the cultural and the social position of the three Hungarian Jewish orientalists. The last chapter of this study focuses on Szomory’s interpretation of the Jewish intellectuals’ role in shaping Hungarian arts and sciences and offers a reading of Mr. Professor Horeb that engages the Hungarian Jewish case within the broader discussion of Jewish marginality in modern Europe.

Similarly to Szomory, students of the Goldziher oeuvre, Raphael Patai, Hamid Dabashi, Lawrence I. Conrad, and Róbert Simon, compared Vambery’s and Goldziher’s careers and attitudes toward Hungarian-ness, Jewishness, and scholarship and interpreted them as two
sharply contrasting examples of Jewish intellectuals’ paths to integration in Hungary. This comparative examination accompanied the publications of Goldziher’s two diaries. The Tagebuch (diary), which he started to write on his fortieth birthday, was published in German in 1978 and in Hungarian in 1984. The Oriental Diary, which he kept during his Middle Eastern journey in 1873-74 was published in 1987.7 These studies rather reproduced the points of views that Goldziher articulated in his private writings and in fact were a sidetrack in the study of Goldziher’s scholarship.

Vambery had full control over the edition of his autobiographies Arminius Vambery, His Life and Adventures (1883) and The Story of My Struggles: the Memoirs of Arminius Vambéry (1904), which Vambery reworked for the 1905 Hungarian publication Küzdelméim (My Struggles). They completed his scholarly and journalistic work. In contrast, Goldziher’s diaries were belated completions of his scholarly oeuvre.8 His family and two Jewish scholars, who considered them to be important documents of Hungarian Jewish history, carefully reviewed them before submitting them to print.9 After his death, Goldziher’s wife tore out several pages of

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8 Arminius Vambery, Arminius Vambery, His Life and Adventures (New York: Arno Press, 1973.), Ármin Vámbergé, The story of my struggles: the memoirs of Arminius Vambéry (London, T.F. Unwin, 1904.), Armin Vámbergé, Küzdelméim (My Struggles) (Budapest : Franklin-Társulat, 1905). These autobiographies not only retell Vambery’s life and career but also include arguments about nationhood, society, the role of religion, and the Jewish experience in Europe and Asia that he could not include in his scholarly or political writings.

9 Vambery’s autobiographies were very popular readings at the time considering that the first autobiography had eight additional editions. Following his death in 1913, in 1914, the ninth edition of Arminius Vambery, His Life and Adventures was published with a very warm introduction by the Zionist leader and close friend of the Vamberys’ (also devoted fan of Mrs. Vambery poppy-seed strudel) Max Nordau, which was also a symbolic gesture toward Vambery who years earlier introduced the founder of the World Zionist Organization Theodore Herzl to the Ottoman ruler. To what extent Vambery successfully shaped his own public image can also be gauged by the fact that several novels were written for children as educational tales based on his autobiographies. Three years after its first publication, Vambery’s first autobiography was edited and published as an educational story for school boys about Vambery the autodidact, who through diligence became a world-known scholar. Armin Vambery, Arminius Vambery: His Life and Adventures. Written by Himself. With Introductory Chapter Dedicated To The Boys of England (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1886) An abridged edition
the *Tagebuch*, which allegedly discussed their marriage and the suicide of their first-born son Miksa. After she died in 1926, the manuscript of the diary as well as other papers including the *Oriental Diary* were bequeathed to their younger son Károly; before his death in 1955, Károly gave them to Alexander Scheiber, his friend, the former president of the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary, and a student of Goldziher’s personally closest student Bernát Heller. Scheiber published the *Tagebuch* and entrusted Raphael Patai with the publication of the *Oriental Diary*. While Scheiber added extensive footnotes describing the personalities mentioned in the entries in both the German and Hungarian editions of the *Tagebuch*, he edited the entries that included Goldziher’s sharp criticism of various personalities from the Hungarian Jewish establishment out of the latter.  


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10 Goldziher considered the diaries private writings addressed to his family and for publication. At the opening, he wrote that “My writing is addressed to my wife, children, and closest friends. During my life, it shall remain inaccessible for anyone else. If by coincidence someone should learn about its existence, I ask by his honor to keep its existence and content a secret.” Goldziher, *Napló*, 17. My translations from the Goldziher diary are based on both the Hungarian and the German texts also when only the Hungarian version is noted.

11 Shlomo Dov Goitein, the renowned authority on Mediterranean history, reviewed the *Tagebuch* in *Jewish Social Studies* after its publication. Goiten emphasized that it was an invaluable source for students of Islam and Goldziher’s life. In addition, it had specific Jewish interest. Accordingly, he focused on the events in Goldziher’s life through which he could elucidate Goldziher’s religiosity and relationship with the Hungarian Jewish community. See: Shlomo Dov Goitein, review of *Tagebuch* by Ignaz Goldziher, *Jewish Social Studies* 41, no. 3/4 (Summer-Fall 1979): 323-327. Goitein’s remarks illustrate Goldziher’s bitterness that Scheiber found to unfit Goldziher’s memory.
acquaintances in academia. He subjected Vambery to exceptionally harsh criticism. The reason behind this should be sought in the fact that Vambery was not simply a Jewish intellectual in Hungary, but a Jewish scholar who sought prominence and thus exemplified both scholarly and political methods in his search for acknowledgement and success in both Hungarian as well as international scholarly and Jewish circles. Most importantly, Vambery played a key role in the initiation of Godziher’s career as an orientalist, and Goldziher believed, behind his back, Vambery hindered his career. As it was mentioned previously and the below cited entry illustrates, Goldziher condemned the conduct of his mentor and teacher as a scholar – he criticized Vambery’s disrespect for philological analysis, politically biased etymological investigations that served his theory about the Hungarians’ Turkish origins. He repeatedly described Vambery as a treacherous and dishonest man, a swindle scholar, and false dervish (it is unclear if this was a reference to Vambery’s “faked” admiration of the east or just a cynical remark about Vambery’s dervish incognito that he used during his Central Asian travels). In addition, accepting the linguistic theory of Finno-Ugrian affinity that opposed Vambery’s theory of the Hungarian-Turkish kinship, Goldziher criticized Vambery submitting his scholarship to political goals. (The Turkish affinity supported the self-orientalist arguments and the imagery of the eastern origins.) Thus, in Goldziher’s eyes, because Vambery engaged with the nationalist pseudo-scholarship that catered to the self-Orientalizing discourse, Vambery embodied the geometrical opposite of the Hungarian Jewish scholar he strove to be. As a private person,

12 Goitein noted in his review of the Tagebuch that while Goldziher was always generous and kind in his reviews, he did not spare criticism in his diary. Goitein also related that when Goldziher was asked about his benign attitude in reviews, he argued that he was a בודק “bodeq” and not a שוחט “shohet,” i.e. he compared his work as a critic to that of the inspector of the body of the animal to be slaughtered as opposed to that of the slaughterer. In Goitein’s mind, the slaughter was done in the diary. Goitein, 325.
Goldziher was probably bothered by Vambery’s atheism and the way he subjected his orientalist expertise to political journalism and the Hungarian nationalist academic enterprise:

the famous man, but after fifteen years of intercourse as I could know for sure, a wretched, dishonest, unprincipled, thoroughly bad man. No emotion of his soul has ever turned to the good. His scientific character is confused, his moral nature is selfishness and greed, his social actions constitute self-advertisement and perfidy.13

Goldziher’s interpretation of the opposition between his and his teacher’s personalities and academic conduct survived in the subsequent comparisons of the scholarly and political attitudes of the two.

From the German edition of Goldziher’s diary, the international readership was appalled to learn about the circumstances in which Goldziher produced his exceptional scholarship, which earned him the title of “founder of modern Islamic studies” in his lifetime. In contrast, the Hungarian readership was offered a distorted version that reflected Scheiber’s politics of Jewish memory and intentions to shape Goldziher’s image as less antagonistic toward the Jewish community and various Jewish personalities. One of the most respected experts of the Goldziher oeuvre, the orientalist Róbert Simon, listed all the parts, including the above quote, that Scheiber eliminated from the Hungarian edition as part of his criticism of the Tagebuch’s Hungarian edition.14 However, his criticism was dwarfed by the intensity of the international response (which Simon also joined) to the English edition of the Oriental Diary and the “psychological portrait” Raphael Patai the translator and editor added to it as an introduction.

13 Goldziher, Tagebuch, 105.

Patai’s *Psychological Portrait* of Goldziher provoked a fierce backlash, as Patai primarily focused on Goldziher’s attitudes toward Zionism and Islam while at the same time reproducing the conflicts that Goldziher had mentioned in his diary, especially his antagonism toward Vambéry. Patai’s father was the editor of the Hungarian Jewish periodical *Múlt és Jövő* and as such Goldziher’s acquaintance. The young Patai, who as a child was fortunate enough to meet the respected scholar, nonetheless depicted Goldziher through the reflections of other people who knew him personally. Patai argued that Goldziher was malicious and jealous. In Patai’s eyes, Goldziher’s weakness manifested in his attraction to Islam— he concluded that Goldziher had almost converted to Islam while in Egypt and thus was not as a pious a Jew as he claimed to be. Patai, who was an ardent Zionist, also highlighted Goldziher’s antagonism toward Zionism, which also “demonstrated” his lack of solidarity with the Jewish cause. In addition, what Patai suggested was Goldziher’s rather romantic attraction to his daughter-in-law, Mária Freudenberg, further illustrated his “lack of dignity.” However, in the Zionist Patai’s view, Vambéry, the helper of Herzl, was the honest Jew and Goldziher, who refused to accept an invitation to the faculty of the nascent Hebrew University in Jerusalem, was the *roshe* (bad person). Thus, Patai not only reversed Goldziher’s and Vambéry’s images — as portrayed by Goldziher in his diary — but also confirmed the Jewish image that Vambéry had created for himself and the Hungarian Jewish community despite his conversion to Protestantism. Several times during his career, Vambéry gave interviews to the popular Jewish weekly *Egyenlőség* (Equality) as an expert of Central Asia as well as a connoisseur of Jewish life in the east. An article condoning Vambéry’s death in *Equality* reminded the readers that Vambéry only declared himself Christian for the sake of his employment in the University but never converted; he could not have converted because of
his strict Orthodox background. Similarly for Patai, Vambéry was the exemplary Jewish citizen, who never antagonized the Jewish community; instead, even when “forced” to convert, he continued to act on behalf of Hungarian Jews and world Jewry.

Two well-known students of Goldziher’s life and work, Lawrence Conrad and Hamid Dabashi equally condemn Patai for distorting Goldziher’s memory and misinterpreting the spirit of his oeuvre. In direct opposition to Patai, in connection with Goldziher’s relationship with Vambéry, they accept the Goldziher diary at face value and stress that Vambéry indeed was the negative example of what Goldziher the scholar and private man represented. Nonetheless, they focus on the two’s attitudes to Islam and the Orient. They emphasize Vambéry’s journalistic views on colonialism and disregard Goldziher’s Arabic textbook, which he had written for Bosnian Muslims as commissioned by the Monarchy’s Bosnian government. In his article “The Dervish’s Disciple: On the Personality and Intellectual Milieu of the Young Ignaz Goldziher,” Conrad compares Vambéry’s alleged negative attitude to Asia with Goldziher’s devotion to Islam. But he does so without noting that the two scholars travelled in very different regions or that Vambéry’s interest was more anthropological, while the majority of Goldziher’s work fell into the category of religious history and the history of ideas. Dabashi argues that Goldziher’s anti-colonialism lay behind his devotion to Islam, which exceeded the mere scholarly attraction

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15 Egyenlőség (Equality), October 12, 1913.
16 See next footnotes for their relevant writings. Conrad has been publishing about Goldziher in the collected volumes Golden Roads: Migration, Pilgrimage and Travel in Medieval and Modern Islam (“The Pilgrim from Pest: Goldziher’s Study Tour to the Near East (1873-1874) and The Jewish Discovery of Islam (“Ignaz Goldziher on Ernest Renan: From Orientalist Philology to the Study of Islam.”)
to the Islamic scholarly field. Based on the content of Goldziher’s diary, Dabashi points out that a comparison with the “charlatan orientalist Vambery” is especially helpful to further accentuate Goldziher’s pro-Islamic stances. Noting the parallels between the changing length of the Suras in the Qur’an and the entries in Goldziher’s diary, Dabashi goes so far as to compare Goldziher’s Diary to the Qur’an. The authors elucidate the role of the two Hungarian Jewish scholars in context of the study of Asia in Europe but not in the context of the Hungarian scholarly milieu.

Róbert Simon compares the careers of the two personalities within the Hungarian context. Similarly to Szomory, Simon characterizes Vambery and Goldziher as two archetypical Hungarian Jewish scholars who exhibited diametrically opposite attitudes toward their field and accordingly chose different paths of integration. In contrast to Szomory, Simon gauges the two oeuvres from the point of view of the orientalist, partly producing an “insider” history, while also addressing the history of Jewish integration in Hungary. In his essay “Goldziher és Vámbéry: Két választás Magyarországon,” (Goldziher and Vambery: two choices in Hungary) Simon juxtaposes the two scholars’ attitudes to the east (Vambery allegedly despised the Orient, while Goldziher exhibited deep empathy and knowledge of it), the quality of their scholarship (Vambery’s did not have a lasting impact on the field while Goldziher’s work forms the basis for Islamic studies in Hungary still today), and personal life conduct (Vambery not only changed his name to a more Hungarian-sounding one, mimicking the names of the noble families by


19 See, Dabashi, xlvi.

choosing one that ends with a ‘y’ rather than an ‘i,’ but he also converted to Protestantism in order to advance his career.  

In contrast, both in his scholarly and academic administrative work, Goldziher opted for promoting a modern civil society in which religiosity would remain a private manner and not have the possibility of hindering professional careers.) Whereas Vambery acquired a university professorship relatively soon (he was full professor by 1870), Goldziher served as the secretary of the Pest Jewish Congregation for thirty years, in order to provide for his family until he became a full professor at the University in 1905, at the age of 55. 

Simon argues that Vambery chose to become an academic purely because it ensured social ascent, while “the service to scholarship was Goldziher’s life-guiding principle.” He goes on to stress that despite the striking difference, the Hungarian public memory retains a vivid image of Vambery, as opposed to the oblivion into which Goldziher’s persona has faded. This illustrates that Vambery’s populism – illustrated by his prolific journalistic activities, commentaries on the Ottoman Empire and the Central Asian question, as well as interviews given to the Jewish press -- was better received than Goldziher’s exemplary conduct, which according to Simon’s view, was much ahead of its time. Simon also stresses that the deeply politicized character of Hungarian academism in the modern period can be gauged by the fact that, like the scholars’ public reception, their reception within academia was very different:

21 In his *Jewish Nobles and Geniuses in Modern Hungary*, William McCagg demonstrates the otherwise well-established argument that due to the incomplete modernization of the Hungarian society in the second half of the nineteenth century, assimilating Jews held the noble lifestyle as a model and measurement of acculturation. Vambery’s name choice (his name was originally Bamberger or Wamberger) illustrates this phenomenon. William McCagg, *Jewish Nobles and Geniuses in Modern Hungary* (Colorado: Boulder, East European Quarterly; distributed by New York: Columbia University Press, 1972.) See also in Péter Hanák, *Magyarország a Monarchiában* (Hungary in the Monarchy) (Budapest: Gondolat, 1975), 371.

22 Goldziher received a salary from the University as a *privatdozent*, and he remained at the Congregation ten years after he was appointed as a regular faculty member.

23 Simon, 190.
Vambery was a well received and widely acknowledged researcher and scholar, while Goldziher and his work were rather isolated in Hungarian academic circles. Presenting Vambery as a mediocre intellectual and conformist, as opposed to Goldziher, who lived up to high ethical standards and did not abandon the principle of superior scholarship and the promotion of civil society, Simon depicts their careers as examples of the two different paths to Jewish integration in nineteenth-century Hungary. Like the aforementioned Conrad and Dabashi, Simon also heavily draws on the two scholars’ autobiographical works. But, maybe because he himself is an orientalist in Hungary, he does so without considering the close association of Oriental studies in Hungary with national identity discourse, which defined the ways in which the two scholars participated in Hungarian scholarship.

In this study I extend the examination of Vambery’s and Goldziher’s careers to that of their student and younger colleague, Aurel Stein. Stein, who lived in India and England from the 1880s and obtained British citizenship in 1904, relinquishing his Hungarian one, did not leave such autobiographical writings. Probably because besides the correspondence between himself and his family, there are few sources which provide insight into his private life, studies on Stein’s work mostly disregard his self-identification as either Hungarian or Hungarian Jew and his attitudes toward Orientalism in Hungary. (According to his biographers, Stein’s elderly parents baptized him at birth. Nonetheless, his maternal uncle, Ignaz Hirschler, the president of the Jewish community, was involved with Stein’s education from his early childhood in their place. For example, Hirschler introduced Stein to the two elder scholars.) Nonetheless, Stein’s career complements the lessons that an examination of the two elder scholars’ lives offers: his

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24 I will discuss this question in further detail in the last chapter.
growing physical distance from the Pest Jewish community and the Hungarian academic circles paralleled his scholarly orientation, which similarly distanced him from Hungarian research; he was a Sanskritist and conducted expeditions to the north-eastern regions of India, later the Silk Road, Iran, and Iraq, which fell rather far from the Hungarian scholarly circles’ orientalist focus. Accordingly, he had very little exposure to the Hungarian self-Orientalizing discourse, which, as this study demonstrates, deeply influenced both the national identity discourse and the course of orientalist research in Hungary, and thus also the two elder scholars’ paths of integration. An examination of Stein’s distance from the Hungarian milieu further demonstrates the crucial role self-Orientalism played in Vambery’s and Goldziher’s careers as well as the several other Jewish linguists, historians, and intellectuals like Szomory, who worked in nineteenth and twentieth-century Hungary.

**Bibliographical Review**

**Self-Orientalism as a Language of Hungarian Nationalism and National Identity Discourse**

The term self-Orientalism emerges from a parallel reading of the debate that followed the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* and the discussion of the modern Hungarian national identity discourse.

Said argues that the language that modern Europe created in order to define the Other alluded to age-old animosities to Asia, which were further perpetuated through the anti-Islam attitudes of Christianity. Modern European imperialism and the exercise of colonial rule, Said points out, relied on these old notions as well as on Oriental scholarship which, in his mind, served less to produce unbiased scholarship about the Orient than further develop means of subjugation and exploitation in the colonies, ultimately bolstering European political and economic goals.
Unlike the British and the French in Said’s *Orientalism*, nineteenth-century Hungarians often described themselves as from an Asian nation and members of Christian Europe, or the descendants of the Asian pagan warriors who conquered the Carpathian Basin and converted to Christianity to become Europeans. The Hungarian strategy of national identity formation, which involved both identification with Europe as well as assertions of Hungarian difference and which allowed for the articulation of Hungarian uniqueness through a self-Orientalizing vocabulary, both corresponds and contradicts Said’s assertion about the power of describing cultural differences in terms of the east-west difference. Nineteenth’s century Hungarians defined not the Other, but the national self as Oriental. Modern Hungarian self-Orientalism demonstrates modern Hungarians’ understanding of their European identity: a total of cultural, economic, and social values through which they connected to Western Europe and qualities, which they perceived as dividing them from Western Europe. The longing for an imagined glorious past, as well as the repeated emphasis on the Hungarians’ European identity combined to contribute to the psychological struggle with what they believed to be their comparatively unsatisfactory situation, while also leaving the possibility that Hungary could become a western nation.

In contrast to *Orientalism*, this dissertation does not blur the distinctions between (Oriental) scholarship, literary representations (of the Orient) and political (self-Orientalizing) discourse. It stresses that not every scholar had the same political agenda behind scholarship as well as the different subfields within Orientalism offered different opportunities for scholars to contribute to the national identity discourse. In addition, Oriental scholarship in Hungary developed under the influence of the political discourse of self-Orientalism and became a national scholarship that offered to shed more light on linguistic and ethnic origins. The main difference among orientalists in Hungary was their way of complying with the political pressure
of nationalism: the mutual and harmonic cooperation between politicians and intellectuals were far from the picture that Orientalism depicts of Great Britain and France. The study of self-Orientalism facilitates a fresh examination of the arguments about national identity formation and discourse in Hungary as well as the reexamination of the role of orientalists and other scholars in shaping the political discourse about nationhood and state.

The emphasis on eastern origins played a central role in early medieval identity discourse. These legends of ethnogenesis were synthesized with the Enlightenment’s Eurocentric vision and practice of cultural othering. The two most important chronicles, both titled Gesta Hungarorum, authored by Anonymus Belae Regis Notarius, King Béla II’s unknown notary (Anonymus in the following) at the beginning of the thirteenth century and the chronicle of the same title by Kézai Simon (Simon of Kéza) at the end of the thirteenth century, both retold the history of the Hungarians since biblical times. The biblical landscape was depicted as a neighbor territory to Scythia, where the biblical Nimrod’s two sons, Hunor and Magor wandered as they followed a deer on a hunt. The Hungarians settled there and many years later, from Scythia, their descendants gradually moved farther westward until they reached the Carpathian Basin. Kézai supplemented this history by creating a genealogical connection between the Huns and the Hungarians.

The renowned medievalist Jenő Szűcs’s work underlines the political importance medieval chroniclers attributed to Asian origins. In Szűcs’s opinion, by embracing the Hun genealogy, Kézai integrated the Western European view that compared the marauding Hungarians, whose attacks on Germany, Italy and as far as France were feared across Europe, to the Hun invasion centuries before. The importance of Kézai’s chronicle lies in synchronizing the oppositional currents of western historiography and eastern history. The Hun genealogy allowed
Kézai to present the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin in the ninth century as an act of reclaiming the territory previously occupied by the Huns, as well as to interpret the Hungarian invasion’s role in European history as equivalent to that of Attila’s, who was called the Scourge of God or the Sword of God. Szűcs emphasized the lasting influence of Kézai’s work in synchronizing the Western approach and the Asian consciousness:

[T]he “European” elements of its political thinking are located in a medium as originally “un-European” as the construct of the Hunnish origins and the prehistory of the Magyars. For it was Master Simon [of Kéza] who identified a dualism in Hungary’s past – Hunnish prehistory against Hungarian history – which was to persist from the late Middle Ages up to the beginnings of modern historiography. And last but not least, it was Master Simon who assigned to the Magyars their place within European history within the medieval world-picture.25

Simon of Kéza’s chronicle had an influence not only on the historiography, but on the national identity discourse as well, since the genealogical connection between the biblical figures, the Scythians, the Huns, the conquerors, and finally the Hungarian nobility in Kézai’s chronicle combined to form the basis of the medieval notion of noble nationhood, natio Hungarica. The term referred to every nobleman in Hungary. According to the contemporary understanding, their ancestors who fought alongside Árpád, the chieftain of the conquering Hungarians, were given noble titles for their bravery. As the House of Árpád became the first royal family of the country, his companions were given nobility. The medieval contract between king and nobility was traced back to the pagan past, and the feudal contract between king and vassals was projected back to the time when the country was founded.

The 1519 Tripartitum (Hármaskönyv) illustrates both Kézai’s long-lasting impact and the understanding that in the sixteenth century, Hungarian nobles continued to believe that their titles

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25 Simon, de Keza, Gesta Hungarorum. The deeds of the Hungarians, edited and translated by László Veszprémy and Frank Schaer, with an introductory study by Jenő Szűcs (Budapest : CEU Press, 1999), XLIII.
derived from their alleged ancestors’ participation in the Conquest. Its author István Werbőczy, who a few years after the appearance of the *Tripartitum* was appointed palatine, argued that though he was about to record the common laws of noble Hungary, in order to discuss the equality of the estates before the law, he felt that it was necessary to explain the origins of their noble titles. His recapitulation of Kézai’s narrative illustrated the historical relationship between ruler and the estates, which formed the constitutional foundation of the state. This historical-genealogical argument solidified the Asian legacy as a central element of the medieval and early modern concept of nationhood.

László Kontler’s essay “The Lappon, the Scythian and the Hungarian, our (former) selves as ‘others’: Philosophical history in eighteenth-century Hungary” points out that despite their engagement with Western European modern thought, the first enlightenment thinkers in late eighteenth-century Hungary, embraced traditional understanding of Asian ethnic origins. Kontler’s work is an important precedent to this study because it emphasizes the long-lasting political impact of the traditional origins-narrative. In addition, it demonstrates the close association between the political and the scholarly in the first discussions about modern national identity. Kontler argues that enlightened thinkers rejected the first substantial linguistic examination of the Hungarian-Lapp affinity, János Sajnovics’s 1771 *Demonstratio Idioma Hungarorum et Lapponum idem esse*. Sajnovics’s book did not generate a scholarly debate, instead, it triggered strong reactions from public speakers who were involved in a broader intellectual movement that initiated a debate on Hungarian nationhood. They stressed the crucial

26 The historian Erik Fügedi’s posthumously published *The Elefánthy: The Hungarian Nobleman and his Kindred*, describes the social milieu of a common noble family during the early modern period and argues that the *Tripartitum* fairly accurately reflects the general principles of the legal and social structure of the medieval nobility. Fügedi, 7.
role the Scythian legacy played in the formation of modern Hungarian identity as opposed to Sajnovics’s ‘Lappism,’ which suggested a less culturally respected origin, and did not comply with the theory of the nobility’s “exclusive membership” in the nation. Kontler coined the term “Scythianism,” which is both a “theory of national origins and the corporate paradigm of the polity associated with such origins.” It describes the Enlightened thinkers’ understanding of national origins as an important element of modern identity. The Asian or Scythian origins better fit their understanding of noble origins. Kontler points out that Enlightened thinkers stressed the nation’s Asian origins as part of their efforts to articulate a modern Hungarian national identity despite their devotion to modern scholarship and acceptance of the new linguistic theory that developed into the Finno-Ugrian studies in the second half of the nineteenth century. Kontler demonstrates that through the works of Kézai and Werbőczy, the concept of noble nationhood, “the corporate paradigm,” in Kontler’s words, “became fully integrated in the political thought and attitudes of the Hungarian elite.” Kontler’s “Scythianism” is conceptually similar to “self-Orientalism” in this study.

While students of modern Hungarian history stress the importance of the concept of noble nationhood in the development of modern Hungarian nationalism, they do not, in contrast to Kontler or the author of this dissertation, discuss the role of the emphasis on eastern origins, which, as demonstrated above, has been closely connected with the noble political paradigm. Instead, they emphasize that Hungary’s incomplete modernization in the nineteenth century left


28 Kontler, 134.
an imprint on the social structure and political system; modern nationalism in Hungary in many respects continued to rely on earlier developed political and rhetorical tools.\textsuperscript{29} The understanding that the gentry played a pivotal role in the modernization process of the country is the cornerstone of the historical research on the creation of modern Hungary.

Scholarship regarding the influence of early modern political motifs on the nineteenth-century reformers emerged during the interwar period. The Conservative historian Gyula Szekfű coined the term “estate nationalism” in order to describe the eighteenth-century nationalist sentiment of the anti-Habsburg movement, which culminated in the Rákóczi War of Independence in 1703-11, as a precursor of the Reform Era’s national movement.\textsuperscript{30} He argued that the German ruler represented the ethnic other in the eyes of the Hungarian estates, who in accordance with the concept of \textit{natio Hungarica}, opposed the ruler not as a social group, but rather as a national community. As Szekfű’s critics pointed out, his argument directed the historiographical attention away from the social tension between the central power and the nobility toward the altering nationalist, i.e. German–Hungarian, opposition between ruler and estates.\textsuperscript{31} The stress on ethnic as opposed to social tension was intended to depict eighteenth-

\textsuperscript{29} In this argument two theories collide. Well-known students of nationalism, such as Ernst Gellner and Benedict Anderson, point out that nationalism is closely connected to modernization and as such is an exclusive feature of modern societies. These claims are contested by other scholars who stress early modern and medieval notions of nationhood.


\textsuperscript{31} Szűcs argues that from the mid-fifteenth century, the nobles effectively opposed royal centralization while after Mohács, when the Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand I inherited the Hungarian Crown, they argued that vis-à-vis the ruler they conduct a fight for national independence. While their rhetoric adjusted to the new political situation, their goals did not change from the mid-fifteenth century, the time of the national dynasty of the Hunyadis. The national sentiment of the nobles was only rhetorical. In Szűcs’s mind, Szekfű’s arguments were made in the same spirit that disguised the anti-centralization claims of the estates as a national platform. For further details about criticism of conservative historiography see Jenő Szűcs, \textit{Nemzet és történelem} (Nation and History) (Budapest, Gondolat, 1974).
century Hungary as a modern society in the making. Indeed, Szekfű claimed that while the estates continued to advocate their own interests as equal to that of the country, the nationalist component of their program came more to the foreground. Szekfű viewed this period as a parallel to the era of the Western European absolutist state that gave way to the nation state. Although historians after World War II continued to criticize Szekfű’s approach, estate nationalism became an accepted term in Hungarian historiography.

The evolution of the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century history of estate nationalism into the modern national movement in Hungary can be gauged through the functioning of the Diet. The Diet, the national legislative body, was the representative forum of the nobility, which at the beginning of the 1800s comprised about five percent of the whole society. Its seat was in Bratislava (in German Pressburg, in Hungarian Pozsony) today’s capital of Slovakia. The official language of the Diet was Latin, which symbolized the Diet members’ adherence to the medieval constitutional order, which was also on the threshold of the modern era. It had two tables: at the Upper Table the high clergy and the aristocracy represented itself, while at the Lower Table, a group made up largely of common nobles represented their municipalities, which enjoyed some autonomy from the central government. The King had the right to assemble and dissolve the Diet and accordingly it became a forum for debates between the ruler and the estates.

Szekfű’s student and the later president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Domokos Kosáry, underlined the estates’ oscillating self-identification as a social stratum and national body in their negotiations with the Habsburg ruler. During the eighteenth century,

Habsburg absolutism repeatedly attempted to incorporate the Hungarian nobility and their large estates into its modernization projects. The Hungarian estates responded with outward hostility. However, by the dawn of the nineteenth century this pattern changed. The majority of the nobility feared losing its privileges as a result of the anti-feudal political movements, and therefore the Diet exhibited exceptional loyalty to the Habsburgs. Kosáry explained that during the reign of Francis I, the Hungarian Diet became a tool for maintaining Habsburg absolutist rule. The emperor relied on the Diet, and the feudal system that it represented, not only to maintain order, but also to hinder the infiltration of any revolutionary idea from the west. The Habsburgs’ political and the Hungarian nobles’ social conservatism coincided and, as Szekfű argued, this “contract” also helped to preserve the noble character of the Hungarian national sentiment.

The move away from this noble character can be traced back to the Reform Era, which began with a reform agenda in the Diet from 1825 to the 1848-49 Revolution and War of Independence. Initially, the Diet responded to the Habsburg fiscal politics (the issuing of paper money after the Napoleonic wars was disadvantageous for the Hungarian nobles, who, as a result, could not further enjoy the profits of their grain export to Western Europe). In retaliation, the king refused to assemble the Diet for thirteen years. The reform Diet of 1825 founded the

33 Domokos Kosáry, Újjáépítés és Polgárosodás 1711-1867 (Reconstruction and Achievement of the Middle-Class Status 1711-1867 (Budapest: Hátter Lapa- és Könyvkiadó, 1990), 207. The Martinovics-conspiracy was the strongest test of the Hungarian aristocracy's conservatism and loyalty to the king. The Hungarian Jacobin movement was suppressed and its members were executed in Buda.

34 Scholars tie the beginning of the whole Reform Era to Count István Széchenyi’s work. The historian Domokos Kosáry argues that Széchenyi’s offer of his yearly income for the foundation of the Learned Society at the 1825 Diet should be considered the opening of the Reform Era. Other historians, among them Széchenyi’s biographer, underline that Széchenyi's political and economic treaties from the 1830s opened the era of reforms that also manifested in the Diet’s legislative practice. See Domokos Kosáry, A History of Hungary (Cleveland, Ohio: The Benjamin Franklin Bibliophile Society, 1941), 184.
Hungarian Learned Society, the organization preceding the Academy, which, in Kosáry’s opinion demonstrated that the Diet was inclined to use a nationalist argument to oppose the foreign king, but at that time wished to avoid the introduction of comprehensive social and economic reforms. These proceeded from the 1830s, partly because of the growing Liberal influence that urged the introduction of economic, social, and political changes, which would serve the country’s modernization. The stress on the role of the Diet in the transformation process further illustrates the historiographical understanding of the top-down change and that the Diet occupied a central role in the modernization process of the country.

From this understanding of the central role of the Diet, the emphasis on the influence of the common nobles as the main representatives of the Liberal idea emerged. It was these nobles, who took it upon themselves to play the role of the middle class, which was an almost non-existent stratum in Hungary at the time. These nobles headed the 1848 Revolution and War of Independence in 1848-49. Historian Miklós Szabó pointed out that the Hungarian nobility endorsed Liberal ideas voluntarily in order to maintain its social status and leading position within changing Hungary. Thus he suggests that the Liberalism of the nobility “assumed that the landowning nobility was in a better position to convey liberal ideas and to organize and build up a new society and political order according to the principles of liberalism than the bourgeoisie of ‘more capital.’”

Just as the events leading up to the 1848-49 Revolution and War of Independence encouraged the common nobles to step up to the vanguard of change, the capitalist transformation brought them disappointment and aggravation. The well-known historian Péter

Hanák argued that most common nobles possessed neither the capacity nor the openness to enter the capitalist competition and regain their social and economic influence on society. The agrarian crisis in the 1870s further deteriorated the gentry’s economic position and triggered an anti-capitalist anti-modern reaction, which coupled with antisemitism as well. At the same time, the aristocracy successfully safeguarded its elite position and through its connections with a newly evolving entrepreneurial stratum, it kept the country’s economic, social, and political transformation under control. Nonetheless, the nobility in late-nineteenth-century Hungary continued to retain a common social and cultural consciousness through their identification with the unified Hungarian state and sense of imperial might. The gradual abandonment of mid-century Liberal principles, the growing antagonism toward the other ethnic groups, and the frustration with the capitalist transformation defined their nationalism in the same way that progressive ideas shaped their national program in the 1840s.

The transformation of the concept of nationhood illustrates the centrality of the gentry’s Liberalism in the changes of the 1840s as well as the continuing impact of origins on the iconography and imagery of the nation throughout the nineteenth century. The focus of the national bourgeois transformation was the expansion of the circle of what constituted the nation, in other words, the redefinition of natio Hungarica. The Liberal opposition wished to add to the number of the participants in the political community and as such abolished noble privileges and involved minorities, like the Jews, into the national polity. Whereas the broadening of the social basis of the nation was carried out gradually, the understanding that modern Hungarians were the descendants of Asian warriors, who a millennium before conquered the Carpathian Basin,

36 Péter Hanák, Magyarország a Monarchiában, 363.
continued to define the national identity discourse. The aforementioned Millennial Monument demonstrates the reconciliation of the restrictive noble concept of nationhood with the modern understanding of nation through the ‘popularization’ of the concept of “Árpád’s people” and the expansion of the validity of the eastern origins to every citizen. As the historian András Gerő points out,

the concept of ‘Hungarian’ centered on origins and played a key role, while the term *natio Hungarica* was relegated to the background. This was no longer the criterion for the nation, since the liberal approach challenged its significance, yet it did not disappear completely, it was merely ‘overwritten.’

Through this nationalist ideology, modern Hungarians abolished the social restriction of the traditional noble concept of *natio Hungarica*, while continuing to adhere to its aesthetics.

The first premise on which this study builds is that modern Hungarian identity formation involved the reformulation of the medieval and early modern eastern self-consciousness and its reliance on the historical approach to national origins. The term self-Orientalism points toward the centrality of the role that Hungarians’ eastern origins played in the political discourse on nationhood and also points to the close interconnection between politics and Oriental studies.

**Modern Hungarian Jewish History**

The study of the three scholars converses with previous research on the social history of Hungarian intellectuals and Hungarian Jewry in the nineteenth and twentieth century. *Képzelt asszimiláció?: négy zsidó értelmiségi nemzedék önképe* (Imagined Assimilation?: the self-perception of four generations of Jewish intellectuals), the most recent monograph on four generations of Jewish intellectuals by Katalin Fenyves demonstrates that from the last quarter of

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the nineteenth century, as Hungarian politics became more and more exclusivist, Jewish intellectuals and academics found it harder to acquire academic employment. Her study focuses on intellectuals, a much broader group than that of academics or, within the academics’ group, orientalists, and connects the history of the intellectuals’ changing lot in the process of integrating into the Hungarian academy to the transformation of what was originally a relatively tolerant Hungarian Liberalism. Fenyves emphasizes the presence of a “glass ceiling,” which despite the legal regulation of 1895, hindered Jewish intellectuals in finding state employment at the end of the century.

Mária Kovács’s 1994 monograph Liberal Professions and Illiberal Politics: Hungary from the Habsburgs to the Holocaust similarly investigates the roots of anti-Jewish politics among three professional groups: physicians, engineers, and lawyers in the early twentieth century. Kovács argues that exclusion from higher education and academic institutions, which was codified by the 1920 Numerus Clausus Law, were the product of not only the post-World War I political crisis and antisemitic wave, but originated in the post-1867 Liberal Hungarian state regulatory practice. In Hungary, due to the state-controlled higher education system, there was less space for the sort of modern professional (self-)organization that characterized, for example, Anglo-Saxon societies. The specific East-Central European structural development of state and higher educational institutions contributed to these groups’ openness to the politics of exclusion that targeted Jews after World War I.

These two monographs demonstrate that Jewish intellectuals’ institutional and professional integration was first and foremost dependent on the Hungarian state’s educational and minority policies, which were largely defined by the Liberal-Conservative dynamics and nationalist ideologies that animated the Hungarian political elite from the Reform Era. In so
arguing, the two monographs define the Hungarian state and political elite as the major forces behind shaping the circumstances of Jewish integration in Hungary, even in light of the fact that Hungary was not an independent state until 1918. Hungary formed a part of the Habsburg Monarchy from 1686 until 1867 and, after the Compromise in that year, Hungary was a partner in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and its king remained the Habsburg ruler until the dissolution of the Monarchy in 1918. Hungary gained full political control of its affairs, except for the portfolios of defense, foreign, and financial affairs. Scholars emphasize that with regard to the Jewish policies, the Hungarian state mainly continued with the Habsburgs’ Jewish policies. This was especially apparent in the field of economic incentives, immigration policies and encouragement of settlement, and educational policies. While the Habsburgs often viewed the Jews as agents of economic development and Germanization, the Hungarian elite also had the strategic interest of developing and homogenizing a multietnic and multi-religious Hungarian society which directly influenced its Jewish politics.

Traditionally, modern Hungarian Jewish history is narrated from 1686, the end of the Ottoman occupation and the integration of the lands of the Hungarian Crown into the Habsburg Empire. In this period, only a small Ashkenazi Jewish population lived in the southern part of the country. (Before the Ottoman occupation, in Buda there was a Sephardi community as well.) Following the general demographic devastation in the aftermath of the century and half Ottoman rule, the Habsburg kings encouraged foreigners’ settlement in Hungary. At the same time, in the Moravian and Bohemian parts, the Habsburgs Jewish politics aimed at slowing down the growth of the Jewish population. (In every Jewish family, only the first-born son was permitted to get married.) Thus the beginnings of settlement of Jews from the other Habsburg lands and Germany fell on the general demographic “reconstruction” of the country. The first waves of Jewish
immigration to Hungary originated from the west: Germany, Austria, and Moravia, under Leopold I and Charles III. After the divisions of Poland between Austria, Prussia, and Russia, a wave of Jewish immigrants from Galicia reached Hungary. The Galician migration outnumbered the number of migrants from the west. Following the Compromise and Jewish emancipation in 1867, emigration from Hungary exceeded the immigration into the country. Whereas between 1720 and 1869 the Jewish population of Hungary grew from 12,000 to 542,000, accounting for 4% of the total population, during the Dualist Period, it reached 910,000. In 1910, Jews comprised 5% of the population of Hungary. The number of Jewish emigrants from Hungary between 1869 and 1910 was 113,800.\(^3\) In sum, the absolute growth of the Hungarian Jewish population did not change substantially. However, when compared to the pace of growth of the whole of the population, by the turn of the century, its growth fell back by 75% mainly because of the number of Jewish immigrants to Hungary lessened.\(^3\) Despite the uniform regulations by both the Habsburg and the Hungarian administrations, the Jewish immigrants from the west and east went through different paths of integration and experienced different economic and cultural life in Hungary. These initial differences impacted their attitudes toward changes in Jewish religious customs, emancipation, the Hungarian state and Habsburg Empire, and exposed them differently to antisemitic attacks in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The three


\(^3\) Don, 21. From 1874-1880 to 1901-1910, the pace of growth of the Jewish population compared to that of the whole population fell from 5.2% to 1.11%. It is due to the slowdown of Jewish immigration to Hungary and the emigration from it. The growth of the Jewish population from immigration fell from 37.7% to 10.6% from 1874-1880 to 1901-1910.
orientalists at the center of this study were of Moravian and German origins and so their families’ history illustrates the western integration model.

The first favorable legislative act to ease Jewish enterprise in Hungary was Joseph II’s 1783 *Systematica Gentis Judaicae Regulatio*. It encouraged Jewish businesses by lifting restrictions on Jewish settlement in Hungary—although they banned it in mining cities—abolishing the taxes to cross the Empire’s internal borders, and allowing free choice of occupation, including leasing land.40 In the background of Joseph II’s policies lay both his desire for modernization and the fact that he counted on the largely German-speaking Jewry to act as agents of Germanization and centralization (Joseph II required Jews to choose a German last name. He also reformed educational policies for the purpose of further serving Germanization in Hungary).

Historians emphasize the Habsburg-Hungarian political dynamics in the enactment of the Jewish laws in Hungary. They point out that Joseph II revoked his Jewish laws before his death, and Leopold I’s 1790 decree *De Judeis* that reinstated Joseph II’s Jewish law remained ineffective, thus in 1840, the Hungarian Diet was in essence reenacting Joseph II’s original statute.41 Moreover, as Jacob Katz noted, in the 1830s the Hungarian Diet refused to collect—and in 1846 abolished-- the Camerilla Tax (formerly known as Toleration Tax that Maria Theresa introduced in 1744) as part of its protest against Habsburg fiscal policies. However, this was not necessarily meant as a gesture toward Jews but as a statement addressed to Vienna.42

40 Frojimovics, 35.
41 Ibid.
Historian András Gerő stressed that Hungarian animosity toward Habsburg centralization, which was manifest in the Liberal politics of both the Reform Era and the Dualist period, framed the emancipation politics of the Diet and the Hungarian government.\(^4^3\) In 1840, Baron József Eötvös’s (1813-1871) and the Lower Table’s Jewish emancipation initiative was defeated by the Conservatism of the Upper Table of the Diet; however, in 1849, the revolutionary government enacted the Jewish Emancipation Law following the Nationalities Act. The latter ensured that the non-Hungarian ethnic groups in Hungary had access to state administration and could be fairly represented by the authorities, while still using their mother tongues. The enactment of these two laws in such close succession demonstrates that, despite the strong nationalist commitment of the Liberals in the 1840s, minorities, including Jews, were welcome to contribute to the building of the independent Hungarian state.\(^4^4\) Whereas soon after the initial enthusiasm over the outbreak of the Revolution in 1848, many of the non-Hungarian ethnic groups engaged with their own program of national self-determination and their relationship with the Hungarian leadership became rather antagonistic, Jews demonstrated their loyalty to the Hungarian state and engaged in acculturation. During the Dualist Period, Jewish acculturation accelerated both in absolute terms (by the turn of the century over 90% of the Jewish population claimed Hungarian as their mother tongue) as well as in comparison to the other ethnic groups.

The sociologist Viktor Karády’s thesis of the ‘assimilation contract’ (coined after Rousseau’s Social Contract) suggests that, from the mid-century on, the Liberals offered Jews

\(^{43}\) Gerő, *The Jewish Criterion*, 4.

emancipation quid pro quo acculturation: the “Hungarianization” of Jews eventually would have made absolute Hungarian majority in the lands of the Hungarian Crown. The 1867 Emancipation Act (Act no. 1867:XVII) and the 1895 Reception of Judaism (the law that declared Judaism a state religion) testify to the Liberal commitment to Jewish emancipation. In contrast, Gerő stresses the pressure which the post-1867 political elite placed on Jews to socially acculturate to the Hungarian national body. Nathaniel Katzburg also points out that, considering the growing chauvinist and intolerant politics toward the other nationalities at the end of the century, Hungarianization seemed to be the “best option” for the Jews in nineteenth-century Hungary.

Jacob Katz’s and Michael Silber’s research on Hungarian Jewish history is based on the claim that Katz developed in connection to the research on the differences of the modern history of European Jewish communities, namely that the social structure of the ‘host society’ defined the path of integration. In fact, the reason to use the word integration in this study instead of assimilation or acculturation derives from Silber’s argumentation. He describes integration as a structural assimilation, a social intercourse with the non-Jewish elements of society which pointed beyond the traditional Gentile-Jewish relations, as opposed to assimilation or acculturation, which rather describe the acquisition of non-Jewish social and cultural customs.

45 “Antiszemitizmus, asszimiláció és zsidó identitás Magyarországon a régi rendszertől az ezredfordulóig - Összefoglalási kísérlet” (Antisemitism, assimilation and Jewish identity in Hungary from the old regime to the turn of the millennium – attempted summary) Önazonosítás, sorsválasztás: a zsidó csoportazonosság történelmi alakváltozásai Magyarországon (Self-identification, choice of faith: the historical transformation of the forms of Jewish collective identification in Hungary.)


The additional importance of their work is that it sheds light on the discrepancies between the social, political, economic and cultural aspects of Jewish integration in Hungary and thus facilitates the discussion of the Jewish scholars’ attitudes toward Hungarian scholarship and relation with the Hungarian academic institutions equally.

Jacob Katz’s important essay “The Uniqueness of Hungarian Jewry” emphasizes that during the Reform Era and before the 1870s economic crisis, the gentry, whose members were the chief advocates of Hungarian Liberalism and the leaders of the bourgeois transformation, was open to accepting minorities and, in fact, even allowed them to contribute and commit to Hungarian institutions as members of a minority. As the gentry suffered the most from the economic transformation, in the last quarter of the century, their growing nationalism changed this trend and Jewish integration became much problematic. Michael Silber’s study on Jewish membership in Hungarian ‘Casinos’ (social clubs) during the Vormärz era reinforced Katz’s findings. As casinos were considered important spheres of civil life, Jewish membership was indicative of the social inclusion of Jewry, which in Silber’s view, lagged behind the pace of Jewish acculturation and, after 1880, further weakened. If around 1848 because of traditional anti-Jewish attitudes Jews were not accepted as members in casinos, after the economic crisis of the 1870s, modern antisemitism antagonized the largely gentry members against Jews. However, the emphasis of the research is on the acceptance of Jews into the casinos. The fact that Jewish casino members were almost exclusively prominent representatives of the Jewish economic and intellectual elite indicates that integration was far from demanding that Jews abandon their Jewish communal allegiances.\(^\text{48}\) Instead, they could contribute to the institutions of the modern

\(^{48}\) Silber, 311.
state in the making as Jews. Katz’s and Silber’s research stresses that Liberal politics and the gentry-based political elite defined the political, social, and cultural dimensions of Jewish social integration in nineteenth-century Hungary both in the early period of inclusion and the latter decades of growing exclusion.

A series of studies starting with William McCagg’s research on relations between Jews and the Hungarian nobility at the end of the nineteenth-century further reinforce the claim that Jews not only imitated the outward expression of Hungarian nationalism, but also actively formed the face of Hungarian national institutions. While the primary focus is on the “alliance” of the traditional ruling classes and the leading Jewish entrepreneurs at the end of the century, the reader also learns that the gentry’s central role in facilitating Jewish integration also resulted in Jewish entrepreneurs idealizing the noble life style and viewing the life of the aristocracy (and not of the haute bourgeoisie) as the model of acculturation.49 Jewish contribution to architecture, sports, arts, belles lettres, and even hunting, also confirms the active role that Jews had in shaping the Hungarian national cultural institutions. Accordingly, the “Jewish subculture,” which David Sorkin claims emerged over the course of the transformation of German Jewry, did not characterize the Jewish integration process in Hungary.50

The study of Jewish attitudes toward Hungarian self-Orientalism is closely linked to the issue of Jewish interpretation and internalization of the ideals of nobility. This study builds on the premise that the emergence of the modern Hungarian state from the second quarter of the nineteenth century and Jewish integration in Hungary were parallel processes, and therefore the

historical situation offered Jewish inhabitants an active role in the formation of Hungarian politics, culture, arts, sciences, and economics.\textsuperscript{51} The study of Jewish responses to self-Orientalism allows for an examination of Jewish responses to the transformation of Hungarian national identity politics under gentry leadership that influenced attitudes toward inclusion and exclusion of Jews. Through the examination of the three orientalists’ attitudes toward Hungarian self-Orientalism, this study depicts these men as active participants in the state’s national identity politics and not merely as members of the Jewish minority who passively endured the state’s Jewish policies.

Though this dissertation will not spend much time on Jewish religious affairs, religious instruction and the question of internal Jewish religious tensions certainly affected the Jewish experience in Hungary in general and, among the three orientalists, especially Ignaz Goldziher and his work. The study of Jewish religiosity in nineteenth-century Hungary can be placed into the historiographical trend that emphasizes the role of Liberal politics, both that of the gentry and of the Hungarian state, in shaping Jewish religious politics and institutions. Studies point out that the activity of the state affected religious attitudes toward acculturation and integration as well as the intensification of the schism, after 1867.

One of the most prominent advocates of Jewish religious reform, Móric Bloch, supported the aforementioned Eötvös’s emancipation politics as early as 1840. While Jewish reformers

\textsuperscript{51} In “The Jews of Italy” the Italian Jewish historian Arnaldo Momigliano stresses that the Risorgimento and the events in 1848 was an important moment in the lives of Italian Jews, comparable to the Reform Era’s impact on the lives of Hungarian Jews. Patriotism and the prospect of becoming farmers and landowners as opposed to new financial opportunities triggered unprecedented enthusiasm toward the prospective unification and the future Italian state. He also emphasizes that the high appreciation for traditional Jewish scholarship was the reason why Jews in the northern part of Italy were able and willing to contribute to modern Italian arts and sciences. Since university professors were involved in politics, Jews among them also became politicians and even prime ministers. Momigliano, “The Jews of Italy,” in \textit{Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 126-128.
were especially supportive of Liberals beginning in the late 1830s, Hungarian Jews, irrespective of their attitudes toward religious reform, supported the Revolution and participated on the Hungarian side in the War of Independence in 1848 and 1849 in general. However, twenty years later on December 14, 1868, the Liberal Eötvös, then minister of education, called the Magyar és Erdélyi Izraeliták Egyetemes Gyülése (Hungarian and Transylvanian Israelites’ Universal Assembly or “Congress”). He did so with the goal of creating a Jewish umbrella organization with which the Hungarian state could coordinate, but finally, the “Congress” antagonized the different religious communities. The organizational questions relating to the creation of the Jewish organization also touched on the different communities’ altering interpretations of Judaism. According to the traditional approach, Judaism was an all-encompassing legal-religious system, which defined Jewish life according to the regulations of the Shulchan Aruch (a set of rules defining Jewish everyday conduct and religious life). Others considered only the contents of the Torah as binding religious conduct. They referred to Judaism as a monotheistic religion, arguing that this interpretation did not contradict their ability to become Hungarian citizens and to conduct their everyday life like any other Hungarian national: rendering religion to the private sphere. Their program was far from being as radical as the Jewish Reform Temple’s in the early 1840s whose speaker, Ignaz Einhorn, advocated for the transfer of Shabbat to Sunday and the cancellation of circumcision. Those communities that accepted the rulings of the Congress formed the Congressional camp and advocated for the Liberal politics of the Hungarian elite; they continued to do so after the illiberal turn in 1870s.\textsuperscript{52} The Orthodox left the Congress in

\textsuperscript{52} The Congressional communities entered the pages of history textbooks as Neolog Jewry. They were called Neologs by the other Jewish communities on the analogy of the two parties involved in the Hungarian neologist movement. Ferenc Kazinczy, the poet-statesman, opponent of the Finnish-theory of affinity and leader of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century neologist movement created the words neológ and ortológ to distinguish between the group that he led and favored the creation of new Hungarian words and those, who

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protest, and in 1871 they formed their own organization which the Hungarian state acknowledged. The congregations who wished to maintain the situation prior to the Congress named themselves Status Quo Ante after 1871. As Kinga Frojimovics’s monograph Szétszakadt történelem (Split History) on the emergence of the different Jewish denominations demonstrates, during the Dualist Period, the Orthodox camp attracted more followers than the Congressional or Neolog.53 Despite the public break between the two religious parties, Frojimovics argues, the cultural-religious clashes of Hungarian Neology and Orthodoxy were not nearly as antagonistic as those in Germany. Her argument coincides with Jacob Katz’s, who claims that in Hungary, just as both Orthodox and Neolog Jews acculturated and acquired Hungarian, both groups’ attitudes toward the Hungarian state differed less than those of proponents and opponents of Jewish Reform either east or west of Hungary.54

A demonstration of this is the example of the Rabbinical Seminary of Budapest, opened in 1877. While it was formed on the model of the Breslau Seminary and was under Neolog leadership, several Orthodox families sent their children there to study as well.55 The Seminary was financed with the indemnity the Jewish communities paid into the Jewish educational fund, which the Habsburg Court had demanded because of Hungarian Jewish participation in the 1848-


53 See reference fn 38.


Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence. After the Revolution, as part of the introduction of a Habsburg general educational system, Jewish elementary education was brought under state control. The Hungarian state continued to exercise this control after 1867 and, as in primary and secondary schools, it required the use of Hungarian in the Rabbinical Seminary.

The history of this Seminary is only indirectly connected to the focus of this dissertation, nonetheless, some aspects of it elucidate the differences between Hungarian and German academic relations between Jewish and Christian scholars, which are reflected in the relationship of modern Jewish studies and Orientalism. In addition to having to learn Hungarian (the first faculty of the Seminary was invited from Moravia), future rabbis were required to pursue a doctorate at the University of Pest, many of them engaged with the Oriental field, closely connected with the study of Middle Eastern languages and history. Among the three orientalists, this phenomenon affected Ignaz Goldziher’s work, both because of his involvement with the issue of Jewish education in Hungary and because of his academic career as orientalist in Hungary.

The comparison with the German example further illustrates the different relationships between the Neolog and Orthodox Jewish movements and the Hungarian state. By requiring rabbinical students to pursue university education, and thus granting them the theoretical permit to become faculty members in state institutions, the Hungarian state blurred the demarcation line between rabbinical and secular training and, in a way, introduced Jewish studies into the University (of Pest). In contrast, nineteenth-century universities refused to consider the German Jewish reformers’ request to include Jewish studies in the German university curriculum. As the Hungarian national identity discourse created the language of self-orientalism, the Hungarian
state brought Jewish studies closer to secular Oriental studies, which created a particular framework for the Jewish orientalist, and therefore allows for the examination of the influence of Oriental scholarship and orientalist discourse on the modern Hungarian Jewish experience.

**Orientalism and Jewish History**

The comparison of the Hungarian and German Jewish educational systems is closely connected with the discussion of the intertwined histories of European Oriental studies, orientalist discourse, and the modern European Jewish experience. Susannah Heschel’s *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus* points out that by opening a dialogue with German Protestant theologians who identified with the Tübingen school, the Jewish reformer rabbi and scholar Abraham Geiger wished to refute the theological anti-Jewish claims. In his view they hindered the introduction of Jewish studies in German Universities, which was closely connected to the process of Jewish emancipation in Germany. Geiger’s engagement with the historical method that he developed based on “the father of the Tübingen school,” David Strauss, in his *Life of Jesus* introduced into Protestant biblical studies, corresponded with the historical turn in Jewish scholarship identified with the Verein für die Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden (Association for the Culture and Scholarship of the Jews) founded in 1819. As Yoseph Hayim Yerushalmi points out, the introduction of the modern historical approach to Jewish studies marked the opening of the modern period of Jewish scholarship. The modernization of Jewish studies involved both the submission of religious sources to modern scholarly criticism and the opening of the study of Jewish literature and history to nontraditional sources. This historical method became the basis of Geiger’s approach to the study of the Hebrew Bible and other religious texts, as well as Jewish history, which allowed him not only to develop a reformed view on the Jewish past but also fight the theological preconceptions hindering Jewish integration in a language that Protestant theologians recently engaged with.
Geiger’s 1833 essay “Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthume aufgenommen?” (What did Mohammad take from Judaism?), historicized the Jewish influence on Mohammad, the founder of Islam, and refuted what Geiger viewed as incorrect Christian presumptions of the inferiority of Judaism.\textsuperscript{56} It also demonstrated a novel argument about cultural borrowing and the interaction between the monotheistic religions. This study is considered to have initiated the Jewish interest in the study of Islam, which as Bernard Lewis’s pioneering essay in 1969 noted, exhibited a positive, quasi-empathetic attitude toward Islam—especially in comparison to the work of Christian scholars.\textsuperscript{57}

Lewis argued that European Jewish scholars approached Islam differently than Christians because of the Jewish social experience in Christian Europe. While Lewis underlined that Orthodox Jews especially recognized the many parallels between Jewish and Muslim religious study practices, and therefore turned to the study of Islam with empathy, from the 1990s, scholars like Martin Kramer, John Efron, and James Pasto demonstrated that Jewish research was inspired by the Jewish historical study of medieval Muslim Spain.\textsuperscript{58} They emphasize the connection between Jewish reform, the modernization of Jewish studies, and its expansion to Islam. Nineteenth-century German Jews viewed the interreligious dialogue in the Muslim-

\textsuperscript{56} In English it was published as \textit{Judaism and its History}, (New York: The Bloch Publishing Co., 1911).


occupied Iberian Peninsula as an example for their own times. Like Heschel, these scholars pointed out that, as Geiger’s example demonstrates, nineteenth-century Jewish scholars’ interest in the study of the Orient formed a part of their dialogue with Christians over the question of Jewish emancipation and illustrated the commitment of modern Jewish studies to the politics of reform and emancipation at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The turn to Oriental studies not only accompanied the modernization of Jewish scholarship, but also demonstrated that the discovery of non-European texts (especially the Indian Vedas) and the concomitant study of non-European languages from the last quarter of the eighteenth century exponentially expanded European scholarly activity in the fields of non-European cultures. Semitic philology was “liberated from theological concerns” and at the same time, the study of eastern languages broadened the tools of modern historical inquiry: modern religious history emerged from the secularization of comparative philology, while other new disciplines like anthropology and ethnology also contributed to European inquiry into the past of mankind, inclusive also of non-European cultures. The Germany of Hegel and Herder played a leading role in the development of modern historical inquiry and also, under the scholarly leadership of the Arabist Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer (1801-1888), in the broadening of modern Oriental research and establishing a broad institutional framework for it.

59 Ismar Schorsch, From Text to Context the turn to history in modern Judaism (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 1994).

60 Fleischer was the French scholar Silvestre de Sacy’s (1758-1838) student, and after returning to Germany, Fleischer singlehandedly transferred the center of modern Arabic philology from Paris to his homeland. Thanks to Fleischer’s work, Germany emerged as the European center of modern Arabic philology and was eventually regarded as the leading workshop for Oriental studies in general. Goldziher became Fleischer’s student in Leipzig. For the development of Oriental research in Germany, including its institutional structure, see Ursula Woköck, German Orientalism: the study of the Middle East and Islam from 1800 to 1945 (London, New York: Routledge, 2009).
The process of secularization, however, did not do away with previous cultural biases, as Liulevicius Vejas’s study about the German conceptualization of the east and its role in the radicalization of German nationalism aptly demonstrated.\textsuperscript{61} As Suzanne Marchand has shown, despite the modern character of Oriental scholarship, it reproduced and amplified early modern cultural biases, while also fighting them.\textsuperscript{62} The Jewish historiographical argument that – building on the Saidian notion of Orientalism – describes German Christian-Jewish relations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in terms of colonial rule also demonstrates the tension between the supposed opening that Oriental scholarship promised in the field of cultural studies and the fact that many scholars bolstered old cultural essentialist claims and biases with recent scholarly arguments.\textsuperscript{63}

The Eastern European immigration waves starting from the 1860s in Germany revived arguments from earlier in the century about “the lack of civility” of German Jews, but in new garb.\textsuperscript{64} The arrival of Ostjuden (Jews from Eastern Europe) to German metropolitan areas triggered orientalist biases toward the inhabitants of the eastern ghettos, and as Steven Aschheim points out, many German Jews responded to the Ostjuden in a manner similar to that of their Christian co-nationals, hoping to dissociate themselves from the eastern Jewish immigrants.\textsuperscript{65} At

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\item \textsuperscript{62} Suzanne Marchand, \textit{German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: religion, race, and scholarship} (Cambridge and Washington: Cambridge University Press, German Historical Institute, 2010).
\item \textsuperscript{65} Aschheim points out that the rejection of the Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe was also a symptom of acculturation. The phenomenon was not restricted to Germany: the antisemitic roots of the famous Jack the
the same time, growing antisemitism at the turn-of-the century fostered a quasi-nostalgia for the eastern ghetto and the biblical Middle East among Jewish intellectuals, and as the language of assimilation at the beginning of the century focused on westernization, the idiom of dissimilation urged “Orientalization.”

The rich literature that examines the modern German Jewish intellectual and social experience through the Orientalism debate is unparalleled. The lack of similar research in the histories of other Jewish communities is especially apparent in light of the paradigmatic status of German Jewish history in the field of Central European Jewish history. An examination of these three Hungarian Jewish scholars involves a comparison with the German case on several levels: the political, the institutional, and the scholarly. Through this comparison, the study of their careers illuminates that, due to Hungarian self-Orientalism, the Hungarian majority attributed “national importance” to Oriental studies, and anti-Jewish attitudes did not couple with orientalist bias. Accordingly, Oriental scholarship did not acquire an anti-Jewish edge and additionally was mostly focused on Central Asian and Siberian studies, related to theories surrounding Hungarian origins. As it was pointed out above, the dynamics between modern Jewish studies and Orientalism was more influenced by the modern Hungarian state’s educational policies than theological concerns, thus the institutional background of Orientalism also contributed to a different association between Jews and Oriental scholarship than in Germany. Indeed, the differences between the status and scope of Oriental studies in Germany

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Ripper scandal in London reached back to the antagonism towards Eastern European Jewish immigration to Great Britain at the end of the nineteenth century.

and Hungary point toward the differences between the paths of Jewish integration in the two countries.

**Orientalism and Self-Orientalism**

As the reference to the self-orientalist discourse in the study of Hungarian national identity discourse offers a new reading of modern Hungarian history, this study also examines the history of the Hungarian Oriental scholarship in the post-**Orientalism** discursive framework. The discussion of Hungarian Orientalism’s relationship with the political discourse of self-Orientalism can rely almost solely on the historical work by orientalists who were interested in the development of their own field.67 Their “internal” histories, to use Suzanne Marchand’s words, are not matched by the intellectual historical analyses by historians who view the development of the field within a broader historical context. This examination of the three scholars’ and their colleagues’ reactions to Hungarian self-Orientalism further narrows down the research on the history of Hungarian Orientalism. This study offers only a partial review of the development of their field by focusing on the three Jewish orientalists’ work. In so doing the study examines the international scholarly and public discourse embedded in the three subfields in which the three scholars worked as well as the specific Hungarian self-Orientalizing idiom. It focuses on how the three scholars engaged with these scholarly and political discourses and thus corresponds not only with the aforementioned narrower theme of Jewish engagement with

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67 Goldziher himself opened the list with his study on Janos Uri, whom he considered a predecessor. In the study I refer to memorial speeches and biographical summaries by Goldziher and Munkácsi (on Vambery) Miklós Zsirai’s reflections on the development of Finno-Ugric linguistics. However, the linguistic debates at the time always included summaries of earlier research, thus Vambery, Goldziher, and their colleagues themselves placed their arguments along a historical continuum, which helps the discussion of their scholarship as part of a longer historical development. Simon’s aforementioned study on Goldziher can be also inserted into this literature.
Oriental studies, but also the broader question of Jewish responses to European scholarship. It suggests that because of the discrepancy between the international and Hungarian political contexts, Oriental scholarship allowed the three scholars to participate in Hungarian identity discourse and through that articulate a Hungarian Jewish identification with Hungary and European cultural values.

**Summary of the Chapters**

The chapters follow the development of the political discourse that I describe as self-Orientalism. They examine the interaction between Oriental scholarship and national identity politics and reconstruct their intertwining histories through the careers of the three Hungarian Jewish orientalists. In so doing, the study demonstrates the influence of self-Orientalism on Jewish integration in Hungary during the three scholars’ lifetimes.

Chapter Two “Self-Orientalism in the making, the Emergence of “Other” Orients and Jewish Responses” discusses the period between the 1790s and 1849: from the beginning of the Diet’s engagement with linguistic politics that led to the formation of the Learned Society until the defeat of the 1848-49 Revolution and War of Independence. During this period the Learned Society became the Academy of Sciences and scholars engaged with mainly linguistic studies of the eastern origins of the Hungarians. The chapter demonstrates that during the Reform Era, the reform politics of the Liberal opposition in the Diet gained momentum and by the end of the period, with the formation of the Conservative and the Liberal parties (1846 and 1847, respectively), the modern Hungarian political culture was formed. The Conservative-Liberal opposition manifested over the course of the constitutional debates, during which the politicians’

differing definitions of the Orient(s) mirrored their political differences. István Széchenyi’s 1841 pamphlet *The People of the East* gave definite modern political meaning to the traditional narrative of national origins, which not only stirred a passionate debate but also created a political legacy. Whereas for Széchenyi the Hungarian national cradle in Asia constituted the Orient, Liberals, embracing the political views of the Western Europe left, looked at Slavic groups and Russia as agents of Oriental politics. The chapter also discusses the Conservative and Liberal politicians’ influence on the pace of Jewish integration in Hungary. It emphasizes the ways in which Széchenyi connected his self-orientalist arguments to the discussions of Jewish emancipation, which lent antisemitic undertones to self-Orientalism, in the later part of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

Chapter Three “Self-Orientalism Questioned: The Beginning of Vambery’s Career” studies the period following the 1848-49 Revolution and War of Independence until the Compromise in 1867. It demonstrates that, whereas on the one hand the emerging Széchenyi cult created a following for the ideas discussed in *The People of the East*, modern comparative linguistics and history, especially through the revival of Finno-Ugrian studies, sought for a voice that was independent from the self-orientalist discourse. Nationalist political arguments, however, continued to influence the scholarly inquiry. At this time, Turkish was still considered to have a close affinity to Hungarian, which made it possible for the young Turkologist Armin Vambery to engage in comparative linguistic research at the Academy’s and ultimately acquire an appointment at the University of Pest. This chapter also examines the role that Vambery’s mentors, the baron József Eötvös and Mór Ballagi, played in advancing Vambery’s career as well as their contribution to the legal enactment of Jewish emancipation in favor of which the Diet voted in 1867.
Chapter Four “Self-Orientalism Rejected: the Emergence of the Ugric-Turkish War and the Beginning of Goldziher’s Career” examines the period from 1868-1876, which witnessed the euphoria surrounding the Compromise as well as the initial attacks on it and the illiberal turn in politics which followed shortly after the 1873 agrarian crisis. It examines the 1869 prelude to the linguistic debate surrounding the origins of the Hungarian language between Vambery and the two leading Finno-Ugrist linguists Pál Hunfalvy and József Budenz. This is remembered as the Ugric-Turkish War and the public followed it with great interest. In his *Turkish-Tartar Word Correspondence*, Vambery developed a theory about the Hungarians’ Turkish origins, which catered to the self-orientalist discourse and provoked criticism from the advocates of the Finno-Ugric theory of national and linguistic origins. At the same time, Vambery produced important studies on eastern Turkish languages, which earned him international repute as the father of Turkology. During this same period, Goldziher was awarded a state fellowship by baron Eötvös, minister of education and president of the Academy at the time. This chapter examines Goldziher’s articles in the Hungarian scholarly press as well as his first monograph *Der Mythos bei den Hebräen und seine geschichtliche Entwicklung: Untersuchungen zur Mythologie und Religionswissenschaft* (Mythology Among The Hebrews And Its Historical Development: Research in Mythology and Science of Religion) written and published after his return from Germany in 1872. These scholarly works demonstrate that he refrained from reacting to self-Orientalism, either in the public sphere or at the Academy, and early on he conceived a broad scholarly and political agenda based on his belief that modern scholarship advanced the development of the nation. The chapter demonstrates the differences between the two scholars’ attitudes toward Oriental scholarship and self-orientalism, their understandings of the political
nature of academism in Hungary, and the role that Orientalism played in Jewish studies and politics.

Chapter Five “Who is Oriental in Hungary? Multiculturalism, Jewish History and Self-Orientalism” studies the 1876-90 period, during which there was relative domestic political stability. Parallel to the unprecedented pace of industrialization, antisemitism in Hungary also gained force, as illustrated by the reactions to the Tiszaeszlár blood libel. This chapter examines Vambery’s monograph *A magyarok eredete. Ethnológiai tanulmány* (The Origins of the Hungarians. Ethnological Study) that approached the previous linguistic debate with a new twist by shifting the discussion to the ethnological field and reinterpreting the content of ethnic and linguistic origins: Vambery defied the essentialism of comparative linguistics and refuted the notion that ethnic and linguistic origins overlap. The chapter demonstrates that Vambery’s argumentation about the origins of the Hungarians agreed with the Khazar theory of the origins of Hungarian Jewry during the years when Hungarians were occupied with the Tiszaeszlár blood libel and the concomitant criminal trial. It also discusses Goldziher’s Hungarian *Iszlám* (Islam) and German *Muhammadenische Studien* (Muslim Studies), which brought him international recognition; on top of this, it examines a long Jewish historical study *A zsidóság lényege és fejlődése* (The Meaning and Development of Jewishness), which constituted a continuation of his first monograph as well as expressing his criticism of Hungarian Neology. The examination of Vambery’s, Kohn’s, and Goldziher’s works demonstrates the differing ways in which Oriental scholarship intertwined with the study of Hungarian Jewish history. These works also presented differing arguments about Jewish integration in nineteenth-century Hungary.

Chapter Six “Scholarly Self-Orientalism, Colonialism, and Jewish Marginality in the Mirror of Stein’s Career 1890-1913” closes the dissertation. It discusses the beginning of Stein’s
career in Lahore, India, and contrasts it with the institutional and scholarly careers of the two elder scholars in Hungary. It also discusses how Goldziher and Vambery perceived the differences between Orientalism in Hungary and Great Britain. This chapter demonstrates that by the time the Millennium Festivities, both elder scholars had completely rejected the reawakening of academic self-Orientalism. Vambery went further with his advocacy for Hungary’s multicultural origins and in his 1895 study, he focused not on origins but nation formation. In his 1893 “Renan as orientalist,” Goldziher articulated his scholarly agenda and stressed that in his eyes, only one international Oriental scholarly field existed. Stein, who, despite the lack of relevance of his work to Hungarian Orientalism, a decade after his arrival to India still hoped to acquire an appointment in Hungary, became a well-respected outsider to Hungarian academic circles. Reading Szomory’s *Mr. Professor Horeb*, this chapter argues that by the turn of the century, the gap between the social and cultural integration of Hungarian Jewish intellectuals became a component of the Hungarian Jewish experience, which was a cause of great stress. It formed the basis for their sense of marginality, which became especially apparent in the way the Jewish author Szomory perceived Vambery and Goldziher.
CHAPTER TWO
SELF-ORIENTALISM IN THE MAKING, THE EMERGENCE OF “OTHER” ORIENTS, AND THE JEWISH RESPONSES

This chapter reconstructs the social and political transformation between the 1790s and 1849 (the end of the 1848-49 Revolution and War of Independence). During this period, Hungarian politicians and intellectuals developed different visions of a modern Hungarian nation and ideal paths of the country’s modernization. Members of the opposition of the Diet, many of them authors and intellectuals (scholars and literati) themselves, united in a quasi-political and ideological alliance with the goal of making Hungary a modern nation state. This “alliance” first materialized in 1825 with the founding of the Learned Society, the predecessor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The literary production during this era and the fact that modern identity discourse relied heavily on the work of linguists and historians further illustrated that the modernization of the country was a common undertaking of statesman and intellectuals. In many respects, their work focused on the traditional narrative of national origins, which when combined with the nobles’ adherence to a traditional understanding of the eastern origins of natio Hungarica, contributed to the central role that the Asian legacy played in the emergence of modern national identity discourses. Second, the 1843 Liberal initiative in the Diet projected the broadening of the political franchise by giving voting rights to intellectuals in general, and Academy members in particular. The political participation of intellectuals and the politicization of academics in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Hungary begun in this period, which partly explains the voluntary engagement of the Jewish intellectuals with the state and national identity discourse.

The period until 1825 is depicted in this chapter as an era when the opposition formed a politically united platform for the advancement of a national culture in opposition to Habsburg and German cultural and political control. The political and scholarly campaign centered around
the formation of the Academy. In the decades following the founding of the Academy, there was much political controversy over the ideal path of modernization between Conservative and Liberal forces. Various political positions regarding Jewish emancipation and the question of Asian legacy and the noble concept of *natio Hungarica* were closely linked to this.

The publication and the concomitant debate over Count István Széchenyi’s (1791-1860) treatise *A kelet népe* (The People of the East), written in 1841, demonstrated the growing tension between Liberal and Conservative paths toward modernization. Széchenyi placed eastern origins at the core of his modernization plan. *The People of the East* was a response to the political claims of the Liberals, who dominated both the Diet and the Academy by 1840. Headed by the common noble lawyer who later became the head of the revolutionary government, Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894), Liberals did not believe that the Asian past should factor into Hungary’s modernization process. This chapter demonstrates that altering attitudes to many of the issues discussed between the political actors paralleled their political interpretations of the geographical Orient. Modern self-Orientalism emerged from and became connected to Széchenyi’s work, and in many respects opposed the Liberals’ rhetoric, which followed Western European ideological patterns of the east-west dichotomy. Accordingly, Liberals perceived not Hungary but Russia and Slavic groups with an orientalist gaze.

The final part of this chapter introduces the discussion of the emancipation of the Jews in 1840 as an additional aspect of the self-Orientalism discourse and the Liberal antagonism toward it. It allowed the completion of the discourse with an “external” element: the definition of Hungarian eastern-ness vis-à-vis Jewish western-ness. It also demonstrates that aside from a meager endeavor to engage with Hungarian self-orientalist discourse, Jews complied with the
Liberals’ politics and engaged with them in a conversation about the terms of emancipation and the path of integration.

**The Politics of Scholarship: the Foundation of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences**

The history of the foundation of the Hungarian Learned Society in 1825 demonstrates the ways in which at the turn of the nineteenth century, linguistic scholarship became a political battlefield in Hungary. The Habsburg attitudes shaped the Diet’s late eighteenth-century linguistic politics. Hungarian statesmen considered the question of Hungarian usage and the development of Hungarian as a modern literary language a political question that should be debated at the Diet. At the same time, the efforts made for the foundation of the Learned Society reflected the common nobility’s desire to reinforce the Hungarian cultural and linguistic identity of the country. Its foundation constituted an important phase and symbol of the emergence of modern Hungarian national identity discourse.

**Habsburg Educational Policies**

In Hungary, until the foundation of the Hungarian Learned Society in 1825, the Royal University of Pest was the main state-founded post-secondary academic institution, while other smaller institutions of higher education, including smaller universities, existed in the major cities all over the country like Pécs, Győr, and Bratislava (Pozsony or Pressburg). In contrast to Prussia or Western Europe during the eighteenth century, in the Habsburg Empire and, within it, in Hungary, universities constituted the state-founded centers of scholarly activities. Habsburg imperial education policies regulated the operation of the University, and it was predominantly dedicated to German and Latin scholarship. Following the reforms of the University of Vienna, the Habsburg Empress and Hungarian ruler Maria Theresa introduced changes into the Hungarian educational system as well. As part of her reforms, in 1769, she drew the former Jesuit University, founded in 1635, under government control. By then, in addition to the initial
two faculties, theology and philosophy, a third faculty of law operated. In the same year, the Empress complemented the curriculum with a faculty of humanities, and in 1777, moved the university from its original seat in Nagyszombat (today Trnava, Slovakia) to Pest. Her school reforms were equally intended to diminish the influence of the Church on education and empower the imperial state. She could not see the field of education and learning but as a political question, which she succinctly summarized in the following way: “education is and forever will be a politicum.” The Hungarian Diet and later the government in the nineteenth century adopted her perspective on the political role of the University, wished to safeguard its Catholic character, and considered it as an important national institution. Also after the Hungarian Diet assumed control over education policy (1867), from elementary schools to the university, educational institutions remained important tools of nation building and Hungarianization.

The strong emphasis on the work of the universities complemented the eighteenth-century Habsburg opposition to the foundation of learned societies with broad scholarly scopes. Frederick Wilhelm of Prussia and Peter the Great of Russia followed the philosopher Leibniz’s suggestion and founded academies. In contrast, Holy Roman Emperor and Habsburg ruler Leopold I, Maria Theresa’s grandfather, referring to his empty treasury in the aftermath of the War of Spanish Succession, refused to form an imperial academy housing research in all scientific fields. The German philosopher Leibniz corresponded with the Prussian and Russian rulers and thus co-founded the Berlin *Sozietät des Wissenschaften* and the Russian Academy in

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1 Karl Heinz Gruber, “Higher education and the State in Austria: an historical and institutional approach,” *European Journal of Education* 17, no 3 (1982), 259. The quote at the end of the paragraph is from here, too.
1700 and 1714, respectively. These institutions followed the Western European model.² Like the Royal Society founded in 1669 or the French Academy established in 1634, Western European learned societies were mostly products of scholarly self-organization meeting the royal or princely political approval. Accordingly, the foundation of these institutions did not carry a similar ideological content as those institutions that were established in the age of nationalism, like the Hungarian Academy. The Academy in Berlin, for instance, was a rather cosmopolitan institution and hence attacked by nationalists. Whereas it allowed its members to deliver their talks in German, Latin, and French, the Berlin Academy decided to publish these talks only in French so that the work of its members would be approachable for scholars in London, Paris, and St Petersburg as well. In one of his letters to Peter the Great, Leibniz himself emphasized that scholarship was rendered to universally serve mankind:

I am not one of those who love only their motherland or any single nation. All my thoughts are turned to the benefit of mankind because I consider the Heavens to be my mother country and all sensible persons its fellow citizens. It is more pleasing for me to do a great deal of good to the Russians than little to Germans or other Europeans. I could have enjoyed the greatest honour, wealth, and fame among them, but I could not render service to others. And my ultimate goal is to increase general prosperity.³

Despite the stress on the universality of scientific occupations, Leibniz’s arguments betray the Enlightenment bias, namely that national scientific academies were considered institutions that represent national scholarly achievements. However, the national outlook of the academies did not contradict the conviction that they were also expected to house scholarly undertakings regardless of the members’ nationality or status for the benefit of humanity.


³ Quotes in Henri, 1223.
Naturally, over the centuries, these institutions transformed according to the changing social expectations and the scholarly views of its members, and they were never neutral to national political concerns. By the beginning of the twentieth century, regardless of the circumstances of the foundation of the scientific associations, European nations entrusted similar tasks to their national academies: until today, scholarly institutions consider themselves as both international academic actors and important contributors to national politics and culture.\(^4\)

According to the authors of the sole monograph on the Hungarian National Academy of Sciences, by refusing to follow the other two rulers’ examples, Leopold I missed the last chance of the Habsburg dynasty to connect their name with a scholarly institution covering most scientific fields common to all their dominions.\(^5\) Indeed, Leopold I preferred to support specialized institutions. In 1677, he embraced the private association *Academia Naturae Curiosorum*, which was founded in 1652. He renamed it *Sacri Romani Imperii Academia Naturae Curiosorum*, which in 1687 became the imperial academy. Next to the British and the French academies, Leopold’s academy focusing on medicine, pioneered European institutionalized natural scientific research. Maria Theresa viewed the patronage of an Oriental Academy as favorable to her imperial designs. The Vienna Oriental Academy was founded in 1754 to train merchants and future diplomats in Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, and, thus allow them to serve the Empire in the East. It was later renamed as the Consular Academy. The *Deutsche Gesellschaft* was founded in 1761 in Vienna; however, the foundation of the Austrian Academy of Sciences was founded in 1847, that is eight decades after the Viennese German


\(^5\) Ibid., 16.
Learned Society, and twenty two years after the Hungarian Learned Society. It is thanks to the famous Orientalist Joseph Hammer-Purgstall’s and another eleven scholars’ common effort that met Prince Klemens von Metternich’s support that the Austrian Academy of Sciences was established. The idea of the foundation of the Czech Academy of Sciences in the third biggest city of the Empire, Prague, rose even later, in the early 1860s, though the Royal Czech Society for Sciences was already active for almost a century: the Kö nigliche Böhmishe Gesellschaft was founded in 1774.

Emergence of the Idea of a Hungarian Learned Society

The first advocates of a state-founded Hungarian learned society responded to the dynamics of the Habsburg politics of centralization in the field of education and the Hungarian Diet’s cultural independence politics following the termination of the Rákóczi uprising by the 1711 Peace of Szatmár. Historians view the agreement between the Habsburg Court and the Hungarian opposition as an example of estate nationalism, as it was mentioned earlier, an early

6 After the fall of the Ottoman rule, by restoring the noble constitution and offering amnesty to those Hungarian nobles who previously rebelled against him, Leopold I gained the Hungarian nobles’ military assistance. This allowed him to push the Ottoman forces further south-east and beyond the Hungarian borders by 1699. (See, Ekkehard Eihof, Velence, Bécs, és a törökök (Venice, Vienna, and the Turks) (Budapest: Európa Kiadó, 2010), 418.) The Habsburg rule was extended over most of the country at a relatively rapid pace. With time it provoked opposition, especially from Transylvanian nobles, which developed into open armed conflict over the territory of the whole country. In 1707, Rákóczi dethroned the Habsburgs, but his armies failed to ensure the necessary military basis to support his political move. They were forced to surrender to the Habsburg army in 1711, and an agreement was reached at Szatmár in that year. The treaty between Habsburg Emperor and Hungarian king Joseph I and the rebels reconfirmed the Hungarian estates’ ‘constitutional’ rights, suspended the Habsburg military rule of the “conquest” in Hungary, reinforced the rights of Protestants and acknowledged the legality of Rákóczi’s laws regarding the material benefits of the families of conscripted serfs. Not least, Joseph I promised to bring all debated questions to the Diet. The estates agreed even if the de facto independence of the country was not restored – a dream that very few thought would be possible to make come true. The agreement did not reattach territories, like Transylvania, the Partium, and more to the territory of the Hungarian Crown. Historian Ferenc Szakály emphasized that the estates did not urge the reunification of these territories: their concerns for their own status overwrote nationalist sentiments. Szakály, Virágkor és hanyatlás 1440-1711, 307. In The peoples of the Eastern Habsburg lands, 1526-1918, historians Robert A. Kann and Zdenek V. David argue that the text of the agreement between the Habsburg Court and the Hungarian noble rebels demonstrated that Hungarian nobility successfully safeguarded its own legal and political independence from the Habsburg hereditary lands. Robert A. Kann and Zdenek V. David, The peoples of the Eastern Habsburg lands, 1526-1918 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984).
modern form a nationalism restricted to the nobility, which can be interpreted also as the nobility’s opposition to the central power dressed in nationalist garb. The first initiative to found a national learned society in 1718 is attributed to the Lutheran pastor Mátyás Bél, a leading scholarly figure of his time and a supporter of the Rákóczi rebellion.  

After finishing his studies in Pápa, Hungary, Halle, and Bergen, Bél became the first pastor of the Bratislava Lutheran Church, and served as such for thirty years until a stroke forced him to resign. At the beginning of his career, he was more occupied with linguistic questions. In 1713, he authored a history of the Hungarian language: *Historiae linguae Hungaricae*. In addition, he was interested in instructing Hungarian speakers in German and vice versa. Reaching back to the Reformation tradition of Bible-translations, he corrected some of the less fluent parts of the Károli Bible. In his 1718 *De vetere litteratura Hunno-Scythica exertitatio*, he studied the history of the Hungarian runic script, and the title of his study betrays the fact that he approached Hungarian literary history as a chronological continuity of the histories of the legendary Scythians, the mighty Huns, and the Hungarians. He was also the first to publish the unknown royal scribe, Anonymus’s chronicle *Gesta Hungarorum*. By readdressing the traditional narrative of national origins, Bél’s scholarly work betrays his identification with the estates’ concept of nationhood.

7 Because the Catholic archbishop of the Southern Hungarian town Kalocsa and the Palatine supported Bél’s *Notitia Hungariae Novae Historico Geographiaca*, the first systematic geographical and ethnological description of the lands of the Hungarian Crown, he was freed from prison and spared from the death penalty in order to continue his scholarly work. He founded the first Hungarian periodical *Nova Posonia* in 1721, and, thus, allowed the wider circulation of political and scholarly ideas among Hungarian readers. See István Sőtér, ed. *Magyar Irodalom Története II. 1600-tól 1772-ig*, 470; available from http://mek.oszk.hu/02200/02228/html/02/325.html; Internet, accessed March 3, 2014.

8 The Calvinist pastor Gáspár Károli translated the bible to Hungarian in 1590. His was the first full Bible translation.
It is in this 1718 *De vetere litteratura Hunno-Scythica exertitatio* that he first suggested the foundation of a learned society, arguing that the study of Hungarian language, history, and culture demands the work of such an association. Whereas his suggestion did not impact the practical realization of the learned society, the growing neologistic movement at the end of the century looked up to Bél as a spiritual leader, and accordingly, the authors of the future plans for the foundation of an academy venerated his memory. Thus Bél’s pioneering work was also important in reinforcing linguistic studies’ fundamental role in the operation of a future learned society. His legacy entailed the gradual growth of the importance of linguistics and the stagnation of the historical research on the period prior to the Conquest.

From the 1720s, with the exception of one known case, all the proposals for the foundation of a learned society that the Court received from different Hungarian thinkers and almost automatically vetoed, connected the cause of the beautification and development of the Hungarian language, the creation of a scientific vocabulary in Hungarian with the Enlightenment promise that learning was the key to the happiness of the broader public. The Hungarian scholars’ focus on the language formed a part of their educational politics and expressed Hungarian patriotism. They conceptualized nationhood as a cultural or linguistic community, and they envisioned the future learned society as a patriotic institution serving the Hungarian nation in the multiethnic empire.

**The emergence of the neologistic movement.** The emergence of the neologistic movement was also a result of the politicization of the language question and the impact of the

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10 This one proposal was by Miklós Jankovich’s, who was of Slavic descent. See MTA, 22.
Enlightenment. It is symbolic that both the beginning of the Hungarian literary Enlightenment in 1772 and the neologistic movement are associated with the poet György Bessenyei’s oeuvre. The publication of Bessenyei’s Ágis tragédiája (The Tragedy of Agis) is considered the opening of the era of Enlightenment, while his 1778 treatise Magyarság (Hungariandom) is considered the manifesto of the neologistic movement. The neologistic movement’s goal was the enrichment and modernization of the Hungarian language, both written and spoken, so that it could properly serve scholarly and literary production and communication. Hence it relied heavily on grammatical analysis and contributed to the development of linguistic, as opposed to philological research in Hungary. The nineteenth-century linguistic research reached back to

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11 Bessenyei was born into a Protestant family, his father fought against the Habsburgs in the Rákóczi War of Independence, yet, between 1765 and 1773, Bessenyei was a member of Maria Theresa’s Hungarian guard. In the Viennese court, he became acquainted with western European Enlightened philosophy, which turned his attention to the question of public education. He worked out the first plans for a system of public education in Hungary. After retiring from the Hungarian guards, he continued to live in Vienna as the representative of Hungarian Protestants. Bessenyei supported Maria Theresa’s educational reforms, which resulted in a break between him and the Hungarian Protestant leadership. He founded the first Hungarian Learned Society in Buda, and in 1779 converted to Catholicism. Like Bél’s, Bessenyei’s career demonstrates that the Enlightened ideas of the significance of learning and public education created a common cause for Catholics and Protestants, the German Court and the Hungarian opposition equally. At the same time, since the Court and the Diet, as well as the neologistic movement and the common nobility recognized the political importance of education, the nominally common cause further deepened the already existing political divisions within the Empire and the Lands of the Hungarian Crown.


13 By drawing a distinction between philology and linguistics I wish to emphasize that the nineteenth-century linguistic scholarship in Hungary focused on language rather than texts, since the distinction was central to the work of the scholars whom I study. In his 1856 article, “Tájékozás a magyar nyelvészetről,” (Information about Hungarian Linguistics), Hunfalvy emphasized the difference arguing that philology was a broader field than linguistics. In the first issue of Hunfalvy’s Magyar Nyelvészet, Szende Riedl differentiated between the practical and theoretical study of languages. He placed philology in the first category, arguing that it was a practical approach to language to use it for the discovery and interpretation of its “literary treasures.” He underlined that man studied the language in this manner from the beginning of times. In contrast, the theoretical study of language, which became a scholarly field only in the nineteenth century, focuses on language and its grammatical, literary, and historical character. Szende Riedl, “A Nyelvészetről általában,” (About Linguistics in General) Magyar Nyelvészet (Hungarian Linguistics) 1 (1856): 23. In 1869, the linguist Ernő Lindner discussed the importance of the study of dialects in a study that appeared in 1869 in the same booklet with Vambery’s “Török-tatár szöveganyagjai” (Turkish-Tartar Word Correspondence). Lindner pointed out that whereas in linguistics language is the subject of analysis, in philology it served as a key to the past. Comparative linguistics focused on evolution and change, the development and transformation of languages. Comparative linguists
this ideal, and its criticism of the wrongly created words by the neologists of the previous century relied primarily on grammatical arguments. As scholars point out, the movement wished to close what thinkers viewed as a gap between Western European and Hungarian cultural development, while also protesting Joseph II’s politics of Germanization. Bessenyei’s famous argument in Hungariandom “Minden nemzet a maga nyelvén lett tudós, de idegenen sohasem” (Every nation became a scholarly nation using its own language and not a foreign one) is often quoted to illustrate that the neologistic movement, in fact reacted to foreign intellectual influences. Nonetheless, it also demonstrates that the cause of the Hungarian language and scholarly development from the earliest stages of the neologistic movement has been viewed as closely connected issues and proved to be a powerful national(ist) political tool. The neologists became active agents of the spread and popularization of the idea of language’s saliency in the formation of modern nationhood. The foundation of the Hungarian Learned Society in 1825 that became the Academy a few years later was a continuation of the intertwined language and scholarly (linguistic) politics of the late eighteenth century.

**Hungarian linguistics at the end of the eighteenth century and the emergence of Hungarian Finno-Ugric studies**

The political character of the neologistic movement and the politicization of linguistics defined both the main areas of interest of Hungarian linguistics and to a great extent determined the negative reception of the new Hungarian research on Hungarian-Lapp and Hungarian-Finnish affinity. As in his aforementioned article László Kontler pointed out, despite their engagement with modern scholarship, late eighteenth-century Hungarian thinkers and those associated with viewed their work a corollary to historical investigation. Ernő Lindner, “Nyelvjárások vallományai” (The confessions of dialects), Nyelvtudományi közlemények (Linguistic News) 8, nos. 1-2 (1869-1870): 1-108.
the neologistic movement viewed themselves as Bél’s followers not only in the field of linguistics but also what regarded his historical vision, which as mentioned before, confirmed estate nationalism’ underlying eastern consciousness. The adherence to the traditional narrative of the Scythian-Hun-Hungarian genealogy antagonized the (re)emerging Finno-Ugrian studies, since contemporaries (as well as future generations in the nineteenth and the twentieth century) interpreted the concept of linguistic affinity as ethnic kinship. In addition, the emerging theory of Finno-Ugric affinity also contradicted the traditional theory of Hungarian-Hebrew linguistic affinity, which – in contrast to the Finno-Ugric theories – complied with the traditional history of national origins. Thus the following review of the spheres of interest of Hungarian linguistics and the emergence and negative reception of the early Finno-Ugric theories sheds additional light onto the correlation between language politics in Hungary and especially that of the neologistic movement – closely connected with the common nobility’s oppositional politics at the Diet - and the politicization of linguistics at the end of the eighteenth century.

**Linguistic research in Hungary at the end of the eighteenth century.** Late-eighteenth-century Hungarian linguistic research concentrated on three areas of interest: Hungarian’s relations of affinity, grammar, and history. The study of affinity and grammar reached back to the work of the sixteenth-century humanists’ research. Traditionally, through the claim of affinity between Hungarian and Hebrew, comparative linguistics in early modern Hungary supported a general idea of eastern origins and especially the biblical beginnings of the history of the nation. In the sixteenth century, the question of the Hebrew affinity was widely discussed among Protestant scholars all over Europe; in Hungary, during the period of the Ottoman wars,
the politics of linguistics intertwined with broader political questions.\textsuperscript{14} Hebrew was not only the key to the true understanding of the Scripture, but it was considered to be the closest to the \textit{Ursprache}, the language that man spoke before God “confused” it after the erection of the Tower of Babel. Bible translations triggered the study of vernaculars and the linguistic research was also expanded to the study of affinity: the closer the affinity one could demonstrate between the vernacular and Hebrew, the more prestigious the vernacular and the nation speaking it would appear among European Christians. The proof of the Hungarian-Hebrew affinity demonstrated the prestige of Hungarian as well as proved that it was not as isolated as Hungary was during the Ottoman wars.

The first advocate of Hungarian-Hebrew affinity was the Protestant common noble János Sylvester (1504-52), an Erasmian scholar as well as follower of Melanchthon. His scholarship illustrates the close connection between affinity and grammar study. His 1539 \textit{Grammatica Hungarolatina} Hungarian-Latin grammar grew out of his Hungarian translation of the New Testament, the first full text of the New Testament in Hungarian. In compliance with the era’s scholarly practice, Sylvester studied Hungarian grammar through the comparison of Hungarian to Latin. Through the comparison with Latin, Sylvester pointed out that the formation of comparative degree of adjectives and the objective verb conjugation in Hebrew and Hungarian paralleled one another. Hence, he concluded, Hungarian and Hebrew had to be related, which in turn proved the superior qualities of the Hungarian language. A century later, scholars continued to confirm Sylvester’s findings. Their theory of Hebrew affinity served them as an illustration for

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the beauty and richness of Hungarian and as a refutation of its isolation and inferiority to other European languages.

Already in the nineteenth century, the linguist Jancsó Benedek emphasized that not only the politics of linguistics weighted in the emergence and longevity of the theory of Hebrew-Hungarian affinity, but that the political situation and its psychological impact better explained why Hungarian linguists tended to discover a connection between the Semitic Hebrew and the Finno-Ugric Hungarian. Jancsó pointed out an interesting and complex web of connections between political weakness, underdevelopment, and linguistic claims and argued that nations who fight for their survival, and are relatively underdeveloped cling on past glory and remain prisoners of historically inspired biases.15 His argument not only reflects the nineteenth-century perspective on the role of language in national history, but also highlights what others after him underlined: that language and its usage had been a symbol of national independence for centuries before the age of nationalism.16 In addition, it demonstrates the weight of politics over scholarly arguments at the threshold of modern linguistic research and, therefore, explains why the Finno-Ugric theory of affinity, which emerged outside of Hungary, seemed not to affect Hungarian thinkers until the late eighteenth century.17

15 Hegedűs, 103.
16 The Hungarian linguist, Hegedűs quotes Isodorus arguing that nations were born from languages and not the other way around in order to illustrate the medieval identification of language with national community.
17 Aeneas Sylvius Piccolimini (1404-1464), who in 1458 became Pope Pius II, among his ethnological studies pointed out first the linguistic affinity between Hungarians and the people who lived in the territory bordered by the rivers Don and Tanais, once believed to be the mysterious Scythia. While he regarded his Hungarian contemporaries as the defenders of Christian Europe from the Ottoman menace, he did not see any contradiction to confirm their pagan past through his linguistic studies. Half a century later, in his 1517 Tractatus de duabus Sarmatias (Treatise on the Two Sarmatias), a geographical description of Eastern Europe, the Polish canon, astrologist, and alchemist, among other things, Maciej Miechowita already used the term Jugria. Jugria became the designation of the territory earlier recognized as Scythia. Similarly to the Hungarian medieval chroniclers and Piccolimini, Miechowita claimed that the original home of the Hungarians was the land of the barbarous Scythians, that is Jugria. Two years later, in his Chronica Polonium, Miechowita argued that the difference between the languages spoken in Jugria and in Hungary was that the Hungarians borrowed several Slavic words.
The students of the second field focused on the development of Hungarian vocabulary and grammatical scholarship and considered both patriotic tasks; their activities paralleled and in fact overlapped the neologists.’ Probably not independently from the political background, among the three this area rose to prominence: in the two to three decades after 1790, more grammatical treatises appeared than during the three centuries following Sylvester’s death. The Piarist priest Miklós Révai’s (1750–1807) study of Hungarian grammar was just among the many treatises that appeared in the decades prior to the foundation of the Learned Society, which becomes significant considering that, as will be discussed later in this chapter, Révai’s plan for the foundation of the learned society became the road map for the Dietary discussions. Révai’s

His argument reiterated the Hungarian-Hun-Scythian genealogy, and fitted the mental framework of the Hungarian eastern consciousness, nonetheless, little is known whether this treatise resonated at all with Hungarian thinkers.

Whereas, due to an erroneously interpreted Leibniz quote John Amos Comenius was considered the first to articulate the Hungarian-Finnish connection, in fact before him, the Hamburg doctor, Martin Vogel (1634-1675) discovered the Hungarian-Finnish affinity. As a graduate of the University of Padua, he was acquainted with Prince Cosimo III de Medici, who exhibited interest in the Finnish language and asked Vogel to purchase a Finnish dictionary for him. Before sending the dictionary that he acquired for the Tuscan prince in 1668, Vogel, a passionate book collector, copied it, and added an introduction De fennicae linguae indole observationes (Observations of the Nature of the Finnish Language). In this introduction he compared thirty five Finnish and Hungarian words, and, thus opened a long history of Finnish-Hungarian comparative linguistic studies. After Vogel’s death, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, well-read in linguistics as well, persuaded the Hannover elector to purchase Vogel’s library. In 1713, as part of his correspondence with the Russian Tsar Peter I, which resulted in the foundation of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Leibniz asked the Tsar’s assistance for his project of collecting languages and different folk tales in the Russian Empire. Though, his proposal was realized only under Catherine II, it contributed to the initiation of Russian Finno-Ugric and ethnographic studies, which not only did not involve either Hungarian or Finnish scholars but did not seem to impact linguistic scholarship in Hungary. For the fifteenth-century research see, E. E. Kuzmina, “Contacts between Finno-Ugric and Indo-Iranian Speakers in the Light of Archeological, Linguistic and Mythological Data,” in C. Carpelan et al., Early Contacts between Uralic and Indo-European: Linguistic and Archeological Considerations, (Helsinki, Memoires de la Societie Finno-Ougriere 242, 2001), 289-317, and Nancy Bisaha, Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 76. About the affinity between the languages of the north-eastern pagans and the Hungarians Aeneas wrote in his Opera Quae Extant Omnia, 308. See in Hegedűs, 66. About Leibniz’s role in the linguistic research in Russia see, Gábor Bereczky, “Tévtanok, rögeszmék a magyar őstörténet kutatásában,” (Erroneous teachings and obsessions in the research of Hungarian prehistory) in A nyelvrokonságról: Az török, sumer és egyéb áfium ellen való orvosság, (About Linguistic Affinity: Remedies against Turkish and Sumerian poisons) ed. László Honti (Budapest: Tinta Könyvkiadó, 2010), 34. The subtitle is a reference to the politician poet Miklós Zrínyi’s political treatise Az török áfium ellen való orvosság.

18 Hegedűs, 92.
works demonstrate the intellectual, personal, and political continuity between the neologistic
movement and the Diet’s involvement in the foundation of the learned society – initially
suggested by Bél.

The third field, the history of Hungarian, in this period was not yet as closely related to
the study of affinity as in the second half of the nineteenth century when comparative linguistics
established itself. The aforementioned Révai was a pioneer of this more philologically-oriented
field; his research studied the development of literary style and grammar and thus was not
analyzing the linguistic development of the period prior to the Conquest of the Carpathian Basin
and did not engage in a dialogue with the theory of origins. His works included the critical
edition of the *Halotti Beszéd és Könyörgés* (Funeral Sermon and Prayer) that the advocate of
Lapp affinity János Sajnovics (1733-1785) published earlier and the already mentioned
Hungarian grammar as well. Indeed, Révai’s activities were very diverse, in addition to his
scholarly work he also edited the Bratislava Hungarian newspaper *Pozsonyi Magyar Hirmondó*
(Bratislava Hungarian Currier), which made his name well known all over the country. His
scholarly fame and organizational capacity permitted him to successfully advocate the idea of a
Learned Society among the Diet members from 1790.

The emergence of the interest in the theory of Hungarian’s Nordic affinities in Hungary
faced the challenge of the Hungarian political conditions and the disinterest of Hungarian
linguistic studies. The first student of the Lapp-Hungarian affinity János Sajnovics’s research
started on an expedition to Norway. On imperial commission and the Danish king’s invitation, he
and another Jesuit astronomer Max Hell travelled to Northern Norway in July 1769 to study the
planet Venus passing in front of the Sun. Acknowledging their contribution to astronomy, the
Danish Academy of Sciences accepted both Hell and Sajnovics as its members. On this journey,
Sajnovics became acquainted with the language of the Lapps, which he argued, was similar to that of the Hungarians. He published his linguistic findings *M. Demonstratio Idioma Ungarorum et Lapponum idem esse* (Demonstration that the Lapp and Hungarian languages are identical) in 1770, which was the first modern linguistic study on the Hungarian language and its earliest history of the Hungarian language.

The fact that the Habsburg court supported it only intensified the antagonism toward this theory. Because in the course of growing political antagonism between the Habsburg central power and the Hungarian Diet, language as an arbiter of national identity and Hungarian usage gained importance and because the question of affinity became directly connected to the issue of national origins – in want of Hungarian written sources from prior to the Conquest – the Hebrew affinity continued to be viewed as a confirmation of the traditional historical theory of Asian origins. In contrast, the Lapp and Finnish affinity did not comply with such political requirements: it suggested a history of origins that refuted the Scythian-Hun-Hungarian genealogy indivisible from the biblical origins that Bél and his followers accepted at face value.

The Hungarian publication of Sajnovics’s study in the same year also contained the first ever written Hungarian text, the twelfth-century *Halotti beszéd és könyörgés* (Funeral Sermon and Prayer), which demonstrates his adherence to the Hungarian linguistic research in general and in this way he expressed his patriotic linguistic attitude. Sajnovics published it in print for the first time. (Révai’s aforementioned 1803 critical edition followed this.) After his return to Hungary, Sajnovics became a faculty member at the Royal University. His colleague, the historian György Pray (1723-1801) praised Sajnovics’s historical findings, which testifies to a rather flexible intellectual attitude. Pray’s 1761, *Annales veteres Hunnorum, Avarorum et Hungarorum*, which he based on French and Chinese sources, argued in favor of the Hun-
Hungarian-Avar continuity, known already from the medieval chronicles. Nine years later, after the publication of his fellow Jesuit Sajnovics’s study, Pray hurried to reformulate his position. In his 1774 *Dissertationes historico-criticae in Annales veterum Hunnorum*, he developed a flexible and holistic argument and claimed that every Finn-Ugric nation was of Hun origin.

Pray’s and his fellow Jesuits’ attitude sharply contrasted the hostility that especially the Protestant and noble readership exhibited toward Sajnovics’s arguments about the “familial connections stinking of fish.”\(^\text{19}\) They preferred the traditional historical reconstructions like Bél’s that connected the Hungarians with the warrior Scythians over suggestions that the northern Lapps were in fact the relatives of the Hungarians. Indeed, as Kontler’s aforementioned article demonstrates, by the end of the eighteenth century, the Lapp affinity was considered not complementary, and contrary to the glorious Scythian-Hun genealogy. The opposition between the two camps -- the Jesuits employed at the university who accommodated the Lapp affinity within the traditional understanding of Hun genealogy and the Protestant nobles and intellectuals who followed Bél’s teachings about the Scythian legacy -- demonstrates that in eighteenth-century Hungary the question of national origins pointed beyond itself, and symbolized broader political arguments, too.

The case of the first advocate of the Hungarian-Finnish affinity Sámuel Gyarmathi (1751-1830) is an additional illustration of this point. Gyarmathi, the Transylvanian Protestant medical doctor, was a known grammatician and associated with the Protestant intellectuals in the neologistic circle around Ferenc Kazinczy (1759-1831) the leader of the movement. His

enthusiasm for the rejuvenation of Hungarian literary and scholarly life was shared by many other intellectual-nobles. Kazinczy was also a member of the Diet and contributed to the work of the legislative body. Initially, Gyarmathi was also an advocate of the Scythian genealogy and, not unlike many others before and after him, argued that the Hungarian language was connected to “Jewish (sic!), Chaldean, Syriac, etc.” After reading Sajnovics’s work, and studying Swedish, Danish, English, and other languages in Göttingen, at the time not only a Protestant university hub but a European flag bearer of linguistic scholarship, he conducted his own linguistic research, and as a result, abandoned his earlier position. His *Affinitas linguae Hungaricae cum linguis Fennicae originis grammaticae demonstrata* (Grammatical Demonstration of the affinity between the origins of Finnish and Hungarian) was published in 1799 in Göttingen. Based on both phonological examination and syntax-analysis, he offered a firm basis for the argument of the Hungarian-Finnish linguistic affinity, which later, the two foremost advocates of Finno-Ugrian studies, Pál Hunfalvy and József Budenz considered the basis of nineteenth-century Finno-Ugric research.

Gyarmathi’s study reflected his professional training and was a cutting edge comparative linguistic analysis of Hungarian and Finnish, paralleling the British William Jones’s (1746-1794) Sanskrit studies, who is today considered to be the founder of modern comparative linguistics. As a result of the European discovery of Indian texts, a new chapter opened in comparative linguistic studies that had a strong historical focus as well. Human history was reevaluated on the basis of connections of linguistic affinity. Whereas originally the connections were constructed based on vocabulary, with the development of linguistic theory, syntax and phonology were also included in the analysis. At the heart of the new research also stood the old desire to understand what language the first man spoke, how God communicated with man and ultimately the
interpretation of the bible as a historical account. The transformation of Semitic philology alongside the growing Indo-European or indo-German field permitted scholars to reexamine the importance of Hebrew and the role of the Israelites, and especially their pioneering monotheism, in European and human culture. Albeit Gyarmathi was Jones’ contemporary, and their methods corresponded, in contrast to Jones’ professional success, Gyarmathi’s thesis hardly hit a nerve in the community of Hungarian linguist scholars. Whereas both Jones’ and Gyarmathi’s readerships interpreted linguistic affinity in terms of ethnic relations, Hungarian readers were less thrilled to learn about the blood-connection with the “fishmonger Northern nation” than Western Europeans were in recognizing their forefathers in the Aryans.

His fellow Hungarians dismissed Gyarmathi’s comparative research despite the fact that unlike the Jesuit Sajnovits, Gyarmathi was a well-known Protestant author of grammatical treatises and a supporter of the neologistic movement. The negative reception illustrates the neologistic movement’s altering attitudes toward the scholarship of grammar and affinity and that the dominant political interest in linguistics overlapped with those of grammatical studies (and marginalized the importance of the study of affinity). Whereas Kazinczy praised Révai’s grammar and argued that it served best the cause of the beautification of the language, Kazinczy dismissed Gyarmathi’s study of Finnish affinity, while remaining a supporter of Gyarmathi’s grammatical research. As a letter addressed to Kazinczy testifies, Gyarmathi felt compelled to emphasize that his nationalist sentiment, and not the prospect of material benefits – a possible reference to the association between the Nordic affinity studies and the Habsburg politics of linguistic scholarship, impelled him to write his study of Finnish affinity.20 Gyarmathi’s

20 Engem az írásra/Nyelvpallérozásra/Nem a jutalom hív/Hanem a magyar szív. (The Hungarian heart and not awards call me to write and beautify the language.) Kazinczy Ferenc levelezése (Ferenc Kazinczy’s Correspondence), 13, 131; available from
scholarship was inspired by the same nationalist notions that the neologistic movement or the late advocates of the Hebrew affinity, the polymath István Weszprémi (1723-1799) and the Protestant pastor and corresponding member of the future Academy Bálint Kiss (1772-1835) articulated, however, the content of his study seemed to undermine his political stand.21 Despite being a member of the community of Protestant intellectuals and associated with the neologistic movement, after the publication of his treatise on the Finnish affinity, Gyarmathi was marginalized and died in isolation.22 As mentioned above, Kazinczy and his colleagues participated also in the work of the Diet and it is through the personal and the ideological connections that the Diet engaged with a language politics that resulted among other things in the formation of the Learned Society.

The Diet’s language politics

From the 1790s, the Diet made it clear that they were committed to elevating Hungarian to equal importance and sophistication as German or Latin. The 1790 Diet decided that the records of the sessions will be in Hungarian, and that Hungarian will be taught in Hungarian schools. From 1805, in addition to Latin, laws were published in Hungarian as well, and from 1830, only those who spoke Hungarian could become state employees. In 1844, instead of Latin, the Diet declared Hungarian the official language in Hungary. Making Hungarian the language of legislation symbolized the Diet’s engagement with modern national identity politics, since it

21 Kiss went as far as preceding the late nineteenth-century Jewish historians, argued that the conquest was a common undertaking of pagans and Jews. Hegedűs, 92. As I will discuss it in the following, the rabbi Lajos Venetianer continued to advocate the Hebrew-Hungarian linguistic affinity at the end of the nineteenth century.

22 About Gyarmathi’s life, see Ottó M. Nagy, Gyarmathi Sámuel őlete és munkássága (The life and work of Sámuel Gyarmathi) (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum és Egyesület, 1944).
entailed both a social and a cultural message. Making Hungarian the criterion for nationality, meant the overwriting of the concept of *natio Hungarica* and to make the cultural (not necessarily ethnic or genealogical) parameter decisive in drawing the boundaries of the political community. It was meant to send a message not only to the Habsburg court but also to those ethnic groups, who were also engaging in national politics, putting pressure on the unity of the country. The Hungarian government faced the problems arising from this unilateral act during the 1848-49 War of Independence.

On the institutional level, as part of its language politics, the Diet founded a Hungarian chair at the University of Budapest in 1791. The act of the foundation of this chair was not unique, also elsewhere in Europe the academic study of the mother tongues were institutionalized at around the same period: in Vienna, Joseph II made the instruction of German compulsory in 1783 and this was an important step also toward the institutionalization of the linguistic field. Correspondingly, a number of scholarly-literary periodicals appeared, a patchy network of high schools existed, and several private foundations supported Hungarian linguistic scholarship. By issuing essay awards, they coordinated debates among thinkers. From 1808, the foundation of the National Museum, which the Academy-founder István Széchenyi’s father, Ferenc Széchenyi initiated, provided an additional institutional framework for scholarly research in Hungarian, yet the need for an independent academy remained on both the scholarly and the political agenda. The second appointee to the Hungarian chair at the University was the same

23 For the University of Vienna, see the University’s own website: [http://www.univie.ac.at/en/university/history-of-the-university-of-vienna/](http://www.univie.ac.at/en/university/history-of-the-university-of-vienna/).

24 These periodicals were the *Magyar Hirmondó*, which Révai co-founded in 1780, in 1788 *Magyar Museum*, founded among others by Ferenc Kazinczy, a founding member of the Academy, in 1790 in the mixed town of Kassa or Kosice, today in Slovakia, *Orpheus*, which was under Kazinczy’s direction, today in Slovakia, Urania by József Kármán, which focused only on belles lettres, and in 1790 in the northern town of Komárom, József Péczely founded the *Mindenes Gyűjtemény*, the first scientific periodical.
Révai, whose grammatical work was foundational to the achievements of the neologistic movement. His enthusiasm toward the amelioration and beautification of the language and his public engagement and editorship helped him in bringing the cause of the Academy to final success. Révai’s Catholicism made him fit to teach at the Royal University, nevertheless, his scholarly merits were appreciated across confessional divisions.

Révai’s appearance as an organizer sheds light to the fact that until the end of the eighteenth century, the proper initiative on the Hungarian side was absent. The emphasis is on the proper, since, as it was mentioned before, there were several attempts to gain royal consent to form a state-found learned society. Kónya et al. underline that the necessary scholarly interest, political will, and social expectations, including a broad demand for education, did not meet in the Hungarian polity before 1825. Révai recognized the importance of successful maneuvering between Court and Diet, and his scholarly credentials and position as editor allowed him to successfully realize his plan. He submitted *Planum erigendae eruditae Societatis Hungaricae* to both the Diet and the Habsburg court in 1790. This plan became the basis of the debates, which in 1825 led to the foundation of the Learned Society, the future Academy.

**Révai’s plan.** Révai’s plan reiterated earlier arguments urging the foundation of a Learned Society, and thus continued to support the connected agendas of estate nationalism and the politics of Hungarian linguistics and the neologistic movement. He founded his plan on the poet György Bessenyei’s arguments in favor of an academy appearing in his 1778 *Hungariandom* and 1781 treatise *Egy magyar társaság iránt való jámbor szándék* (Humble Will to Found a Hungarian Society), which Révai reprinted in 1790 and published it without marking

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25 MTA, 15.
the name of the author. Bessenyei’s writings prepared Révai’s activities as well as due to Révai’s efforts became part of the Hungarian literary pantheon.

In accordance to Bessenyei’s vision and the other advocates’ claims, in the development of a scholarly center that uses Hungarian, Révai saw the key to the future happiness of the nation. He argued that the task of such an association should be the development of Hungarian so that it would be suitable for scientific discourse. As part of its operations, the Society was to study the idiom of the people as well – as authentic linguistic source as well as a basis for the development of its educational policies. Révai’s program, in addition, included a “business plan” to demonstrate that the Hungarian nobility would be able to support such a national institution. It was a breakthrough: the Diet started discussing it in its 1790/91 session. That the discussion on the topic lasted three decades, demonstrates the reluctance of the Hungarian nobles to carry the financial burdens but also the persisting political force surrounding the foundation of the Academy.

**The foundation of the Learned Society, precursor to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences**

The discussions reached a turning point at the famous Reform Diet in 1825. The young magnate, István Széchenyi offered his yearly income for the formation of a learned society for the study and the beautification of the Hungarian language. The famous aristocrat, who by 1825 already sponsored many public institutions, and published short treatises demanding economic and social modernization, addressed the Lower Table in Hungarian to announce his offer. His act was meant to be symbolic and was enacted symbolically, since in 1825, the official language of the Diet and Hungarian administration was still Latin. His offer was topped by other magnates’ offerings, yet it took another two years for the Diet to finally enact the law that founded the Hungarian Learned Society. In the year of the bourgeois Revolution of 1848, it was renamed Hungarian National Academy. In the 1860s it received its current name: Hungarian Academy of
Sciences. These politically-sensitive name changes reflect the continued political resonance of the institution well after the Reform Era. The Academy retained a leading position in the country’s intellectual life in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The founding document of the Learned Society was actually written years later, and it betrayed the altering interpretations of the politics of learning of the three main forces participating in the process: the Court and the two chambers of the Diet associated with the magnates and the common nobility. The 1825-27 XI Law declared that the king was the operating authority of the Society, and the Society was accountable to the Diet. A twenty-five member board of directors directed the Society. The board was comprised mostly of the magnates and the highest clerical offices. Only one common noble and one bourgeois member of the Diet delegated to this board. The directors decided on the appointment of members and the officers of the Society, supervised its finances, and both exercised governmental control and safeguarded the independence of the organization. The king and the archduke were the patrons of the institution and no officer to the Society was to be appointed without royal accord. The King assembled the Board of Directors of twenty-five members only in 1830, and the Society elected the counts Teleki as president and Széchenyi as vice president in the next year. The king signed the appointments. At this time, the Society did not have its own printing house and was obliged to submit every publication to the royal censor.

The Board declared that the Society was organized solely for the purpose of the development of the Hungarian language in the fields of sciences and arts, and its members should refrain from political discussions. Similarly to the composition of the Board membership

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26 MTA, 24-25.
and the presidency, the declaration reflected the status quo between the Habsburg court and the Hungarian Diet: the King altered the original goal appearing in the proposal, namely that the Society would be concerned with every branch of scholarship. Instead, he welcomed the work of a society for the development of the Hungarian language. The Court, thus, did not adequately recognize that for the Hungarian common nobles, language usage and linguistic studies had political importance, while the magnates were ready to embrace the scholarly-nationalist goal. The result of this political bargain was the aforementioned ambiguous declaration of the Society’s scope. Open to interpretations, the debates that followed the foundation revealed that the Society’s main goal could be understood as the development of the Hungarian idiom but also the admonition to engage in scholarly activities only in Hungarian.

If the wording of the founding document was imprecise, while supporting a strong state control through the presence of the magnate-high clergy-dominated board, the composition of the Society’s membership reflected the political manifesto of the common nobility and this ensured that the Learned Society would represent its language politics. Common nobles, many of them acting as intellectuals (literati) and politicians (members of the Diet), became members of the future Academy. By the mid-1840s, the Liberals among them formed the majority of the Academy members; they staffed especially the four departments of humanities of the planned six departments. Each department was designed to have seven members, however, at the beginning, it proved especially difficult to fill the places in the mathematics and natural sciences, fourth and sixth departments. These two departments together counted six members, forming a minority next to the majority of seventeen writers and a social scientist, active in the four departments of humanities. These were the first department of linguistics, the second of philosophy, the third of history, and the fifth of legal studies.
That language carried a specific importance to both statesmen and scholars manifested also in that the linguistic was the first department of the Learned Society, and notables like the nobleman, Diet member, and author of the national anthem *Himnusz* (Hymn) (1823) Ferenc Kölcsey (1790-1838), who was Kazinczy’s son-in-law, and another leading figure of the neologistic movement Mihály Vörösmarty (1800-1855), author of the *Szózat* (Appeal) (1836) which is still referred to as the second anthem, were elected to this department.

Kazinczy, the leader of the neologistic movement and oldest member Learned Society, curiously, was elected to the department of historiography. Interestingly, of the four members of this department, there was only one trained historian. István Horvát was a representative of noble Romantic historiography; his writings reproduced the medieval historiographical narratives of the Hun-Scythian origins and the foundation of the country. He taught several of the Reform Era’s intellectuals, who embraced his historical vision as well. The other two members of the department were pastors, and only one of them conducted archival research in order to study Hungarian history. Kazinczy’s and Horvát’s influence on the younger generation and presence at the historiographical department seems to reinforce the assumption that in its first two decades of its operations, the Academy institutionally represented the traditional history of origins, while the members advocated the new idea of nationhood based on the cultural or linguistic criterion.

The impact of the “old school” historiography manifested in the poetry of those statesmen who became the founding members of the Learned Society, later Academy. In the year

27 Horvát studied at the University of Pest and two decades later he became professor there. From 1815 he was the librarian of what is today the National Library, (Országos Széchenyi Könyvtár). In contrast to the claims of the Monograph on the Academy, according to the Hungarian Biographical Lexicon, he refused the Academic Membership due to his antagonism with the leadership of the Learned Society. The authors of the Monograph, however, counter with a description of Horvát ceaselessly recounted the glorious stories of the foundation of the country that during the sessions that worded the Academy’s bylaws., Horvát was reported to ceaselessly recount the glorious stories of the foundation of the country. MTA, 23.
of the foundation of the Learned Society, Vörösmarty’s epic poem *Zalán futása* (Zalán’s Flight) was published. The poem is considered to have opened the period of epic poetry in Hungary, which “marked the beginning of a true renaissance in Magyar literature.”28 More importantly, however, when read next to Kölcsey’s *Hymn* as well as several other poems written during the Reform Era, it testifies to the common nobility’s adherence to the traditional history of origins. Whereas Kölcsey’s *Hymn* also known as *Anthem* reviews the major events in Hungarian history starting with the Conquest by the Asian warrior Árpád and his tribesman, *Zalán’s Flight* renarrates the Conquest, however, from the perspective of the conquered. These and a series of other poems invoking various events from the Hungarian past articulated both the hope that nineteenth-century Hungarians would live up to Asian warrior forefathers’ past national glory and would not commit the same mistakes that had triggered divine wrath in the form of the loss of national independence. The poetry of these statesmen serves as an additional illustration to Kontler’s observation, namely the progressive literati’s adherence to the Enlightenment’s notion of modernity while they clung to the traditional historical vision that confirmed the nobility’s elite status in the nation. This historical vision also maintained the eastern consciousness that defined the traditional understanding of national origins.

The two prominent members of the department of philosophy, Gábor Döbrentei and János Berzsényi were Széchenyi’s acquaintances and shared his political ideals; they became involved with the Academy through their connection to Széchenyi. In the mid-1820s, they shared the same historical vision and national identity with the Liberals, however, by the end of the 1830s, similarly to Széchenyi, they lost sympathy with them. Döbrentei became the first

28 Barany, 125.
secretary of the Learned Society, and he served in this position between 1831 and 1836. Later he had a career in the Habsburg administration in Vienna and, in 1844, he received the highest rank of public officer (főtanáncsos). By that time he had gotten into an open conflict with the Aurora circle, the most liberal literary association of the time that listed both Kölcsey and Vörösmarty among its members. Berzsenyi’s earlier writings demanding the amelioration of the conditions of the peasantry, and later his poems influenced a whole generation of noblemen, among them Széchenyi. Széchenyi referred to Berzsenyi’s poem of 1807, A Magyarokhoz (To the Hungarians) in several occasions, both in his study Hitel (Credit 1831) and during the discussions of the emancipation of Jews at the Diet in 1843, a point that will be discussed in further detail in the following. Berzsenyi started writing poetry relatively late in his life. Academy member János Kis called Kazinczy’s attention to read Berzsenyi’s writings. Both Kazinczy and Kölcsey publicly criticized Berzsenyi’s poetry, which drove Berzsenyi away from the Liberal literary circles. Among non-Liberal nobles, however, he became very popular.²⁹ His poems, like To the Hungarians, were read as a reflection of a sentiment that many nobles shared. Berzsenyi was the most prominent representative of the so called noble Romanticist poetry, which reproduced the traditional noble national identity discourse and projected it onto the current political situation. In fact, despite the criticism, similar motifs animated Berzsenyi’s A Magyarokhoz as Kölcsey’s Hymn and Vörösmarty’s Appeal which illustrates that at the

²⁹ The alleged connection to the conquerors served Berzsenyi the argument to describe the loss of national wealth and glory. Such claims relied on the traditional historiographical view, which Horvát represented. The opening lines of A Magyarokhoz illustrates this world-view: Oh you, once mighty Hungary, gone to seed,/can you not see the blood of Árpád go foul,/can you not see the mighty lashes/heaven has slapped on your dreary country?
beginning of the Reform Era, Liberals and their future opponents led by Széchenyi, equally identified with the noble national identity and shared the eastern consciousness that defined it.  

**Liberals and Conservatives: East and West on the Hungarian Political Map**

As the foundation of the Academy is considered the zero hour of the history of modern Hungary, it also illustrates the argument that modern Hungarian national identity politics built on the traditional noble concept of nationhood. At this time, the opposition at the Lower Table and its intellectual circle equally believed in the Asian origins and professed that the Hungarian forefathers were Asian warriors whose glorious lives should be held as examples for modern Hungarians. By the end of the Reform Era, however, the attitudes toward the Hungarian past and the eastern consciousness underwent substantial changes. In the 1840s, Liberal intellectuals initiated a new historical research that was to revisit the traditional history of origins. Liberal statesmen constructed their political plans without holding the legacy of the preconquest era as a guiding example. Instead, following another poet of the Enlightenment, János Batsányi’s (1763-1845) call at the eve of the French Revolution “Turn your watchful eyes toward Paris!” they considered the French political example of republicanism as a guidance. In addition, as part of their social reform, they suggested granting political rights to intellectuals and especially Academy members, at the time a strictly noble privilege. In the scholarly transformation and the projected social reform intellectuals were to be the protagonists. Their impact could also be measured as the Liberals in the Diet identified with the Western European left and adopted the

30 Kölcsey or Vörösmarty shared this view. Kölcsey’s Himnusz (Anthem) recounts the glorious development that followed the conquest headed by Árpád: Where’er Danube’s waters flow/And the streams of Tisza swell/Árpád’s children, Thou dost know,/Flourished and did prosper well."

31 My translation of the original “Vigyázó szemetek Párizsra vessétek!” which is the closing line of Batsányi’s poem A franciaországi változásokra (On the changes in France) written in 1789; available from http://mek.oszk.hu/00600/00611/00611.htm#14; Internet, accessed March 12, 2014.
western political dictionary of Orientalism, while Széchenyi’s *People of the East* propagating a specifically Hungarian course of modernization revoked the traditional concept of nationhood and translated it to modern conditions: self-Orientalism emerged as a modern identity discourse that entailed a program of modernization and the creation of a modern nation state. As the following chapters demonstrate, intellectuals and scholars remained active agents in the national identity discourse, which offered avenues of integration for minority scholars, among them Jews. Their scholarly debates about the Hungarian origins underpinned the political arguments about the importance of the Asian legacy in the formation of modern Hungary. The greatest contrast between Kossuth’s and Széchenyi’s reference to the Orient is that Kossuth was not concerned with the Hungarian Orient while it stood at the center of Széchenyi’s arguments.

**The Liberal Understanding of the Orient**

The Liberal conceptualization of the Orient identified the Slavic groups within Hungary as culturally inferior “Orientals” and the political enemy of the western notion of freedom, Russia, the Oriental despot. Both the cultural and the political argument served the Liberal goal of the creation of a modern Hungarian nation state, part of the West, and grew out of the Enlightenment movement that the ‘guard poets’ led by Bessenyei had introduced to Hungary.

Exposed to Vienna’s intellectual milieu and the philosophy of the Enlightenment, the guard poets recognized the hiatus of its influence in Hungary and viewed their country accordingly. They embraced the Enlightenment’s cultural geography too, however, as Kontler suggests, they infused their interpretation of the country’s underdevelopment as an Oriental trait with their pride of the Asian past. As Larry Wolff points out, from the eighteenth century onwards, in exploring the differences between the two areas of the continent, Western Europe increasingly Orientalized Eastern Europe in a similar way as it approached non-European eastern
cultures and Jews. Ezequiel Adamovsky’s phrase “Euro-Orientalism” helps to explain the process through which the Russian Empire became the “‘land of absence,’ a historical entity characterized not by what it is but by what it lacks — that is, by the absence of certain elements that were considered fundamental to civilization, development, modernity, or simply freedom.”

In the eyes of western thinkers, Hungary, however, belonged neither to the developed west, nor did it really fall into the eastern category, which gave Hungarian thinkers a space for “maneuvering.” The twofold interpretation of Hungary’s Oriental character allowed them to maintain Hungary’s identification with both the west and its eastern past.

The Franciscan friar Joachim Szekér’s 1791 Magyarok eredete (The Origins of the Hungarians) is one example of the Hungarian enlightenment’s attempts to articulate this twofold approach to the Hungarians’ Asian identification. Szekér retold the history of the Hungarians from biblical times by uncritically following the medieval historiographical tradition while at the same time stressing that the Hungarians inherited their willingness to defend their freedom from Asia, and it remained one of the most important national characteristics even after the foundation of the Hungarian Kingdom in the Carpathian Basin. The Hungarians continued to treasure their national political independence through the centuries and thereby remained faithful to their Asian heritage. In doing so, he presented the Hungarian tribal alliance as a primordial form of modern republican societies and thus reconciled the Enlightenment’s modern political values with the


34 Székér’s name became better known at the beginning of the nineteenth century upon the publication of his Magyar Robinzon, a Hungarian version of Daniel Defoe’s story about the shipwrecked Englishman Robinson Crusoe, whose civility conquers untamed nature.
historical narrative of the noble nation. By attributing modern western political ideals to the Asian pagan Hungarian nomads, Szekér relativized the Hungarian forefathers’ eastern identification in a similar way as medieval chroniclers wished to fit the pagan Hungarian past into the European Christian historical vision.

The guard poets similarly “translated” the Enlightenment notions of west and east onto Hungarian circumstances, and the Hungarian Liberals followed them. Whereas they remained attached to the Asian legacy and scholarly and literarily supported it, they also believed that whereas the Germans represented a higher level of civilization in the Habsburg Empire, the Hungarians had a cultural mission to fulfill in the Carpathian Basin: to spread western civilization among the other ethnicities. After the 1830 Polish revolution and especially after the 1848 Hungarian Revolution, the Liberal rhetoric reached back to the Ottoman wars and described the Hungarian cultural mission in political terms, too. They claimed the Hungarians were the defenders of European freedom from the Oriental despot, that is Russia.

The Slavic groups in Hungary. The historian János Gyurgyák points out that the political interpretation of the cultural hierarchy was closely connected to the self-nomination of the Hungarian ethnic element for political leadership of the multiethnic country. The Diet’s and the Liberals’ language politics became not only the main drive of modernizing the concept of nationhood but redefining the ethnic identity of the country. Kossuth argued that the Hungarian cultural supremacy entitled the Hungarians to “walk before the nationalities” and demonstrate the “benefits of Hungarian freedom.”

35 In his book on Kossuth, István Deák underlines the

manifestation of a sense of cultural superiority in the unveiled political program of hegemony. He argues that Kossuth’s electoral district was in the mixed northeastern part of the country, which had a Slovak majority, and he was adamant in denying independent nationhood to the Slovaks. Deák refutes the myth that Kossuth was himself of Slovak origin by examining his family tree and his German extraction on his mother’s side. Kossuth claimed that “the Slovaks have had no history of their own and that they have never formed a distinguishable territorial unit.” The use of the argument of historical nationhood demonstrates that Kossuth’s Hungarian national politics were consonant with the view of the Slavs held by the Western European Left, particularly by Marx and Engels. According to the two German thinkers, national and bourgeois development was foreign to Slavs, except the Poles. In Hungary, this claim was by no means independent from the discussion of civilizational hierarchy within the Empire. Kossuth denied the Slovaks exactly what he demanded for the Hungarians, underpinning it with his advocacy of Hungarian cultural supremacy. The same way as in the nineteenth century, European thinkers’ attitudes towards the Slavs were far from independent from the Enlightenment’s unconditional acceptance of a preeminence of Western European culture and thought, through the Liberal imperative, Hungarian national hegemonic endeavors within the borders of the lands of the Hungarian Crown and the anti-Slav sentiment mutually reinforced each other. In addition, the degrading attitudes toward the Slavs contributed to the interconnected internal and external, cultural and ethnic definitions of nationhood. This nurtured an increasingly intolerant Hungarian nationalism and narrative of exceptionalism that disregarded the awakening national movements.

of the other ethnicities on Hungarian territory. Most importantly, it nurtured a language that articulated cultural superiority in the vein of imperialist self-justification.

**Russia, the Oriental Despot.** When stressing the importance of the mission of spreading the seeds of civilization among Hungary’s ethnic groups, Liberals could refer to the nation’s historical role in the Ottoman wars. Since the wake of the Ottoman offensive in Europe, Hungarians had been proud to act as the defenders of all the Christian nations of Europe. In the fifteenth century, humanists like Aeneas Piccolomini viewed Hungary as the last European bastion in the face of Ottoman attack. Four centuries later, in the 1830s, in response to the news of the failed Polish revolution, the Hungarian Liberal opposition followed the European left in describing the Romanov Empire as the chief menace to political freedom in Europe that Hungary was destined to safeguard. The Habsburg ruler did not oppose the Russian action in Poland, and the members of the Hungarian Diet gave voice to their concerns of the Emperor’s lack of respect for Polish national freedom. In a speech on May 3, 1831, the Bars County delegate initiated the discussion of the Revolution in Poland and claimed that Russian despotism hindered the further development of Polish civil freedom. He further issued a warning regarding the geographical proximity of the “Northern Colossus.”

On June 23, 1831, Kossuth delivered a speech to his county assembly in which he claimed that [The Poles] in their struggle with the formidable power extending its autocratic rule over one-sixth of the territory of the known world, are giving their lives by the thousands in a desperate battle, not only for their homeland but for the freedom of the whole of Europe threatened by the shackles of the Northern Colossus and for the triumph of civilization, which the northern barbarians have reduced to savagery.

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38 Ibid.
András Gerő points out that, led by his “liberal-bourgeois consciousness,” Kossuth linked civil to national freedom, and that this was manifested particularly in the discussions of the Polish revolution in 1830. The Polish question provided the forum with an opportunity to discuss not only Russian absolutism, but national political self-determination as well. The Habsburg ruler’s indifference to the “Oriental Despot’s” military actions indicated to the Hungarian Liberal nationalists that their ideological engagement with Liberal values diametrically opposed the German Habsburg ruler’s politics. Nevertheless, Liberals continued to perceive German high culture as a superior culture, which continued to set the cultural standards for Hungary until the end of World War I.

Even though the 1830s Liberal “outrage” over the Russian suppression of the Polish revolt soon calmed down, and the image of Russia as the Oriental Despot faded in the late 1840s, a negative concept of Asian politics coupled with attacks on Slav political movements were revived in particular in 1848-49.39 Again, the Hungarian Reform politicians’ arguments were congruent with those of the European left.40 In his January 1849 article “The Magyar Struggle” in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Engels connected Pan-Slavism with the anti-Pole and anti-Hungarian politics. He argued that Pan-Slavism was a separatist movement that opposed both the Magyars and the Germans. It was, to his mind, invented in Prague and Zagreb, and its reactionary nature manifested itself in “a double betrayal: it sacrificed the sole Slav nation to have played a revolutionary role so far, the Poles, to its own petty nationalist narrow mindedness,


and it sold itself and Poland to the Russian tsar.”\footnote{Available from \url{http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1849/01/13.htm}; Internet; accessed March 8, 2012. Italics in the original.} The Hungarian government labeled the Russian intervention as unjust and declared that “the Hungarian people would not yield to the aggressor but would fight until the last drop of blood.”\footnote{Francois (Ferenc) Fejtő, “Hungary: The War of Independence,” in \textit{The Opening of an Era 1848: An Historical Symposium}, edited by Francois Fejtő (London: Allan Wingate, 1973?), 347.} As the historian-sociologist Ferenc Fejtő argued, Kossuth desperately called for England’s and France’s help by trying to litigate on their alleged engagement with democratic principles: “You are repudiating all those who, putting their faith in you, have taken the bloodstained path of liberty.”\footnote{Ibid.} Russia’s image as the Oriental despot, though for some decades faded in the Hungarian public discussion, never disappeared completely. Events in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and during the twentieth only “refreshed” this image also because 1848-49 became a definitive moment in the development of Hungarian modern national identity.

\textit{The People of the East and Self-Orientalism}

István Széchenyi, unlike Kossuth, was born to one of the richest and mightiest families of Hungary. He was raised in Vienna and believed to know well the politics at the Habsburg Court.\footnote{Barany argues that Széchenyi believed that his modernization program is better than Kossuth’s also because he could rely on his familiarity with Vienna politicians, including Metternich, the Austrian Foreign Minister, later Chancellor.} Nonetheless, he considered himself a patriot and his diary aptly describes the archaic hue to his patriotism even at a fairly early age that most Hungarian nobles shared at the beginning of the century:

\begin{quote}
That I am a descendant of the most real kind of Huns … is well proven by the fact that even in the Alps of Switzerland or in Italy's lushest valleys and lands I cannot
\end{quote}
feel and live as warmly, passionately, and devotedly as on my own country's steppes and plains.\textsuperscript{45}

Both his practical contributions to the modernization of Hungary and his treatises illustrate that he believed that the country’s Asian traits did not contradict westernization, which toward the 1840s brought him into opposition with the Liberals. His most famous treatise \textit{The People of the East} is considered to summarize his understanding of the Hungarians as an eastern people stepping on its path of modernization at the end of which it would become a western country. However, his adherence to the idea that the Asian qualities assured the success of the Hungarian modernization was an underlying motif in his whole literary oeuvre.\textsuperscript{46}

Széchenyi’s popularity in the 1830s was due not only to his economic and industrial initiatives and philanthropy but his three treatises \textit{Hitel} (Credit) (1830), \textit{Világ} (Light) (1831), and \textit{Stadium} (1833) that outlined comprehensive, socio-economic change. They comprised the


\textsuperscript{46} Széchenyi’s contribution to the modernization of the country was not restricted to his publications. As the diary quote suggests, he extensively travelled in Europe. He toured England and Western Europe in his twenties and upon his return to Hungary, Széchenyi launched his own economic program as well as a political campaign for comprehensive reform. He established the Hungarian Derby in 1822, the First Horse Breeding Association three years later, and the National Casino in 1827 hoping to develop a civil society based on the English example, which he considered the social basis for the future economic reforms. In the same year, he addressed the Diet to offer his annual income in support of the establishment of the Learned Society, which can also be considered a continuation of his father’s and uncle’s philanthropies. They founded the Hungarian National Museum and the Keszthely Georgicon, a famous library. He was among the initiators of the introduction of steamships to the Danube and later on to Lake Balaton, the largest lake on the European continent. He contributed to the opening of the first ship-building yard, the Hungarian Commerce Bank, and as an appointed state official, headed a project to make the Danube in its whole length, including the Lower Danube until the Black Sea, navigable. Impressed by William Tierney Clark’s bridge over the Thames, Széchenyi invited the Scottish architect Adam Clark (no relation of William Tierney Clark) to plan and oversee the construction of the first permanent stone bridge over the Danube and in the whole country. It connects Buda and Pest, constituting a major step toward their unification to form the capital city of Hungary. As a demonstration of his support for the introduction of general taxation, he collected a fee for the use of the bridge also from the nobility. Furthermore, he advocated viniculture and silk production, was involved in the planning of Hungarian theater (as all existing theaters in the future capital were German) as well as other projects that he considered essential for the well-being of a modern European nation.
pinnacle of his activities as a reform politician and publicist. His biographer George Barany argues that they should be considered as parts of a tripartite work, rather than three independent studies.47

If the 1830s were Széchenyi’s decade, Lajos Kossuth came into his own as the leading voice of the opposition in the Diet from 1840 onwards, after launching his newspaper Pesti Hírlap (Pest News). Kossuth attacked the Habsburg establishment and Széchenyi’s openly monarchist program. In contrast to Széchenyi’s emphasis on economic and social change, Kossuth focused on the achievement of political equality and economic development was considered secondary to it. In Kossuth’s eyes, the conceptualization of the Orient correlated with the Hungarian modernization because, as the Polish revolution illustrated, Oriental despotism could hinder the achievement of Hungarian freedom.

The geographical proximity of Russia made the Hungarian transformation process vulnerable. Congruence of European and Hungarian interests was possible only if a bourgeois transformation took place in Hungary and if expressionist Tsarist Absolutism stood in the way of the formation of an appropriate political framework for bourgeois development.48

In Kossuth’s opinion, the establishment of a national political framework was a precondition to social and economic transformation; in other words, westernization could not take place in “Oriental” political conditions. His rhetoric about Hungarian progress did not use the orientalist vocabulary that he readily employed in discussions of Russia’s oppression of the Polish revolution.

47 Barany, Stephen Széchenyi, 217.
48 Gerő, “The Emergence of Bourgeois Thought,” in Modern Hungarian Society in the Making, 46.
Széchenyi protested that political demands without economic preparation as Kossuth proposed would endanger the entire country leading to the death of the nation (*nemzethalál*).\(^{49}\) Similarly to his contemporaries, Széchenyi interpreted the Herderian prophecy of the death of the Hungarian language by suffocation in the German and Slav seas as the annihilation of the whole nation. The thinkers who gradually accepted that the political community was to include every Hungarian speaker and not only nobles “naturally” identified nation with its language. The image of the death of the nation returned in many of the Reform Era’s poems, including the *Appeal*, which illustrates that the Herderian prophecy influenced a whole generation of Hungarian thinkers. In fact, Kossuth described modernization as the only way to remain a part of human history.\(^{50}\) Széchenyi was thinking similarly. *The People of the East* was written in 1841 as a last resort to point out the “fatal errors” in his Liberal opponents’ program and underscore the importance of the economic changes he had been advocating for almost two decades.\(^{51}\)

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\(^{51}\) Despite his criticism of the Liberals, he participated in the Revolution and continued to write after it. However, those treatises were not able to stir such emotions as *The People of the East* did. By the end of the 1850s,
Széchenyi began to write a “serious” response to Kossuth on February 6, 1841. He initially wanted to give his book the title “The Death Knell.” However, after a week he hit upon the title “The People of the East,” knowing that his treatise would bring him further unpopularity and boost Kossuth’s camp. Barany views Kossuth’s role as that of a catalyst rather than a provocation in Széchenyi’s eyes. He needed to “write out of himself” his devotion to the future of the country and anger against what he perceived as anti-Habsburg reform plans and disappointment over losing the reform leadership. The book was a “cri du coeur of a mature political mind torn in a personal moral crisis,” a complaint that the reform program was on a wrong course under Kossuth’s influence. Barany also emphasizes that Széchenyi published the treatise against the advice of several of his politician friends who pointed out the danger in dividing the reform forces. Széchenyi was aware that the publication of the book would mean a complete break with the rest of the opposition and thus constitute the first step on a path that he would walk alone. The use of the old metaphor “people of the east” in the title illustrates that unlike for Kossuth, in Széchenyi’s view, the eastern consciousness should be directly connected to the Hungarian reform program. He stressed that the modernization process should fit the eastern character of the nation and not directly follow western models as the Liberals suggested. Indeed, People of the East reiterates the arguments of the three previous treatises

52 Barany, 388.
53 Kossuth had been reading most of the Western economists’ works however, Friedrich List’s Das Nationale System der Politischen Oeconomie (The National System of Political Economy) influenced the most Kossuth’s economic program. List focused on three elements: national well-being, the intertwined development of agriculture and industry, and the system of protective customs. Contrary to the centrality of free flow or trade of goods and capital and the well-being of the individual in Marx’s model, List’s idea was that development lay in a national industry protected from the influx of foreign goods, which halts the growth of a self-sufficient economy. Naturally, the question was connected to that of Hungary’s relationship with Austria, about which Széchenyi’s
and through the four writings, Széchenyi’s understanding that the eastern origins and the path of westernization correlated become especially apparent.

Answering to the Liberals’ allegations that he wanted to “pull Europe’s developing nation, the Hungarians, back to the wilderness of Asia that is stagnant in spiritual development, brute, and lagging behind in everything,” Széchenyi emphasized, that constitutional freedom and ethnic purity were central elements of the Hungarian nature.54 Not unlike Szekér, Széchenyi understood that the Hungarian respect for the constitutional order rooted in their Asian origins, this national character that singled the Hungarians out among the nations and ought to define the path of reform. “The Hungarian nation has no other calling than to represent the characteristics that are hidden in its Asian cradle, and until now it has not matured…”55 Because the sense of freedom was an original and therefore well-developed Hungarian national trait, economic development was the first priority in the reform agenda.

A similar idea has already appeared in his first treatise, the 1830 Credit. Then he claimed that the strength of a nation could generally arise either out of its wildness and fanaticism or its civility. While the Hungarians had already left their first, wild state behind, Hungary still remained weak, as it had not yet stepped onto the road of Enlightenment. Széchenyi underpinned this argument by quoting the Academy member Berzsenyi (as he would again a decade later in the context of the discussion of Jewish emancipation): “Oh, the thunderbolt of a different Hungarian arm lighted up/during Attila’s bloody battles.”56 However, the Asian warrior glory of

and Kossuth’s opinions diverged, too. See, Gerő, “Industrial Development in the 1840s,” in Modern Hungarian Society in the Making, 22.

54 István Széchenyi, A’ kelet népe (The People of the East) (Pozsony: Wigand, 1841), 9.
55 Széchenyi, 16-17.
56 My translation of Dánial Berzsenyi’: A magyarakhoz (To the Hungarians). The original text: “Oh! más magyar kar mennyköve villogott/Atilla véres harcai közt, .. ”
the past had not yet been replaced with a knowledge that could serve the development and enrichment of all. Széchenyi discussed the past and the future as two extremities of one linear continuum, and described progress in terms of the physical movement of the nation through a path leading towards the future. As he identified the past as the time of the Asian warrior ancestors like Attila and the future as Hungary reaching the level of civility and riches of Western Europe, he envisioned a similar path leading from the east to the west that led the pagan ancestors from Central Asia to Central Europe. In arguing so, he continued to refer to the Orient as a Hungarian Orient that is prone to change in contrast to Kossuth, who described the Hungarian development as a political progression in spite of the foreign, despotic and underdeveloped Oriental polity.

In addition, Széchenyi insisted that only Hungarians themselves could make their “Asian race” as great as other European nations. (Whereas nineteenth-century Hungarians generally understood race as a broader collective than nation, Széchenyi as well as others often used the two concepts interchangeably.\(^{57}\) Széchenyi gave a central role to the eastern motif in calling the nation to action, and described Hungarians who continued to dream of the past as opponents of reform and enemies of modernization. “It is unacceptable to remain in the past and be excluded from the circle of the enlightened progressive nations, because the foreign advance will

\(^{57}\) The interchangeable use of nation and race is a fascinating phenomenon that characterizes Széchenyi’s writing, as well as his contemporaries’ and followers also in the twentieth century. I have not found any study focusing on this question, yet. My hypothesis regarding this phenomenon is that the interchangeable usage rooted in the belief in the traditional narrative of origins, which stressed the genealogical connection between forefathers and the descendants as discussed in the previous chapter. As Jenő Szűcs and the author of The Elefánty: the Hungarian nobleman and his kindred Erik Fügedi pointed out, until the eighteenth century, nobles continued to envision nationhood in terms of genealogical connections, and the usage of race as a synonym of nation might just refer to that. The discussion of twentieth-century racial theories at the end of this chapter underscores the continuities between the concepts of nationhood and race.
eventually delete even the memory of the Magyars.”\(^{58}\) The solution, in Széchenyi’s eyes, was to start “diligent work” instead of “awing the past.”\(^{59}\)

In \textit{Light}, he provided his readers with a list of practical and some less practical steps that would reduce the gap between Hungary’s underdevelopment and the achievements of “civilized nations.” A few years later, Széchenyi himself accomplished some of the items on his list, such as making the Danube navigable from its entrance into Hungarian territory all the way to the Black Sea, and the construction of a permanent bridge over the Danube between Buda and Pest in 1849, which is named after him: Széchenyi Lánchíd (Chainbridge).

In Széchenyi’s argument, thus, the eastern qualities manifested not only in the past, but were eternal national traits. When he argued that the “flower of the independent eastern race can be annihilated, but will never degenerate,” he paraphrased Vörösmarty’s \textit{Appeal}: “Less in number but not with broken spirit/Lives the nation in this homeland.”\(^{60}\) Széchenyi’s designs for Hungarian modernization, thus considered the Hungarian eastern quality an eternal trait of Hungariandom, and the reference to this eastern quality became indivisible from his understanding of the modern Hungarian nationhood. In contrast to Kossuth and the Liberals who stressed their desire to “liberate” Hungary from the feudal past and transform it into a western democracy, Széchenyi stressed that Hungary needed to continue on its eastern path toward modernity.

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\(^{58}\) Széchenyi, 210.

\(^{59}\) Széchenyi, 218

\(^{60}\) Széchenyi, 264.
Széchenyi’s work stirred an unprecedented public debate in 1841.\textsuperscript{61} In addition, it set the parameters of self-Orientalism, the discourse that before 1848 defined modern Hungarian national identity within the framework of reforms, and after the 1848-49 Revolution and War of Independence shifted attention to the external aspects of Hungarian national identity vis-à-vis non-Hungarians within and without Hungary’s borders. The discourse influenced especially right-wing political arguments during the Dualist Era as well as in the interwar period regarding Hungary’s relationship with Austria, the non-Hungarian ethnic groups, the Romanov Empire, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and Turkey. It also inspired racist arguments and left a deep imprint on Turanism and the Hungarist movement as well during the first half of the twentieth century. Self-Orientalism, indeed, became an idiom of both prescribing Hungary’s path of modernity as well as distinguishing the Hungarian national self from the Other. Széchenyi’s argumentation in the dietary debates about Jewish emancipation in the early 1840s addressed both the question of modernization and the distinction of Hungariandom from other ethnic and national groups – in this case the Jews in Hungary -- and thus demonstrated the ways in which self-Orientalism expanded from being an “internally focused” to a “holistic” (both internal and external) discourse of identity. The similar functioning of Orientalism in Germany and self-Orientalism in Hungary elucidates the differences Oriental scholarship played in the history of Hungarian Jews from that in the history of German Jewry.

\textbf{Occidentals among the People of the East}

In contrast to eighteenth- and the nineteenth-century Germany, where, in order to underline the Jewish difference from Christian Germans, leading intellectuals like the

\textsuperscript{61} For the People of the East-debate see György Kókay, ed., “Széchenyi a Pesti Hírlap ellen” (Széchenyi against the Pest News) in \textit{A magyar sajtó története I 1705-1848} (The history of the Hungarian press) (Budapest: MTA, ?), 714-730.
philosopher Herder or the orientalist Michaelis referred to Jews as Asiatics, Széchenyi described the Jewish minority as “Occidentals” and thus different from Hungarians, the “People of the East.” Széchenyi’s arguments presented at the Dietary discussion of Jewish emancipation in the early 1840s illustrate that, while as most of the political elite, he interpreted the Jewish question within the framework of national economic politics and modernization, because of his different stand on the broader national questions, his opinion on Jewish integration contrasted that of the Liberal Eötvös and Kossuth as well as the Conservatives. He expressed his antagonism toward Jewish emancipation and that it would contradict the national political priorities through self-Orientalization, which in a reversed way paralleled the orientalist language emerging throughout the discussions of the Jewish question in nineteenth-century Germany.

**Liberal Advocacy for Jewish Integration and Self-Orientalism as a Language of Opposition to Jewish Emancipation**

The 1840 Diet discussed first whether Jews should be given equal rights to those of the country’s non-noble inhabitants. The broadening of the franchise was a central element of the opposition’s program, and the emancipation of the Jews demonstrated that the political program had to be considered with both social and ethnic issues. In the case of the Jews, the ethnic polemics appeared less daunting, since the Hungarian endeavor did not collide with another nationalist movement as it was the case with the Croats, Slovaks or the Romanians. The debates were initiated by the Liberal/Centralist Eötvös, who advocated unconditional emancipation stressing that the Jewish residents were attached to the country. He published his claims presented at the Diet in *A zsidók emancipációja* (The Emancipation of Jews) in 1840 on the

pages of the *Budapesti Szemle* (Budapest Review). Eötvös underlined that emancipating Jews in Hungary should not be considered as acknowledging merits but terminating an unjust situation. Hence, no conditions should be given to Hungarian Jewry as pro quid pro granting them equal rights. Kossuth advocated emancipation only on the condition of Jewish willingness to acculturate. The Upper Table successfully derailed the discussions on Jewish emancipation, which demonstrates that the magnates and the highest clergy saw no interest in emancipating the Jewish residents of the country. The 1840 Diet ended up reenacting Joseph II’s and Leopold I’s Jewish acts that offered economic incentives to the country’s Jewish residents.

The Diet of 1844 returned to further discuss the question of Jewish emancipation. The debates revealed that while the Jewish participation triggered traditional economic anti-Jewish biases, especially among aristocrats like Széchenyi, the Jewish participation in the country’s economic life was viewed as a contribution to the capitalist transformation, a key to the modernization of the country. This approach stands in sharp opposition to the Oriental label that German thinkers had attached to Jews in Germany in the context of modernization. There Jews were depicted as representatives of the backward, non-civilized Orient. In Hungary, instead, Jewish economic advance was connected to cultural difference, described also in positive terms, both by Conservatives and Liberals. The Conservative Dessewfy underlined that in comparison to that of the Christian Hungarians, the Jewish diet was healthier, which was considered a sign of

64 Eötvös, *A zsidók emancipációja* (The Emancipation of Jews) (Budapest: Magvető, 1981), 35. The pamphlet is compiled to refute arguments about the prospective harmful effects of Jewish emancipation. In addition, Eötvös also emphasized the positive arguments for emancipation, including that it would ennoble the Hungarian state and nation.

the more civilized Jewish life style, and he added that Jews were more industrious as well.\textsuperscript{66} The Liberal Vörösmarty declared, “let us confess honestly, in the Jewish race we hate our own sins.”\textsuperscript{67} Kossuth’s debate with the rabbi of the southern town Pápa, Leopold Löw on the pages of his \textit{Pesti Hirlap} (Pest News) revealed that even if some attributed positive characteristics to the Jewish diet, the claim that the altering dietary customs contributed to social division between Jews and Christians found a stronger echo among Liberals. Löw replied that nobody in Germany would have considered denying citizenship to Moses Mendelssohn because he refrained from eating pork. The discussions between Jews and Liberals, in fact, from these formative years were based on the requirements for Jews to become integrated citizens of a modern Hungarian nation state. Both Liberals and Jewish reformers depicted the projected change towards complying with these requirements as advancement.

In 1844, Széchenyi argued against both the Conservative and Liberal viewpoints on the positive aspects of “Jewish advance.” Széchenyi’s address to the Diet on October 1, 1844 in response to Count Zay’s argument in favor of Jewish emancipation illustrates the impact of self-Orientalism on his attitude toward Jewish emancipation. Relying on his interpretation of the east-west axis of economic development, Széchenyi described Jews as contributing to the national economy in Hungary as westerners, the flag bearers of economic and industrial change and, thus, projecting modernization at a pace that would be foreign to Hungarians.


\textsuperscript{67} Miskolczy, 20. English is my translation. The original Hungarian: “valljuk be őszintén, hogy a zsidőfajban saját büneinket gyűlőljük.”
If one considers the industry that this unfortunate nation-race develops in this country, it is impossible not to feel any sympathy for them [i.e. the Jews]. I understand that others here and elsewhere talk in their interest, and that his Excellency Count Károly Zay wishes to give them full rights. However, if we really want to support the nation, I cannot understand what this submissiveness is to be good for. … Without fully matured nationhood I want no other progress. For me, everything depends on this, without it, I can tell, we will become a hodge-podge people who might possess more money. We might be able to sell the skin of dead animals for a higher price, etc., but this does not motivate me. The most important thing that guides me is loyalty to my kind.68

The stress he placed on the harmful effect of the emancipation of the Jews on both the economy and the racial composition of the nation rested on Széchenyi’s earlier claims. In Credit, he had emphasized that the Jewish creditors presented the greatest hindrance to the Hungarian noble’s economic liberation, since Jewish credit kept the Hungarian economy in “captivity.”69 He added that in the future era of general taxation, when every citizen contributed to the common good, “Jews would not bother” the nation.70 He warned the nobility about the dangers of continuing to rely on Jewish creditors and avoiding the question of a “real” modernization that would enrich the whole of the country in the long term.

68 In the original Hungarian, available from: http://www.judaisztika.hu/szovgyujt/KG_chrest_105.pdf; as well as Antal Zichy, ed. Gróf Széchenyi István munkái II. (Budapest, Atheneum, 1887); available from http://www.archive.org/stream/grfszechenyi00sz/grfszechenyii00sz_djvu.txt; Internet; accessed March 27, 2013.

69 Széchenyi, Hitel, (Credit) 77. The original Hungarian text: “Azonban ne aggódjunk ezen, türjük, sőt öröljünk rajta, mert ez is praerogativáink egyik szép következése, melynek a zsidó annyira őrül és nevet, miőtt mi főlemelkedett bőske érzéssel függetlenségünkéről álmodozunk, de magunkat egyszersmind általa megköttetni engedjük — hogy azt valóban inkább az ő praerogativájának mondhatnánk!”

70 Ibid., 128-129. The original Hungarian text: “Mindenkinek idő, ész s pénzbeli tehet- sége szerint forró s állhatatos járulása a közjóhoz. Legyen öszhaj, vén fő fiatal vállalok, ellenség előtt nyert vitézi szép karczolatok s erőltetett vizsgálat redőzeti s tudomány benyomása a homlokon — a zsidótul béke — jobbágyok szeretete, külföld becsülése a társaság ismertető jele…”
In *Light*, replying to the Conservative nobleman Dessewfy’s attack, Széchenyi refused to be likened to “nature’s most repulsive creature, who has ever lived, and was the child of Shakespeare’s strong imagination, the Jewish Shylock.” Széchenyi made clear that his stress on economic questions and that the country needed a modern banking system did not root in his “Jewish character.” Széchenyi declared that he was not a “heartless idolater of money”, an expansion on his interpretation of Shylock’s Jewish figure, and repeated that his foremost concern was the good of the nation.

Furthermore, *The People of the East* underpinned the necessity of a development of the national economy in which Jewish participation was undesired. Whereas he found the foreign example, like that of England, important, he planned not to borrow but to adapt foreign techniques and procedures to local conditions. In Széchenyi’s mind, Jewish economic activity did not fit the Hungarian mentality, because it represented a much higher level of capitalism, which, if introduced too quickly and without any control, might prove disastrous for the nation.

In order to underline the correlation between the level of economic development and the capacity to “liberalize Jews,” and refute both Conservative and Liberal positions, even in 1844, Széchenyi compared Hungary to England and France, where in his mind, Jewish emancipation could not have a negative effect in contrast to Hungary, where it would be disastrous.

If I pour a bottle of black ink into a big lake, its water will not be spoiled, and anyone can drink of it without any harm. In the bog English element, the Jew disappears, and the same is true for France. But if one pours a bottle of ink into the Hungarian soup, it will be spoiled and one cannot eat it. … Therefore, for anyone, who honestly supports the nation, it should be impossible to give advantages on the account of the nation to an element that has more intelligence and diligence.

71 Széchenyi, *Világ*, (Light) 288.

72 „... ha például én egy palaczk tintát töltök egy nagy tóba, azért annak a vize nem romlik el, és mindenki ártalomból megígíthet; a nagy angol elemben a zsidó transeat, s ugyanez áll Francziaországra nézve is: de ha a magyar levesbe az ember egy palaczk tintát önt megromlik a leves, és azt meg nem eheti az ember. … Tehát
Széchenyi’s argumentation was twofold. Indeed, even if in the 1840s the Jewish population of Hungary did not exceed the 300,000, it represented a much higher portion of the total population than in England or France. Nonetheless, his argumentation pointed beyond demographic statistics and stressed, in fact similarly to Kossuth’s, that even if it was a difference that represented the Jewish residents in positive light, the presence of a cultural difference considered crucial to future development, would hinder the realization of the emancipation act. The parable illustrates the Hungarian politicians’ association between national and table communities, and the symbolism of food and common eating characteristic of the era’s nationalist argumentations, which ought to be studied in further depth in the future especially since Jewish dietary laws were considered a social barrier hindering integration.

The above statement provoked a reply by Zay in which he claimed that the Hungarian race was strong and that a few “miserable” Jews could not weaken it. Széchenyi responded that the alleged miserable state of the Jews did not justify such “odd measures of protection” as the granting of legal equality, and stressed that Jews themselves might refuse such paternalism. He cited a few lines from the same Berzsenyi poem To the Hungarians which he had quoted in his earlier treatises. “Behold: the oak that proudly withstands the storm/that cannot break it from the North, but/vermin can chew up its mighty root-worm.”

According to Jehuda Don, in 1840, of the 11,275,000 inhabitants of Hungary, 242,000 were Jewish. Though he did not rely on them, Don’s data is very close to the previously quoted Elek Fényes’s statistics regarding the total of the Hungarian population, published in 1842. Jehuda Don. A magyarországi zsidóság társadalom és gazdaságtörténete a 19-20. századan (The Social and Economic History of the Jewry in Hungary in the 19th and 20th Centuries) (Budapest, MTA Judaisztikai Központ – Élet és Irodalom, 2006), 13.

Translated by Adam Makkai, available from http://www.magyarulbabelben.net/works/hu/Berzsenyi_D%C3%A1niel-1776/A_magyarokhoz_%281%29/en/24606-To_the_hungarians_%281%29?interfaceLang=en; Internet; accessed March 29, 2013. Széchenyi did not quote the poem word by word: “lásd a kevély tőlgy, mely századoknak ádáz
poem had illustrated his warning against inner political fights, in 1844, it supported his opposition to Jewish emancipation. The comparison of Jews to the “inner worm” that eventually brings down the proud oak immediately entered public discourse. By the turn of the century, not unlike elsewhere in Europe, the ‘worm’ had been transformed into a ‘parasite,’ and Jews as well as Liberals were often described as harmful organisms living on the nation’s resources.

Széchényi, however, could not have foreseen that. Even when opposing emancipation, he repeatedly stressed that he had nothing against Jews and that he wanted every inhabitant of the country to enjoy equal rights. Yet, as he justified his nationalist Machiavellianism, as long as the nation was not strong enough, everything, including the Jewish emancipation, needed to be subordinated to the most important goal: the advancement of the People of the East.

The question of Jewish emancipation was put aside again and only as its last act of legislation the independent government enacted it in July 1849 as rather a symbolic act of acknowledgement of the Jewish residents’ participation in the war effort on the Hungarian side. By supporting the Hungarian cause, Jews expressed their submission to the Liberals’ national(ist) politics that manifested also in the intensifying Jewish acculturation during the second half of the nineteenth century.

**Jewish Reactions to the Emancipation Question**

Whereas in 1848-49, as Jacob Katz underlines, Jewish communities following different religious ideals and exercising different religious customs from all over the country supported the Hungarian cause, only a small segment of Hungarian Jewry engaged in a conversation about emancipation with Liberal politicians during the decade preceding the Revolution. These were

ostromát kiállotta, most belsejében rágódó kis fergek által enyészik el.” The original text: “Nézd: a kevély tölgy, mellyet az éjszaki/Szélvész le nem dönt, benne termő/Fergek erős gyökerit megőrlik,”
Jewish thinkers and activists who engaged with Jewish Reform to varying degrees. A distinctive character of Jewish reform in Hungary was the advocacy of the usage of Hungarian in quotidian life and synagogue equally. Hungarian study circles for Jews were founded in Pest (the Pest Society for the Dissemination of the Magyar Language was established in 1844) and the southern city of Szeged, and Hungarian was gradually introduced into synagogue services during the 1840s. In this period, for example the majority of Pest’s population spoke German. The Jewish advocacy of learning Hungarian singled out the small Jewish community from among a mixed population that included Germans and Slovaks and in which Hungarian speakers were still a minority. As mentioned before, most Jews in Hungary at this time were either German or Yiddish speakers. Their language choice “translated” cultural identification with Hungarians and support for the modern concept of nationhood based on language usage. It confirmed the viability of the Hungarian Liberal-Jewish political alliance and illustrates Jewish leaders’ belief that the politics of acculturation would advance the cause of Jewish emancipation. Whereas the gradual consensus on the usage of Hungarian among Jews were prompted not only by political but also practical concerns, the advocacy of Hungarian usage as part of religious reform set the path of Hungarian Jewish integration into a modern nation state leading away from the German speaking Jewish communities of Central Europe.

The Hungarian Jewish reformers early on engaged with a dialogue with Hungarian Liberals discussing the question of Jewish emancipation, and their rapport with the Hungarian statesmen illustrated their positions on reform as well. In 1840, when Eötvös first initiated the discussion of the emancipation question at the Diet, he asked Rabbi Móric (Mordechai) Bloch (1815-1891), an advocate of Jewish Reform, to support him. Bloch’s pamphlet A zsidókról (About Jews) was written in Hungarian and published in the same year 1840 in the periodical
Tudományos Gyűjtemény (Scholarly Collection) and advocated unconditional Jewish emancipation. In the same year About Jews appeared, Bloch published a Hungarian translation of the Pentateuch in 1840 and 1841 to promote the acquisition of Hungarian among Jews and advance Jewish acculturation - reminiscent of Moses Mendelssohn’s Biur. He translated other Jewish religious writings to Hungarian (including the Jewish prayer book Jiszrael könyörgései (Israel’s Prayers)), authored a Hungarian grammar book, compiled a Hungarian-German dictionary, and campaigned for the establishment of a Jewish rabbinical seminary. As it was mentioned before, Bloch was not the only supporter of Jews’ acquisition of the Hungarian language, as language politics became the foundation of the Liberals’ modern national identity politics. His Jewish politics, in contrast, provoked animosity from various Jewish corners either opposing reform completely or viewing his reforms as too radical. Disillusioned with the Hungarian Jewish reform movement, after he participated in the 1848-49 War of Independence, he left for Tübingen, enrolled at the University, and converted first to Lutheranism and later to Calvinism, which provoked further criticism from the Jewish establishment.75

It was his work in the field of Hungarian linguistics that constituted the permanent element of Bloch’s public life. In contrast to the Jewish criticism, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences expressed its appreciation of his Hungarian Torah translation and offered him corresponding academic membership in 1841. A decade later, upon his return to Hungary as a doctor of philosophy, Bloch assumed a new, Hungarianized name: Ballagi. In 1853, he was

75 Lajos Komáromi, Ballagi Mór emlékezete (The Memory of Mór Ballagi) (Különlenyomat a Magyar Tanítóképzőből, ?), 3. Ballagi’s younger brother, Károly also converted to Protestantism and took the Ballagi name. The Jewish community in Pest was enraged after Ballagi called other Jews to convert too. See Miklós Konrád, “Zsidók és kitért zsidók a dualizmus korában: A kitérés okai zsidó szemmel,” (Jews and Jewish Converts to Christianity in the Era of Dualism: Reasons of Conversion from the Jewish Perspective) Történelmi Szemle (Historical Review) 49, no. 3 (2007): 373-402.
appointed to the Kecskemét Protestant Seminary. In 1855 he moved to Pest. Along with his Protestant theological studies, he continued his research on the Hungarian language and he contributed to the mid-century continuation of the neologistic (language renewal) movement. In 1858, he was elected a full member of the Academy. Ballagi’s early connection with Eötvös continued also after his conversion. Despite, or rather irrelevant to his conversion, he, along with Eötvös, mentored both Vambery and Goldziher and in doing so, his exemplifies one of the Hungarian Jewish intellectual career choices in nineteenth-century Hungary.

The aforementioned Rabbi Leopold Löw from Pápa is also considered a similarly paradigmatic figure. Whereas he advocated meagre reforms, as it was discussed before, he criticized Kossuth’s position that conditioned Jewish emancipation with assimilation because in his eyes, the demands of assimilation were superfluous and irrelevant to the requirements of good citizenry. The leader of the Pest Reform Circle Ignaz Einhorn, (1825-1875), who later changed his name to Ede Horn, during the 1840s, was the fiercest critic of Hungarian Liberalism for its failure to enact Jewish emancipation during the 1840s and embodies a third example of advocacy of Reform and integration. After the 1848 Easter pogroms, Horn had expressed his disappointment with Kossuth and the Hungarian Liberals for failing to ensure Jewish freedom, but by 1849 he was once again giving his full support to the Hungarian government. Likewise, from the outbreak of the Revolution in March 1848, Löw fully sided with Hungarian Liberals and served as the military rabbi for the Hungarian forces. Jews like Einhorn and Löw, who were critical of the Liberals’ Jewish politics and others less prominent speakers including those who might have been disinterested in Hungarian politics contributed to the Hungarian war effort.

in various ways. Many became regular conscripts in a separate Jewish unit, since the Hungarian elite feared the negative effects of antisemitism among the soldiers.\(^7^7\) In addition, Jews helped the Hungarian army as suppliers and many joined the medical teams treating the wounded. In addition to Ballagi, Stein’s father, Nathan Stein (1813-1889), and maternal uncle, the famous ophthalmologist Ignaz Hirschler (1823-1891) (who later became president of the Jewish community), were also among the famous Jewish “1848-ers.”

**Liberal rhetoric by Jewish advocates of the Hungarian cause.** A sermon delivered by Löw to the Jewish soldiers demonstrates that, despite the earlier antagonisms, Jewish leaders in addition to engaging with the Hungarian cause, shared the language that Kossuth and the Liberals used when discussing the future of the Hungarian polity. Similarly they disregarded the “Asian nostalgia” that Széchenyi had introduced into modern public discourse except for one case, which is discussed below. In talking of Jewish support for the Hungarian cause, Löw reiterated the Enlightenment vision of an opposition between east and west and the Hungarian civilizing mission in the region. He emphasized that whereas in ancient times the prophets spread the word of God in Asia, “superstition, ignorance, rudeness, and passivity dominated” in the contemporary Orient.\(^7^8\) Referring to Isaiah (12:21): “Morning came and so did night,” Löw noted that (in contrast to its earlier course) civilization now proceeded from west to east. It was the task

\(^{77}\) Not the least because a wave of pogroms swept through Hungary following the outbreak of the 1848 Revolution. The Hungarian civil and military leadership was not enthusiastic about accepting Jews into the ranks of the Hungarian army since they feared that antisemitism spread into the military ranks would undermine military discipline. Nevertheless, a Jewish regiment was formed. Many later argued that the pogroms were caused by German city dwellers, not Hungarian patriots.

of the Hungarian nation to serve as a “torch of civilization” among the eastern barbarian nations. He described this as a historical and divine mission and compared former struggles with the “southeastern barbarians” (i.e., the Ottomans) to the current strife against the “northeastern barbarians” (i.e., Russia). Hungarian soldiers were chosen by God to be frontline fighters against the civilization of the east for the defense of (western) culture, the happiness of the citizens, and freedom from slavery. Whereas Löw’s argument proved to be the first in a long series of Jewish advocacies favoring integration while relying on the Liberal’s language, the editor of the Jewish Almanac of 1848 and member of the Pest Reform Circle Márton Diósy’s article reminded Széchenyi’s wording. Diósy’s advocacy of the shared Hungarian-Jewish easternness remained a curiosity, because it differed in its wording from other addresses that urged Jews to embrace Hungarian culture.

The Eastern Passage to Acculturation. In order to encourage Jews to learn the Hungarian language and become Hungarian Jews, Diósy noted the shared eastern roots of the Hungarian chieftain Árpád and Abraham, the forefather of the Israelites. He aspired to complete national assimilation:

Do we have to prove with facts that the Hungarian Jew is not a chimera? As Abraham and Árpád were country-folks, why couldn't their descendants unite in one idea: that of the nation? The Hungarian nationhood and our religion rose from the same cradle, why would it be impossible to merge them? What harm would fall on our religion, monotheism, if in language, feelings, and intelligence we became Hungarian?79

Though Diósy’s argumentation relied on the same logic that Széchenyi used in his *People of the East*, namely that the legacy of the forefathers should guide the actions of the modern descendants, Diósy argued along the lines of those Jewish speakers who accepted the Liberal rhetoric. Curiously, Diósy’s writing sheds light onto the parallels between Széchenyi’s and the Orthodox Jewish leader the Pressburg rabbi, Hatam Sofer’s, also known as Moses Sofer or Schreiber, opposition to Jewish integration. Orthodox circles opposed reform because it encouraged acculturation, which according to the Hatam Sofer would bring irreversible changes to Jewish life. Hence he famously declared “Hadash [new] is forbidden by the Torah,” aptly expressing his view that not only the rabbinic but biblical teachings suggested that introducing changes to religious rituals would deteriorate the whole edifice of Judaism. In a sort of similar way, as his bottle of ink-metaphor illustrated, Széchenyi feared that Jewish integration would “contaminate” the pure Hungarian “Asian race.” Both speakers advocated purity, of Judaism and Hungarian-ness respectively. In contrast Diósy argued that the common Asian origins ensured that no such impurities would result from the common political action. In his argumentation Hungarian-ness appears as a political identity, whereas Jewishness is a religious identification. Accordingly, Jewish characteristics would not disappear as a result of acculturation or integration; the shared eastern-ness destined Hungarians and Jews to cooperate and live together.

The uniqueness of Diósy’s plea lies not only in that it reminded Széchenyi’s arguments while promoting the same ideas that the Jewish advocates of acculturation articulated. Through the emphasis on the shared eastern origins he also defined Hungarian-ness a political/national category and Jewishness religious category and therefore compatible identifications. Diósy’s pamphlet preceded Rabbi Sámuel Kohn’s historical study on the Khazarian origins of Hungarian Jewry with more than three and a half decades, which further supported the saliency of common
origins in the formation of modern Hungarian nation and Jewish citizenship in it and which will be discussed in the fifth chapter of this study.

**Epilogue: the Birth of Hungarian Jewry**

As 1848 became a symbol of the modern Hungarian quest for independence and freedom, it also entered the Hungarian Jewish historical consciousness as the opening of a new era. In retrospect, the immediate postwar events’ direct impact on Jewish life reinforced the 1848-49 experience of Jewish-Hungarian comradeship. The Habsburg restoration had annulled the 1849 emancipation act and required the Jewish community to pay war indemnities for their collaboration with the Hungarian revolutionaries. The discussions of the 1867 Compromise and the subsequent Hungarian policies centered on the legacy of 1848, and Kossuth became a celebrity *in absentia*, which further confirmed the saliency of 1848 in modern Hungarian as well as Hungarian Jewish identity discourse. The 1867 Jewish emancipation law was worded by Eötvös, the same man who had advocated unconditional emancipation for Jews since 1840. The parallel connections between the politics of the Revolution and the Compromise for Hungarian nationalists and Jews reinforced the connection between modern Hungarian and Hungarian Jewish historical memory. Accordingly, both in 1898 and 1948, Jewish historical studies commemorating the fiftieth and hundredth anniversaries of the Revolution and War of Independence equally described 1848 as “year zero” in the modern history of Hungarian Jewry and articulated the alliance between Hungarian Liberalism and the Jewish establishment, mainly the Neolog Congregation. A plaque placed on the Dohány Synagogue façade in commemoration
of the Revolution also advertised that the Jewish engagement with the Hungarian polity marked the birth of Hungary Jewry.\textsuperscript{80}

The 1895 Law of Reception declared Judaism a state religion and therefore granted Hungarian Jewry the status of a religious minority. Henceforth, the Jews – unlike any Christian ethnic group – were theoretically considered part of the “state-forming” nationality, the Hungarians, in the multiethnic Hungarian state. Because the law was introduced a year prior to the Millennial Festivities, it further reinforced the 1848’s memory as a foundational event for Hungarian Jewry, and Jewish speakers viewed the law as a justification of the “Jewish trust” in Liberal politics. This historical experience transpires from Jewish leaders’ sermons which enthusiastically celebrated the 1896 Hungarian Millennium. If not the most popular, certainly one of the most popular Jewish newspapers of the capital Egyenlőség (Equality) reported on the Jewish festivities all over the country. According to the newspaper, the Dohány temple in Budapest, the largest synagogue in Hungary and second to the New York Great Synagogue in the world, was adorned with the national flag and a long line of private carriages of the celebrating crowds formed a “barricade” in front of the building. The attendees, among them barons and members of the Upper House of the Parliament, wore the diszmagyar, the newly invented traditional Hungarian costume that alluded to the clothing of the conquering forefathers as well as of the seventeenth and eighteenth century anti-Habsburg Hungarian rebels. In his sermon, the chief rabbi Sámuel Kohn, the historian-advocate of the Khazar theory of Hungarian Jewish origins, stressed that “Hungarians of the Jewish faith … celebrated the Hungarian

\textsuperscript{80} Béla Bernstein, 1848 [i.e. Ezernyolcszáznegyvennyolc] és a magyar zsidók (1848, i. e., eighteen forty-eight) and the Jews) (Budapest: A Magyar Zsidó Könyvtár Kiadóvállalata, 1906), Jenő Zsoldos, 1848-1849 a magyar zsidóság életében (1848-1849 in the life of Hungarian Jewry) (Budapest, Pesti Izraelita Hírközség, 1948).
Millennium as a religious holiday.”

He argued that the conquerors’ chieftain Árpád and his tribesmen seized this country together with Jewish allies who fought in alliance with the Hungarians.

Kohn’s millennial address, though centered on his Khazar theory (which will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Five) and therefore, following Diósy, emphasized the common Hungarian-Hungarian-Jewish origins, in its tone did not differ from the other talks delivered by Jewish leaders across the country; all reflected that the Millennium marked a milestone of national maturity and the beginning of a fruitful era for Jewish Hungarians. Just like in 1848, the turn-of-the century reference to *The People of the East* only in wording differed from the arguments that followed the Liberal rhetoric. *Equality* also reported that Lipót Löw’s son, Immanuel Löw, rabbi and acknowledged scholar, not without any critical edge reiterated Széchenyi’s “visionary” thoughts by underlining that at the time of the Millennium the “nation entered the age of manhood, the age of manhood of serious work” during the millennial celebrations held in the southern town of Szeged. The Jewish intellectual and political elite unequivocally considered the stabilization of the Hungarian national institutions, the reception completing the legal process of Jewish emancipation, and the socio-cultural process of Jewish assimilation as correlated processes and that they had opened a new chapter in the history of Hungarian Jewry.

Similarly, Rabbi Lajos Venetianer’s 1898 Passover sermon commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the 1848 Revolution illustrates the long-lasting impact of mid-century Liberal


82 Ibid.
language, which defined the late-nineteenth-century discourse on Jewish integration. His words, which draw a parallel between the Hungarian Spring (Vormärz) and Passover, are reminiscent of the elder Löw’s address from half a century earlier. He said, “This month should be the most important month; this is how the word of the Scripture addresses you, Hungarians, because in this month you left Egypt, [wandered] from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom.” In Venetianer’s sermon, the Jewish and the Hungarian “liberations” are blurred; he addressed the Jews as Hungarian patriots. In fact, the word ‘Jewish’ does not even appear in the text. Rather, he was talking specifically to Hungarians. To close the speech, Venetianer borrowed Vörösmarty’s line from the Appeal: “Here one must live and die”—praising the patriotic virtues of the Revolution’s heroes.

The peculiar reversal of the west-east dichotomy that the self-orientalist discourse produced, the Liberal ideals of civic nation state, and the growing nationalism equally shaped the ways in which Jewish speakers articulated their understanding of the ideal paths of Jewish integration in Hungary in the very years when Hungarian statesmen and intellectuals debated the ideal character of the future modern Hungarian nation state. The following chapters demonstrate that after the 1848–49 Revolution and War of Independence, the Hungarian political debates continued to directly impact the work of both the University and the Academy in Pest in general, and Oriental scholarship in particular. As the above discussion illustrates Jewish speakers and among them scholars sensitively reacted to Hungarian political arguments about nationhood and nationality. The interconnected histories of the three Hungarian Jewish orientalists illustrate the ways in which Oriental scholarship and self-Orientalism defined the particularities of Jewish integration in Hungary.
CHAPTER THREE
SELF-ORIENTALISM QUESTIONED: THE BEGINNING OF VAMBERY’S CAREER
(1851-1867)

The chapter discusses the beginning of Vambery’s career as a Turkologist between 1851 and 1867 and emphasizes that he successfully advocated his career path in the post-revolutionary political and scholarly atmosphere. It demonstrates that the eastern consciousness still determined the Academy members’ historical and linguistic research equally, though the neediness of modern scholarship urged scholars not to reconstruct but to critically revisit the traditional narrative of origins. Vambery’s Turkological research fitted this broader academic effort and he recognized both its political and the scholarly appeal to the intellectual and political elite. He successfully promoted his scholarly interest to acquire the support of the Academy to travel to Istanbul and later to Central Asia. His success in becoming a corresponding Academy member in 1858 and seven years later a university lecturer illustrates yet another path of integration of a Jewish scholar, who did not even have a high school diploma let alone formal university training.

In this first phase of his career, Vambery conversed with linguists and while he stayed in Istanbul between 1857 and 1861 and then returned there later that year to leave for Central Asia, his colleagues in Pest studied the materials collected in the Siberian region and arrived to the conclusion that Gyarmathi’s studies directed Hungarian linguistic scholarship to the right direction. Vambery argued against them, however, their conflicting ideas generated a heated public debate only from 1869, which will be discussed in the following chapter. Whereas Vambery repeatedly referred to the importance of the discovery of “scientific truth, ” he was equally interested in catering for the political advocacy of the eastern origins and self-Orientalism the scientific foundation of which the advocates of the Finno-Ugric theory questioned. Vambery’s career thus, started in the period between the Revolution of 1848-49 and
the Compromise when the first signs of the departure between self-orientalist discourse and linguistic and historical research on national origins appeared on the Hungarian academic and political horizon.

**The Academy’s Scholarly and Patriotic Program Following 1848: Historians and Linguists Historians about the Magyarok Őshite - Study of the Hungarians’ Ancient Beliefs**

The previous chapter stressed that the Academy’s second department of historiography had four members; of them there was only one historian, who advocated the traditional understanding of national origins. Similarly, during the 1830s and early 1840s, through their Romantic historicizing poetry, literati continued to disseminate traditional historiographical interpretations about the glorious and tragic events on the history of the nation. It was also through their initiative that the traditional narrative of Hungarian origins was subjected to historical analysis. In contrast to other periods of Hungarian history, because of the lack of written sources, the study of mythology and ancient religion could be historically examined in order to learn more about the national origins. Origins-research in this earlier period, therefore, was restricted to the study of religious beliefs, and gradually expanded to comparative linguistics, the study of foreign chronicles (Arab and Byzantine), and archeology.

The literary historian Ferenc Toldy, wishing to create a literary forum that would parallel the scholarly work of the Academy, in 1836 initiated the Kisfaludy Society, which was named after Károly Kisfaludy, the Academy member playwright in whose apartment a little literary salon regularly assembled.¹ As an homage, the Society held its annual assemblies on Kisfaludy’s birthday. In addition to publishing literary series and theoretical works on literature, philosophy,
and aesthetics, the Society held a competition every year on a different topic. In 1846, it called for papers that answered the question, “What certain or credible information can be deduced from old Hungarian and foreign chronicles, other reminiscences, and traditions about the pagan Hungarians’ religious belief and rituals?” The competition gave a decisive direction to the study of Hungarian mythology on literary grounds, which led to the beginnings of modern historical research based on critical source analysis.

In 1846, the applicants at the Kisfaludy competition were in fact faced with one of the central questions of Hungarian historiography. The medieval chronicler Anonymus stressed that he did not credit legends or folk stories in his Gesta Hungarorum. Yet, his reconstruction of Hungarian origins less than three centuries after the Conquest relied on such oral history, making his narrative especially questionable in the eyes of the eighteenth-century historians like Pray and Katona. While the Jesuit scholars accepted the Hun-Scythian origins, they emphasized that Anonymus was unreliable unless his data was confirmed by foreign chroniclers. With regard to the study of the myths themselves, the contestants could rely on the 1693 Origines Hungaricae, a study by the same Ferenc Otrokócsi Foris who (continuing the Transylvanian Protestant tradition) compared Hungarian to Hebrew and—complementing his linguistic studies-- discussed the primordial beliefs of the Hungarian tribes. This discussion was continued a century later by the historian Daniel Cornides. His 1785 Göttingen academic inaugural address, De religione Veterum Hungarorum, was printed in 1791 in Vienna. In his historical review of the development of Hungarian ethnology, László Kósa stresses that Cornides’s arguments provided

2 Károly Szabó, A magyar vezérek kora Árpádtól Szent Istvánig (The era of the Hungarian Leaders from Árpád until St. Steven) (Pest, Ráth Mór, 1869), 8.
future scholars with a basis upon which they could construct their own claims. Cornides ascertained an etymology for the Hungarian word for god (isten), and based on this etymology he described the Hungarian forefathers’ alleged ancient monotheism that paralleled the Persian veneration of fire. In addition, he stressed that the contemporary European chronicles displayed locally created stereotypical images of the Hungarians. (Vambéry also emphasized this phenomenon in his investigations of the Hungarian national origins.)

Kósa considers János Horváth’s 1817 A Régi Magyaroknak Vallásbéli s Erkölcsi Állapottyokról (About the Old Hungarians’ Religious and Moral Conditions) and Bálint Kiss’s 1839 Magyar régiségek (Hungarian Antiquities) the most immediate preludes to the works submitted to the Kisfaludy competition in 1846. Horváth argued that ancient Hungarian religious beliefs could be reconstructed through studying the pagan beliefs of the Uralian ethnic groups who spoke languages that were related to Hungarian, while Kiss suggested that the living contemporary folk culture could provide a compass for the investigation of the ancient Hungarian religion.

Ferenc Kállay’s A pogány magyarok vallása (The religion of the Pagan Hungarians) won the first prize. The combination of research on the Finno-Ugric and Turkish linguistic affinity and the comparative approach to folk stories formed the basis of the examination of ancient beliefs and religion. It also relied on Jacob Grimm’s 1835 Deutsche Mythologie (German Mythology) and the German Romanticist approach to mythology and folk literature. Despite winning the prize, Kállay’s book was not published until 1861, after his death, due to the

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Revolution and the publication of another, more comprehensive study of this subject: Arnold Ipolyi’s *Magyar Mythológia* (Hungarian Mythology) in 1854.

Ipolyi’s work was the first monograph about Hungarian mythology that was based on a broad variety of sources, including Hungarian and foreign chronicles, linguistic studies, folk tales and traditions that were collected and published, and archeological findings. Ipolyi also stressed that he relied on a personal collection of stories which were accumulated over a ten year period.\(^4\) In his monograph, he separately listed the theoretical works and the foreign folk tale collections that served him as examples, including Grimm’s *Deutsche Mythologie* (German Mythology), *Deutsche Sagen, Haus- und Kindermärchen* (German Sayings, Children’s and Household Tales), and *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache* (The History of German Language). He mentioned Oriental as well as Finno-Ugric sources and listed the Hungarian predecessors of mythological study (including Kállay). Ipolyi embraced the argument that language and mythology expressed the first human reflections about the world and therefore philological inquiry could reveal the original mythology of the nation.

For Ipolyi, mythology was the pagan peoples’ understanding of god and the surrounding world. As Kósa points out, Ipolyi’s approach was rooted in the German Catholic Staudenmayer’s view on myths as well as reflecting the impact of Creutzer’s neoplatonic theory of ancient monotheism. Creutzer suggested that monotheism was the most ancient religious form that had deteriorated into polytheism over the centuries.\(^5\) According to this theory, monotheism was not innate but derived from divine intervention that planted the belief in one god in ancient peoples’ consciousness. Mythology was the product of the human loss of the original idea of the divine. It

\(^4\) Arnold Ipolyi, *Magyar mythologia* (Hungarian Mythology) (Pest, 1854), xxvii.

\(^5\) Kósa, Ibid.
represented deterioration from the original perfect state of monotheism and myths reflected how the original idea of one god became diluted into a world of several deities and superhuman creatures. However, Ipolyi was less interested in the development of mythology or religion than he was in the linguistic research that allowed him to explain the etymology and meaning of those words that he believed described ancient Hungarian beliefs.

Ipolyi’s study received much attention from his contemporaries, especially Antal Csengery, a scholar of many interests, whom among others Goldziher respected for his broad intellectual horizon. Csengery became the editor of the historical periodical *Századok* (Centuries), which was launched only from 1867 illustrating that the Compromise in 1867 positively impacted modern historiography in Hungary. In his Academic address on June 11, 1855, Csengery criticized Ipolyi’s work. Kósa notes that for a period it was believed that, because of Csengery’s criticism, Ipolyi temporarily turned his back on scholarship. Csengery condemned Ipolyi for both his method (uncritical source analysis) and final conclusions (original monotheism). Csengery stated that ancient Hungarian religion could not be other than shamanism, which has been the mainstream scholarly argument since then. In addition, Csengery criticized Ipolyi’s tendency to create a correspondence between the eastern consciousness and mythology creation. He argued that Ipolyi failed to recognize how Asian as well as European influences shaped Hungarian myths after the settlement in the Carpathian Basin and conversion to Christianity. In a way, he criticized academics’ “latent” attraction to the eastern identification,


7 Csengery Antal, *Csengery Antal összegűjtött munkái* (Antal Csengery’s Collected Works) (Budapest: Kilián Frigyes, 1884).

8 Kósa, Ibid.
which (as it will be discussed in the following) the linguist Hunfalvy articulated in one of his pioneering articles about comparative linguistic research.

Despite his confidently judgmental tone, Csengery’s critique had positive points as well. He introduced his review of Ipolyi’s work by outlining the Grimm brothers’ collection of folk literature, study of German mythology, and linguistic research -- noting that they were not independent undertakings. The three points that he made in connection with the discussion of the Grimm brothers’ work demonstrated his broad perspective on scholarship. First, he explained that the linguistic research especially advanced the study of German mythology.

The thought and feeling find articulation: this is how language develops. Who follows each and every moment of the development of the language the way as Jacob Grimm did, surely can have the closest look into his nation’s intellectual and emotional world.\(^9\)

In Csengery’s opinion, examining the development of linguistic articulation allowed Grimm to investigate German national origins all the way back to the era “when sensual impressions dominated the human spirit,” which gave rise to myths.\(^10\) Thus, he arrived at a general conclusion about the transforming role of linguistics: linguistic studies served historiography as a “living source.” Through linguistic research, as in the case of mythological study, the earlier phases of human thinking could be revealed. Third, he emphasized that making any parallel between the German and the Hungarian scholarly field would be unfair and argued that his review of Ipolyi’s work kept this in mind. He stressed that, in contrast to the German scholars, Hungarian thinkers lacked resources and methodological experience equally. He pointed to the field of comparative linguistics, which was making its initial steps under

\(^9\) Csengery, 13.
\(^10\) Ibid.
Hunfalvy’s guidance. Indeed, Csengery referred to Reguly’s collection and Hunfalvy’s efforts to introduce German comparative linguistic methods to demonstrate how far Hungarian scholars needed to travel before reaching results similar to their German colleagues’.

**Linguistics**

On January 18, 1851, the former notary of the independent Hungarian government who after being given amnesty in 1850 became the librarian and corresponding member of the Academy, Pál Hunfalvy, read his presentation, “Nyelvészeti teendőink” (Our Linguistic Agenda), in front of the First Department, the Department of Linguistics, of the Academy.\(^{11}\) This presentation is considered to be the opening of the modern period of comparative linguistic studies that—with the aid of the latest linguistic methods—revived Gyarmathi’s and Sajnovics’s investigations on the affinities and history of the Hungarian language.\(^ {12}\) In doing so, Hunfalvy framed the program of modern Hungarian comparative linguistics within the broader academic endeavor to learn more about national origins and thus opened another avenue—next to mythology studies—to the examination of the Asian past of the Hungarians. While formally trained as a lawyer, Hunfalvy was interested in classical philology, linguistics, ethnology, and history and learned Finnish. As four years later Csengery pointed out, Hunfalvy closely followed the evolution of comparative linguistics, especially the German literature, and his scholarly interest was coupled with outstanding organizational skills. He was experienced enough to recognize raw talents like Vambery’s and those coupled with systematically acquired

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disciplinary training such as in the case of the Schlötzer-disciple Joseph Budenz. From the 1870s, Budenz became the leading figure of Finno-Ugric studies, which was charged to demonstrate the relations of affinity and identity of the Hungarian language. Nonetheless, Hunfalvy’s influence defined both the tone and the patriotic aptitude of Hungarian linguistics during the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

In his era-opening address, Hunfalvy urged his fellow Academy members to engage with Ural-Altaic comparative linguistic studies in order to further deepen the scholarship on Hungarian and learn more about its origins. The qualifier Ural-Altaic referred to the territory defined by the two mountain ranges in Central Asia: the Ural Mountains in the northwest and the Altai in the southeast. Finnish, Hungarian, and Turkish were thought to be the three main languages belonging to the Ural-Altaic language group, and scholars believed them to be equally related to each other. In 1850, the Finnish linguist Alexander Castrén established the connections of affinity among the Ural-Altaic languages. Hunfalvy based his program speech on the Castrén study and underlined both the patriotic and the scholarly motivation that should lead Hungarian scholars to the study of Ural-Altaic languages.

The order, in which our linguistic studies should follow, corresponds with the interest of this era … the scholarly interpretation, collection, and ordering of our vocabulary, which is our most thankful duty, requires the study of the related languages. Even if no European interest would suggest so, it should be done here.¹³

Hunfalvy viewed the research of Ural-Altaic languages a means that could dissolve the historical fog enveloping the history of the great migrations in the early Middle Ages. Since the Hungarian language was part of the Ural-Altaic language community, in his opinion, it was the duty of Hungarian scholars to embrace its leadership role in this linguistic field. In addition,

¹³ Hunfalvy, 6-7.
Hunfalvy stressed that every progressive thinker should encourage linguistic studies since they reflected contemporary Christian Europe’s intellectual progression, from which Hungary should not remain isolated.\textsuperscript{14} Through a summary of the work of German linguists like Schott, Gabelentz, Grimm, and Schlötzer, Hunfalvy also explained how the linguistic examination of the Hungarian and Finnish languages provided the basis for further comparative studies, which demanded from Hungarian linguists to be knowledgeable of not only the Northern languages, but also Turkish and Mongolian.\textsuperscript{15} Hunfalvy added that foreign academic influence of comparative linguistics, which was especially strong in the Indo-European and the Semitic fields, complied with the Hungarian scholarly interest in the beautification of the Hungarian language. In so arguing, he positioned modern comparative linguistic research not only as an extension of European linguistic studies, but also as a continuation of the Kazinczy-led neologistic movement at the end of the previous century. In addition, Hunfalvy stressed the importance of philological inquiries into the Byzantine and Arabic chronicles, which were the sole written sources that could aid historical research on the pre-Conquest period. He clearly outlined both the linguistic and the philological avenues to the inquiry into Hungarian prehistory.

Almost six months following his inaugural address, in June 1851 Hunfalvy delivered another paper, “The Comparative Description of Hungarian, Finnish, and Turkish Languages.” As the title suggests, he presented these three languages as the best known among the Ural-Altaic tongues, with different language groups of the Ural-Altaic family awaiting further study.\textsuperscript{16} This second paper further emphasized the importance of comparative linguistics, however without

\textsuperscript{14} Hunfalvy, 3.
\textsuperscript{15} Hunfalvy, 8.
\textsuperscript{16} Académiai Értesítő, (1851): 181, 344
clarifying the parameters of linguistic affinity, which were clarified only in the sixties, once the Finno-Ugric theory was further developed. Three years later, in 1854, Hunfalvy still argued that Hungarian occupied a position in between Finnish and Turkish, and as late as in 1862, Budenz entitled his academic inauguration speech “Turkish-Hungarian linguistic comparison and about the Hungarian Altaic phonetics.” Budenz ascertained that the vocabulary of Hungarian demonstrated affinity to Finnish, while its grammar connected it to Turkish. In his eyes, Hungarian was “rather Turkish than Finnish-like.”

Hunfalvy’s epochal address and concomitant articles together with Budenz’s early work indicated that while after the failed Revolution and War of Independence the Academy continued to refer to language in both political and cultural terms, scholars considered the study of the relations of affinity contributing to the research on the historical origins. It indicated the modern turn in the study of language in addition to the members’ wish to go beyond political assertions to the study of Hungarian origins and base the questions of linguistic affinity and origins on freshly established scholarly grounds. In keeping with the original purpose of the Academy, such research also contributed to the formation of the concepts of nationhood, peoplehood, and Hungarian-ness, which the parallel developing mythological studies failed to accomplish until Goldziher’s endeavor in the mid-1870, which research, though not conducted on a Hungarian topic, rooted in the theoretical findings of comparative linguistics and mythology.

Hunfalvy became a central figure of the organization of the modern linguistic and ethnological field in Hungary. In 1856, he privately founded Magyar Nyelvészet (Hungarian

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17 Bernát Munkácsi, Vámbéry Ármin tudományos munkássága (Armin vambery’s Scientific Ouvrue) (Budapest:?, 1915), 89., Pápay, 43.

18 Ibid.
Linguistics), the first Hungarian scientific periodical of linguistics. Hunfalvy dedicated it to the scholarly examination of all languages of the country, not only Hungarian. Despite the fact that the focus on language studies was the ambiguously declared scope of the Academy, the institution had no specific periodical dedicated to the discipline. Until 1856, the Új Magyar Múzeum (New Hungarian Museum), which later became the Academy’s newsletter Magyar Académiai Értesítő (Hungarian Academic News), under the literary historian Toldy’s editorship, published scholarly articles in the fields of linguistics and philology. Six years after Hungarian Linguistics was launched, the Academy’s Committee of Linguistics entrusted Hunfalvy to edit its newly founded Nyelvészeti Értesítő (Linguistic News), acknowledging the significance of Hunfalvy’s private enterprise, as well as realizing that linguistics could count mostly on academics as readers. In 1862, Linguistic News took over the role of Hungarian Linguistics, which was discontinued. Throughout the years it has been published, it stressed the idea that comparative linguistics could provide decisive proofs about national origins and thus lift scholarship above political concerns.

Hungarian Linguistics addressed not only the scholarly community, but also the broader Hungarian public, though unlike the New Hungarian Museum that every January listed that year’s political and literary papers (and the weekly and daily papers often reported on the Academy’s meetings), it concentrated solely on the developments of scholarship. The two scholarly newspapers that Hunfalvy launched reflected not only his scholarly agenda, but also the politicized atmosphere that determined the effort to lift Ural-Altaic linguistics to the forefront

19 See first chapter.
of the national scholarship, and as the linguist Bernát Munkácsi wrote in his commemorative paper, the circumstances in which Vambery’s academic career began.\textsuperscript{21} Several linguistic periodicals followed them in the 1870s; the \textit{Philologiai Közlöny} (Philological Newsletter) appeared only in 1877, which indicates that in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Academy prioritized linguistics over philology.\textsuperscript{22}

In 1856, in the opening editorial of \textit{Hungarian Linguistics} Hunfalvy pointed out that scholarship in general depended on the domestic and foreign political conditions of the state. They both shaped and were being shaped by national scholarly work. The multi-national make-up of the country demanded that \textit{Hungarian Linguistics} studied the languages of all the ethnic groups in the country. At the same time, the scholarly periodical was required to fight against those movements that wished to yield scientific truth to myths and vain interests. Nonetheless,

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\textsuperscript{21} Munkácsi, 89.
\textsuperscript{22} For a similar approach, see Tuska Benes’s \textit{Language, Philology, and the Nation in Nineteenth-Century Germany}, which studies the mutual impact between philology, linguistics, and the conceptualization of nationhood in nineteenth-century Germany. Her study examines the beginnings of the modern study of language and therefore records the development of modern philology and linguistics, the birth of which is connected to the names of the three German “giants” Grimm, Humboldt, and Bopp. In their time, there was already a differentiation between subjecting language to scholarly examination (which today is called linguistics) and using the language as a tool to interpret ancient texts, which is the object of philology. In the first half of the eighteenth century, one symptom of the difficulty in separating these two interests of linguistics studies was the discussion of whether philology was a natural or historical science. Unlike Benes, I underline this difference because it was central to the work of the scholars whom I study. In his 1856 article, “Tájékozás a magyar nyelvészetről,” (Information about Hungarian Linguistics), Hunfalvy emphasized the difference arguing that philology was a broader field than linguistics. In the first issue of Hunfalvy’s \textit{Magyar Nyelvészet}, Szende Riedl differentiated between the practical and theoretical study of languages. He placed philology in the first category, arguing that it was a practical approach to language to use it for the discovery and interpretation of its “literary treasures.” He underlined that man studied the language in this manner from the beginning of times. In contrast, the theoretical study of language, which became a scholarly field only in the nineteenth century, focuses on language and its grammatical, literary, and historical character. Riedl Szende, “A Nyelvészetről általában,” (About Linguistics in General) \textit{Magyar Nyelvészet} (Hungarian Linguistics) 1 (1856): 23. In 1869, the linguist Ernő Lindner discussed the importance of the study of dialects in a study that appeared in 1869 in the same booklet with Vambery’s “Török-tatár szögezetetések” (Turkish-Tartar Word Correspondence). Lindner pointed out that whereas in linguistics language is the subject of analysis, in philology it served as a key to the past. Comparative linguistics focused on evolution and change, the development and transformation of languages. Comparative linguists viewed their work a corollary to historical investigation.
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Hunfalvy believed the focus should be on the study of Hungarian, which he viewed as a key to becoming a European nation.

In order to clarify his view on the foreign political relevance of scholarship, Hunfalvy cited the self-Orientalizing discourse rampant since the publication of Széchenyi’s *People of the East*. Fourteen years after its first publication, Hunfalvy engaged in a lengthy discussion about what he called the cliché-like Hungarian Oriental self-designation and the scholarly criteria for European-ness. Indeed, in the same year *Hungarian Linguistics* was first published, *Kelet Népe; magyar irodalmi csarnok és időszaki szemle* (People of the East: Hungarian literary and periodical review) appeared in Vienna. It chose a quote from Széchenyi’s *Credit* as a motto, and claimed that its goal was to commemorate Széchenyi’s oeuvre. The economist and Academy member János Török, Széchenyi’s close associate, wrote an introduction to the first issue. He underlined that the title choice reflected the contributors’ principles and opinions, as well as their wish to resurrect the great nation based on Széchenyi’s program. Török described in superlatives the contribution of three generations of the Széchenyi family — and especially István Széchenyi — to the nation. Reflecting on the strained relationship between the Habsburg king and Hungary, he noted that no ruler can successfully rule without the support of the people. In his eyes, Széchenyi was a prominent patriot who recognized the “importance of the nation” and would have brought God’s mercy to the country. The Hungarian nation was punished for not following his advice and instead became an “idolater, forgot the wise advice of its prophet-spirited leader, and drifted itself into the politics of emotions.” Despite his rather explicit blame on Kossuth’s
politics, Török closed his argument on an optimistic tone and called his readers to unite in order to save the “race, which was an independent national family, from death.”  

Prominent intellectuals and public figures — like the author and politician Zsigmond Kemény, the literary historian Ferenc Toldy, and the actor Gábor Egressy — contributed articles on different subjects. Some of the articles in the first issue focused on the Széchenyi family, on István Széchenyi’s life, and The People of the East. Others related to Széchenyi’s practical achievements, such as articles about the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the history of legal scholarship, historiography, Adam Smith’s economic theory, or a study on cows. The periodical successfully recreated the spirit of Széchenyi’s vision for his country; in addition, it established the future basis of his “cult” and his conservative reform program—with eastern national identification as the central motif.

Hunfalvy, in contrast, argued that the Asian identity of Hungarians was misused as an excuse for both success and failure. “It is an empty phrase, which cannot determine else but [that Hungarian scholars were] absent from the European centers of academic work,” he maintained. He held fast to the claim that in the modern age the humanities made the greatest contribution to the advancement of civilization. Thus, even without mentioning Széchenyi’s treatise or referring to the awakening Széchenyi-cult, Hunfalvy challenged its vision of modernization, which was restricted to economics and social issues.

To support his claims, Hunfalvy described Western Europe as a worthy heir of classical Greek culture, since modern western Europeans learned Greek in order not only to understand and memorize classical texts, but also to embrace the creativity and spirituality of the ancient

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23 János Török, “Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos?” Kelet Népe; magyar irodalmi csarnok és időszaki szemle (People of the East: Hungarian literary and periodical review) 1 (1856). The title is a reference to one of Széchenyi’s sayings.
Greeks. This spirit, in his mind contributed to the rise of Christianity as well as modern critical
and creative thinking in Europe. He used the medieval Arab Empire’s temporary preoccupation
with Greek sciences as a counter-example. Whereas the study of the Greek philosophers and
scientists lifted the Arab Empire above the Christian European intellectual niveau, the Arabs fell
short because they read the Greek works from translation and did not engage with the spirit of
the authors of those texts. Thus they did not step onto the road of “Enlightenment” that Europe
did a few centuries later. Hence, he urged Hungarians, and especially the nobility, to engage with
scholarship and learn Greek, because more knowledgeable leaders could become better
statesmen as well. 24

Hunfalvy’s passionate defense of a critically thinking Europe that carries forward the
cultural heritage of ancient Greece was a simultaneous attack on the Hungarian self-orientalist
discourse. He believed that such discourse idolized an imaginary Asian quality, which,
nonetheless, was the subject of the historical investigation comparative linguistics promised to
deliver. Hunfalvy emphasized that in order to become Europeans, Hungarian scholars needed to
contribute to European scholarship by producing work that was both relevant to and reached the
level of the work in other European countries. He pointed out that in Europe, natural sciences
and linguistics were flourishing; therefore he believed it was important to also develop
Hungarian linguistic studies. 25 Accordingly, he named classical philology and Hungarian
linguistics as the scope of linguistic studies and emphasized the priority of comparative
linguistics, which he saw as auxiliary to prehistoric research. 26 The stress on linguistics also

24 Hunfalvy, “Mit akar a Magyar Nyelvészet?” (What Does Hungarian Linguistics Want?) Magyar Nyelvészet
(Hungarian Linguistics) (1856): 11.


26 Hunfalvy, “Mit akar…,” 7.
enabled him to criticize Hungarian self-Orientalism and its focus on steppe-Romanticism from the linguistic point of view. He explained that comparative research on languages that were related to Hungarian promised more historically accurate results than continued advocacy of the Central Asian warrior forefather myth, which hindered the popular acceptance of the Hungarian language’s affinity to northern hunter-fisher peoples’ languages. He argued that national vanity should not entrap scholarship. Hence, Hungarian Linguistics was designed to cover the study of the literature and the mythology of other Altaic peoples in addition to linguistics.

Hunfalvy’s attack on self-Orientalism constituted a weak endeavor to diminish the reliance on the Asian past in both scholarship and politics, which is illustrated by the success of the periodical Napkelet (East, literally “where the Sun rises”), first published in 1857 in Pest. It was not the first magazine that its founder Imre Vahot edited; though trained as a lawyer, he was a well-known playwright and journalist in Reform-Era Hungary. In this periodical, he addressed the “People of the East” who, in his opinion, should understand the best among all peoples the political and cultural significance of the east. He discussed at length the idea that Asia was the cradle of European culture, civic values, religions, sciences, languages, and the arts. He wrote that from there “like the rays of the Sun, spread the spirit of the enlightenment and humanity all over the world.”

Vahot’s editorial reiterated Széchenyi’s claims about the maturation of the young Asian nation and insisted that, thanks to illustrious patriots like Széchenyi, Hungarians learned from their errors and blamed the nation’s underdevelopment on their own actions rather than on other factors. His introduction positioned his newspaper as an extension of Széchenyi’s work, and its articles ranged from literature through travelogues, poems, and satirical works.

illustrating Széchenyi’s efforts to develop a well-read civil society that followed western cultural practices. Between 1857 and 1862, it was one of the important Hungarian literary magazines of the future capital.

In addition to the seeming broadening of the Széchenyi and People of the East-cult, Hunfalvy’s own patriotic program embedded in linguistics countered his quest for acquiring objective scholarly truth about the origins of the nation and the affinity-relations of the language. Whereas he condemned the reference to the nation’s Asian past as an “excuse” for lagging behind Europe in material and intellectual advancement, he contributed to the belief that the eastern origins should be considered in the future development of Ural-Altaic linguistics as an avenue to the study of the nation’s history. Vambery’s career began in this atmosphere and Vambery demonstrated that he would gladly oblige with this politicized scholarly rhetoric, which allowed him to emphasize the importance of his Turkological research. Supported by the Academy, he left for the Ottoman capital in 1857, at the age of twenty five, which fact in itself illustrates the power of the eastern consciousness promoting the career of a formally not educated poor Orthodox Jewish youngsters from a small Northern Hungarian (today Slovakian) village in nineteenth-century Hungary.

**Becoming a Turkologist**

**Familial Background and Early Studies**

Vambery was born in the small village of Szentgyörgy, which was then in the north of Hungary and today is in Slovakia, into an Orthodox Jewish community in 1832. His father was a local Talmudist, and the family name was Bamberger after the Bavarian city from which his great-grandfather had originated. Vambery’s mother, nee Malawan, had been born in the Moravian town of Lundenburg, today Breclav in the Czech Republic, close to the border with Lower Austria and Slovakia. Widowed early, Vambery’s mother remarried and moved to the
close-by village of Dunajská Streda (in Hungarian Dunaszerdahely), which Vambery considered his home village. Though Vambery gave a picturesque description of the religiosity of his childhood, he never discussed what language he spoke at home. He grew up either as a German - with a local dialect - or Yiddish speaker and certainly learned Hungarian and possibly Slovak as a child. He described the Jewish community of Dunaszerdahely as “the most religious, most ancient, and the most immune to the impact of Neology except from some Hassidic communities … A reminiscence of the pure and authentic Middle Ages.”

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In Vambery’s childhood memories the world of his village is described as the Habsburg Monarchy’s backwater the maternal house being one of the poorest ones in the village. He depicted his mother balancing between the expectations of the Orthodox community toward the young widow and her instincts to create a better life for her son. When he was three years old, he developed coxalgia and started limping. Despite his mother’s ceaseless search for remedy for his limping including the help of sorcerers and abiding with superstitions, one of his legs remained lame forever.

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Untypical to the area’s Orthodox Jewish families, his mother sent him to Christian schools to ensure that he received more and different education available outside the Jewish heder. She hoped that one day her son would become a doctor. Vambery spent his short years of formal education in his village and later in Bratislava in even deeper poverty than in the maternal house: he often spent the night in a park and had to survive for days without eating. Finding a bed that he was forced to share with another man meant an improvement in his living

28 Vambery, Küzdelmeim, 20.
29 Vambery, Struggles, 15.
conditions. The elderly Vambery, who repeatedly stressed his atheism, perceived his childhood Jewish experience less as a cultural and rather as a socio-economic category, a state of backwardness and hopeless poverty. Accordingly, he explained his decision to quit school, go to Pest in the hope to find himself a position as a tutor at a private house as a first step on his way to leave his poor Orthodox background behind.

Vambery arrived at Pest in the mid-1840s. His autobiography offers a minute description of the Jewish Pest’s central institution, the Orczy House. Orczy House was outside the medieval walls of Pest and opposite the gates; thus before 1840 when Jews were given permission to reside within the city, it became a gathering place for Jews who conducted business there. It even had a permanent space for Jewish prayer. After 1840 and as the city grew, Orczy House became a starting point for Király utca (King Street), where the Jewish quarter developed in the second half of the century. By the end of the century, Orczy House was situated in the city center neighboring the prestigious Leopoldstadt quarter, home to the most illustrious families of the city. He described how Jewish tutors and heads of households met at the Orczy House in Pest under circumstances that he viewed as resembling a slave market.30 There, Vambery would sit in the seats reserved for tutors for weeks until he found an employer. Each time an appointment ended, Vambery returned to this place so he could move to another part of the country with a different family.

The Turkish philologist István Vásáry suggests that when arguing that he planned to become an interpreter and he travelled to Pest to find an employment as a private tutor to both support himself and continue his language studies that he started in high school, Vambery was

thinking about the Orientalische Akademie that Maria Theresa founded in 1754. Such argument in fact would fit the description of an ambitious Jewish youngster who saw in the Habsburg Monarchy’s state administration an avenue to social ascent and assimilation. However, if Vásáry’s guess was right, Vambery must have thought about studying Turkish once he left high school and moved to Pest, that is earlier than his autobiography states. The reader learns about his plans of Turkish studies at a much later stage: he claimed that in order “to give his studies a definite direction,” he started learning Turkish during his second employment with the Rosenberg family in the small town of Kutjevo (in Croatia today). Amazingly, during his stay there he learned not only “Slavonic” (i.e. Slovenian), but also Spanish, Danish, and Swedish.

Vambery continued his autodidact Turkish and other European linguistic studies also after he left this appointment, and following the encounters with the era’s leading intellectuals – it is unclear how – his career plans based on his Turkish studies took a sharp turn. According to the autobiography, instead of becoming an interpreter for the Habsburg government, Vambery started to dream of becoming a Hungarian language scholar. Instead of continuing on the path of integration into the Habsburg Empire’s social fabric, he chose to assimilate into the Hungarian academic milieu. Vambery’s rather superficial discussion of his road to Turkish studies scattered

31 Vásáry István, “A tudós Vámbéry Ármin,” (The Scholar Arminius Vambery) Magyar Tudomány 8 (2013); available from http://www.matud.iif.hu/2013/08/03.htm; Internet; accessed September 10, 2013. As it was mentioned before, this institution was the center for training diplomats, interpreters, and experts on commercial and consular issues and its activities centered on the Habsburgs’ relations with the Ottoman Empire. The name was not changed to Konsular Akademie until 1898; it was closed between 1938 and 1964; today it is called the Diplomatische Akademie and trains future Austrian diplomats.

32 Vambery, Struggles, 80., Kützdelmeim, 99.

33 From the autobiography, the reader learns that until the age of twenty-four, Vambery continued to support himself as a language tutor, while perfecting his knowledge of Turkish and European languages. When staying in Pest, he visited the Academy’s reading room, which gave him the first insight to the work of the institution, of which he soon was to became a member. He described these as very fruitful years of unsystematic studies that left a deep imprint on his intellectual maturation and scholarly attitudes. Vambery, Kützdelmeim, 39.
in the memoir (he did not tell the reader why he started Turkish, let alone, how he decided to proceed to learn Arabic and Persian) sharply differs from the parts detailing his encounters with leading intellectuals, as a result of which he changed “the scope” of his integration “policy.” The change also involved that his language studies were no longer the aim of his self-education but a means to reach a greater goal: the study of the origins of the Hungarians. Whereas his autobiographies better reflect the elderly Vambery’s intentions of constructing his public image than his plans when he was in his early twenties, especially through the description of the meetings with the Hungarian elite, they also demonstrate that Vambery recognized in academism a path of social ascent and possibilities that appealed to him more than his previous plan.

Making Connections

Vambery noted that in addition to focus on Turkish he had decided to also learn Arabic and Persian after his meeting with the famous Austrian orientalist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall in Vienna and making the acquaintance of Hungarian intellectuals, among them Mór Ballagi. Hammer-Purgstall was well known, if not for his work on Persian literature and contributions to both the Austrian Academy and the British Royal Geographical Society, then because of Goethe’s Westoestlische Divan. The German poet received the Persian poet Hafiz poems from the Austrian orientalist, which inspired his Oriental series. From the early 1830s, the Hungarian Academy published several of Hammer-Purgstall’s Oriental studies, and he shared the view according to which Hungarians were especially well-suited to study eastern languages because of their eastern origins. While such claims fanned the national myth, they also corresponded to the western understanding of Hungarian Oriental roots, and Vambery’s addresses and writings, like that in 1897 in Paris, illustrate that he often relied on this argument and professed that the Asian origins predestined Hungarians to sensitively study the east and pass this knowledge to the rest of the west. Connecting the beginnings of his development as an orientalist studying the origins
of the Hungarians to Hammer-Purgstall’s name could have contributed to Vambery’s prestige as a scholar if it was unanimously respected all over the world. However, judging from Goldziher’s diaries, in Germany, which soon became the center of European Oriental research, Hammer-Purgstall was mostly ridiculed for his scholarship.\textsuperscript{34} Nonetheless, in Hungary, his name was respected and thus it well served Vambery’s goal.

As it was discussed earlier, Ballagi, who was seventeen years Vambery’s senior, has been a corresponding member of the Academy since the publication of his Pentateuch translation in 1840-41 and considered a 48-er in addition to being a former promoter of Jewish reform. Vambery met him sometime between 1853 and 1855 in the small town of Kecskemét after he converted to Protestantism and assumed the Hungarian-sounding name Ballagi. Ballagi lent him books to study Arabic, which Vambery expected to learn easily based on his Hebrew knowledge.\textsuperscript{35} This meeting was important not only because it prompted Vambery’s decision to travel to the east, but also because the example of Ballagi’s career could have inspired Vambery as it later did inspire Goldziher.

From the little Vambery discloses in his autobiography, it is unclear whether Ballagi attempted to awaken Vambery’s interest in either Protestant theology or German biblical criticism-inspired Orientalism as he did a decade and a half later in the case of Goldziher.\textsuperscript{36} Ballagi’s interest in Hebrew and Arabic corresponded with his preoccupation with Protestant theological questions. Among his better-known studies are the 1863 \textit{Renania} (a reflection on Ernest Renan’s \textit{Life of Jesus}) and 1867 \textit{A Protestantismus harca az Ultramontanismus ellen} (The

\textsuperscript{34} Goldziher, \textit{Tagebuch}, 37. See also in Róbert Simon, \textit{Ignaz Goldziher}, 35.

\textsuperscript{35} Vambery, \textit{Küzdelméim}, 92., \textit{Struggles}, 94.

\textsuperscript{36} Vambery, \textit{Küzdelméim}, 106.
fight of Protestantism against Ultramontanism). Research based on his letters or a diary could reveal more about the relationship between Ballagi and Vambery. Vambery’s emphasis on his own atheism and the addition of the list of intellectuals whom he met through Ballagi indicate that Ballagi’s scholarly and political focus on the Hungarian language and his social connections were the factors that most impressed and aided Vambery.

Ballagi and Vambery represent two different generations of Jewish intellectuals, whose careers were shaped by the parallel effects of Jewish Reform—or the lack of it—and the Hungarian Revolution. As it was mentioned earlier, in contrast to Ballagi and Leopold Löw the young Vambery had connection neither to the Jewish Reform movement emerging in the early 1840s, not participated in the events of 1848-49 and, thus, could neither demonstrate a pro-assimilationist and patriotic past that the two leading Jewish figures could. Once Vambery left his family’s Orthodox environment, he never returned to the Jewish religious world, while he also missed connections that would have helped him to find mentors and support. His childhood memories of Hungarian soldiers after the Revolution and concomitant Russophobia were his only mental connections to 1848 and therefore the only social capital onto which he could construct his Hungarian academic and patriot-identity. By connecting his memories of the Revolution to this intellectual interest, he described the beginnings of his orientalist program and complied with the legacy of 1848 and the Asian national origins.

37 Ballagi not only taught at the Protestant Academy but also edited various Protestant periodicals, including the Protestáns Kalendárium (Protestant Calendar), which was designed for the Protestant middle class and to which leading literary figures like János Arany, Mihály Tompa, Pál Gyulai, Mór Jókai, and Károly Szász contributed. In 1858, he launched (and for thirty one years edited) the Protestáns Egyházi és Iskolai Lap (Protestant Church and School Newspaper). In 1861, he started the periodical for families Házi Kincstár (Home Treasury) and in 1869 founded the theological periodical Protestáns Tudományos Szemle, (Protestant Scholarly Review), in which one of Goldziher’s first Hungarian articles on Arabic philology appeared in 1872. During this period he was also a member of Parliament, continued to press the importance of education in Hungarian, and occupied himself with publications on the Hungarian language (he edited dictionaries and a collection of proverbs). See, Komáromi, 4.
The real impulse for inquiring into the ancient history of the Magyar nation dates back to my boyhood. It was the year 1849. I was sitting with my playfellows in a maize-field. It was harvest-time and shortly after the surrender of Fort Komárom. Some straggling Honvéd, [Hungarian soldiers, literally ‘defenders of the homeland’] mournful and of broken-down appearance, were on their way home after the conclusion of the War of Independence, and stopped their march in the field where we were, to tell us of their struggles, and their stories made us all feel very sad. An old peasant, the owner of the field, comforted us and said, “It will all come right. Whatever our nation is in trouble the old Magyars from Asia come to our rescue, for we descend from them; they will not fail us this time, you may be sure.” “So there are old Magyars,” I thought to myself, and ever since that time the idea has stuck me.\(^{38}\)

Not unlike several years before in Paris, in his autobiography, Vambery positioned himself amidst the Hungarian multi-generational collective, both as a Hungarian national and a scholar. That not only in retrospect but also at the beginning of his road as a scholar he recognized the importance of connections and that his mentors like Ballagi could list the prestige of his work is reflected in the wordings of his acknowledgement and dedications of his first works. In 1861, Vambery closed his academic inaugural paper “A török történelmi irodalomról” (About the Turkish Historical Literature) as well as his “Farewell to the Academy” with an acknowledgment of Ballagi’s patronage, along with that of Eötvös and Ferenc Toldy. In addition, after his return from his second voyage in Central Asia, Ballagi assisted at Vambery’s baptism.

In *The Dervish of Windsor Castle: the life of Arminius Vambery*, the cornerstone English-language biography of Vambery, Lory Alder and Richard Dalby state that Vambery could never present a baptismal certificate and never converted.\(^{39}\) Their work is unfortunately poorly footnoted, but it became the basis of the widespread contention that Vambery only pretended to be a Christian the very same way as he wore the dervish incognito during his long voyage in

\(^{38}\) Vambery, *Struggles*, 151., *Küzdelmeim*, 156.

Asia. Alder and Dalby quoted one of Goldziher’s remarks that Vambery was only connected to Protestant circles (as opposed to being actually baptized), as well as an anecdote that Eötvös recorded Vambery as a Protestant after he answered an inquiry about his religion with the interjection “I protest!” Indeed, Vambery never discussed his conversion in any of his writings, though often referred to his identity as a Christian in the sense of being a European and western person. Despite all, the registration of Vambery’s conversion to Protestantism can be found in the Pest Protestant congregation’s registry, on page 160, under entry no. 217, dated December 30, 1864, that is after his return from his second eastern journey and before his appointment to the lectureship of Turkish at Pest University. Many questions on the form were unanswered, such as the names and religion of the parents and whether he was born out of a legal marriage. The document instead says the following: “Ármin Vámbéry, Israelite, born in Dunaszerdahely in the Csallóköz, after proper preparations, was baptized and received the baptismal name Ármin Vámbéry. Witness: Mór Ballagi, Baptizing pastor: Pál Török.” The act of conversion was key to Vambery’s University appointment as well as any future career in Hungary. By the mid-1860s, Ballagi was an acknowledged leader of the country’s Protestant establishment and by signing the baptismal registry as witness, he helped Vambery’s career in myriad ways.

Thanks to Ballagi and his circle of intellectual friends, including the famous poet and secretary of the Academy, János Arany (1817-1882), Vambery received a recommendation to Baron József Eötvös, who opened the doors to other intellectuals and politicians. Among them were the poet Vörösmarty and the linguists Antal Reguly (1819-1858) and Pál Hunfalvy (1810-

40 Vambery’s Protestant identification was important in his participation in public life both in Hungary and England. In his autobiography, Vambery explained his conversion as a matter of practicality since it did not involve a change of religion for a self-professed atheist. (Küzdelmeim, 488.)

41 Vambery, Küzdelmeim, 93.
1891). These acquaintances helped Vambery prepare intellectually and “logistically” for his travels to the Ottoman Empire in 1857 and further east in 1861. From their first meeting in the early 1850s, Vambery enjoyed Eötvös’s support, and later this support was also extended to Vambery’s students, such as Goldziher.

The emphasis on Eötvös’s central role in Vambery’s academic advancement served Vambery not only to further his own patriotic image and endeavor to write his story into the history of modern Hungary. It was most probably also a sincere way of honoring the memory of the baron, who was a towering figure of the mod-century politics and intellectual life in Hungary. Goldziher’s diary, in this respect, parallels Vambery’s memoir. Vambery described Eötvös in the most positive manner, with respect and admiration, however, he emphasized different aspects of their first meeting in the English and the Hungarian versions of Struggles.

The differences between the English and Hungarian narratives offer additional insight into Vambery’s literary politics and orientalist agenda, which also reveals that behind the surface of Eötvös’s progressive Jewish politics, a complex political and cultural nationalist program lied that was deeply impressed by the Romantic longing for the eastern past.

According to the Hungarian Küzdelmeim, when they first met in 1857, Vambery emphasized to Eötvös that his journey’s goal was to search for the ancient homeland of the Hungarians. He wrote that his “courageous and calm argumentation” and the “warming memory of Sándor Kőrösi Csoma” convinced Eötvös to support his plans. The Hungarian text describes a Vambery of humble Jewish origins and harboring Hungarian patriotic feelings meeting with

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42 Küzdelmeim, 107. As it was previously mentioned, the Göttingen-trained linguist Sándor Kőrösi Csoma left for Central Asia in the late 1820s, arguing that he was investigating the ancient history of the Hungarian nation. He received an initial sum for his travels from the Transylvanian parliament, but ended up accepting fees from the Royal Asiatic Society in Northern India and Tibet and produced the first Tibetan dictionary for the west. Eötvös was surely aware that Kőrösi Csoma’s initial goals had not been realized.
Eötvös. In contrast, *Struggles* stresses the poor circumstances in which he lived and studied. In both accounts, Vambery described substituting a piece of paper for a sole missing in his shoe. The tattered shoe trailed mud on the carpet in the aristocrat’s living room. A similar motif appears in his descriptions of his very unordered clothing as well as unpolished manners contrasting the circumstances of the wealthier families who employed him. Nonetheless, for Vambery the disheveled clothing remained a sign of his poverty, only, and he never interpreted it as an illustration of “Jewish undercivilization.” When describing his visit at Eötvös’s, he stressed the socio-economic difference between himself and his future patron. However, the Hungarian account emphasized the shared patriotism of the Christian aristocrat and the young Jewish student to highlight their common nationalist ground rather than their differences.

Vambery described the meetings with the linguists Hunfalvy and Reguly as important stages in his development as an orientalist. These accounts appear only in the Hungarian version and do not hint about the deterioration of Vambery’s relationship with the Finno-Ugorist linguists that began in the 1860s. Vambery gives the impression that the greatest linguistic authorities viewed him as a future contributor to Hungarian comparative linguistic studies—which was not far from the truth. In contrast to his meeting with Eötvös (talking with the Baron, Vambery stressed his interest in the study of the origins of the Hungarians) with linguists he discussed his academic interests in linguistic terms. Vambery recognized that especially for Hunfalvy, but also for other Academy members, the linguistic and the historical questions correlated. Independently from the narrative politics of the Vambery memoirs, the young

43 Reguly died in 1858 and Hunfalvy in 1891, thus none of them saw the publication of Vambery’s autobiographies. The academic-political debate that was given the name Ugric-Turkish War made fierce enemies of Hunfalvy and Vambery despite the fact that they shared many common experiences as Hungarian scholars of minority background. Vambery was Jewish and Hunfalvy was of German origins. The next chapter discusses the debate in detail.
Vambery successfully shaped his academic program in order to insert it into the framework of Hungarian linguistics of the 1850s.

**Integration through Scholarship**

Vambery’s path, though it illustrates Jewish career choices of his generation and socio-economic background, was not singular among the non-Hungarian groups in Hungary. The Academy offered a fast-track of Hungarianization for “ethnic” intellectuals which was characteristic of the earlier period of Hungarian Liberalism— as noted by Jacob Katz. In this period, Hungarian nationalism was relatively open and attractive to acculturating national and ethnic minorities, including Jews in contrast to the growing chauvinism at the end of the century. Ballagi and Vambery demonstrated that from the 1840s, in contrast to Germans, Slovaks, Romanians, or Croatians, Jews born during the first few decades of the nineteenth century could acquire respectable positions in Hungarian academic institutions following Hungarianization and conversion to Christianity. As Katz pointed out, conversion to Christianity was an additional step that Jews needed to make in order to be acknowledged as Hungarians. As it was noted before, Ballagi, who converted in 1843, witnessed Vambery’s conversion in 1865.

Hunfalvy, Budenz, and Toldy offer examples of the German minority’s political and intellectual engagement with Hungary from as early as the 1830s. The German Budenz’s integration into the Hungarian academic milieu was completed with even more spectacular speed than Vambery’s: as it will be discussed in the following, within four years of his arrival to Pest,

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44 National minorities are considered ethnic minorities, who are divided by a political border from the national body that forms a state forming majority in another country. Ethnic minority is a minority which is ethnically different (i.e. speaks a different language and have a different religion) and consider itself culturally different from the majority or other minorities. In case of the Jewish population, the different religion and language usage overlapped, hence both linguistic/cultural and change of religion was considered necessary to Hungarianization despite the fact that already in 1848 Jewish intellectuals argued that one can be a Hungarian national without conversion to Christianity. Jacob Katz: “The Uniqueness of the Hungarian Jewry,” *Forum* 27 (1977): 45–53.
he became an Academy member and started publishing in Hungarian. Budenz’s situation, being ethnically non-Hungarian, differed from the other scholars like Hunfalvy, Toldy, and Vambery only in that they were born in the territory of Hungary.\textsuperscript{45} Hunfalvy’s original name was Hunsdorfer. He was from the Szepesség, the German-speaking area in the north of the country (today part of Slovakia) and learned Hungarian outside the family home. Similarly, Ferenc Toldy—the famous literary historian, editor of the \textit{Magyar Academiai Értesítő} (Hungarian Academic News), and secretary of the Academy—was originally “non-Hungarian.”\textsuperscript{46} Toldy was born in Buda with the surname of Schedel. His parents did not speak Hungarian, but sent him to a Hungarian school to learn the language. Toldy studied literature and history and was also trained as a physician. He joined the Academy in 1830 and closely cooperated with Vörösmarty on a Hungarian dictionary, which later Hunfalvy fiercely criticized. Both Toldy and Hunfalvy identified with the nationalist movement in Hungarian letters and linguistics and thus represented the German minority who engaged with the Hungarian cause and state despite the favors that German Habsburg rule could offer them. Their careers demonstrate that despite the national scope of the Academy (in contrast to the University of Pest) it welcomed the contribution of minorities from the beginning of its operation.

Not only the nationalist priorities of the Academy attracted ethnically non-Hungarians who sought to join its work, but the goal of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to promote the study of the national language became a broadly embraced social movement that allowed residents of different ethnic background to collaborate on a national project. With the initial

\textsuperscript{45} Hunfalvy was relieved to learn that, unlike him, Budenz was Catholic, which was an advantage over being Protestant when it came to finding employment in as an academic. See \url{http://budenznet.sulinet.hu/bjaig/html/BJ.htm}; Internet; accessed April 27, 2014.

\textsuperscript{46} At this time, the title of the Academy’s Newsletter was still spelled in the traditional way.
donation for the palace of the Academy in 1858, the Greek merchant Baron Simon Sina initiated the state-wide philanthropic movement to collect money for the building that still houses the Learned Society. An article in the *Sunday News* demonstrates how the Academy was considered more than a mere intellectual enterprise also after 1849 and rather embodied a supra-ethnic, national project. The article was part of a series of writings that listed all the offerings for the Academy. It included a short summary by Gyula Orenstein, who was asked to publish his report of a Jewish wedding which he attended. He explained that not only the bride and the groom but every guest wore Hungarian dress, thus “anyone who saw them leaving the house of prayer would have believed they were Hungarian.” During the feast, following the wedding, the guests toasted “the well-being and happiness of the beautiful Hungarian homeland.” The seven-year-old brother of the reporter recited Vörösmarty’s poem *Appeal*. Orenstein continued arguing that “whoever had spent these minutes among us would have been convinced that Hungarian Jews are Hungarian not only in their dressing but also in their hearts and feelings.” To close, he addressed his fellow Christian nationals. He called on his countrymen to stop the *felekezetiség* (confessionalism, in the sense of religious divisions) and unite in order to make “the homeland great and happy.” The article closes with a detailed list of the wedding guests’ offerings, ranging from one forint to thousands of korona, for the construction of the Academy’s building.

47 His letter from August 14, 1858 in which he offered eighty thousand forint to raise a building for the Academy is available from [http://bfl.archivportal.hu/id-764-baro_sina_simon_tekintetes_magyar.html](http://bfl.archivportal.hu/id-764-baro_sina_simon_tekintetes_magyar.html); Internet; accessed September 14, 2013. Twenty three years earlier, Széchenyi offered 60,000 forints to found the Learned Society. See the Monograph on the HAS as well as the article discussing the Sina family’s philanthropies in both the Habsburg Monarchy and Greece Nikosz Fokasz, “Sina Simon 1810-1876: Kétszáz éve született a magyar tudomány és kultúra mecenása,” (Simon Sina 1810-1876: The Maecenas of Hungarian culture and scholarship was born two hundred years ago) *Magyar Tudomány*, August 9, 2010, available from [http://www.matud.iif.hu/2010/08/09.htm](http://www.matud.iif.hu/2010/08/09.htm); Internet; accessed September 14, 2013.

48 Korona was the name of one of the monetary units. “A magyar Akadémia palotája,” (The Palace of the Hungarian Academy) *Vasárnapí Újság* (Sunday News) 7, no. 46, Nov 18, 1860; available from [http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/00351/datum09683/cim109693/cim209704.htm](http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00030/00351/datum09683/cim109693/cim209704.htm); Internet; accessed April, 27, 2014.
The Beginnings of Vambery’s Career: 1857-1867

The First Study Tour to Istanbul

Toldy’s introduction to Vambery’s first article about the inaugural speech of the Turkish Academy’s vice president in 1857 in the New Hungarian Museum confirms that the Academy members acknowledged Vambery’s preparedness and approved his plan of travelling to Istanbul. Toldy claimed that “our fine linguist from the Csallóköz [name of the northern region from where Vambery originated] Ármin Wamberger’s” report gave a detailed picture of the Turkish language and thinking. He also shared with the readers that Vambery was about to leave for the Ottoman capital “to perfect himself in the eastern languages and literature, to the study of which he dedicated his youth.”

Though in the article there was no definite reference to either contributing to the research on Hungarian-Turkish affinity or the preconquest history of the Hungarian tribes, Vambery’s stated linguistic interests complied easily with the romantic beliefs of the Asian national origins as well as with Hunfalvy’s linguistic program.

Vambery’s practical interest in spoken languages and the present-day Ottoman Empire in itself yielded his German-Turkish Dictionary published in Istanbul in the following year. Instead of compiling the dictionary based on the Ottoman elite’s linguistic customs, he made the language of the street the subject of his book. It later contributed to the Turkish language renewal movement which continued in the next century. More importantly, the dictionary demonstrated his attraction to ethnographical and anthropological research. Vambery spent long hours on the streets of Istanbul, sang in coffee houses for money (despite the support he received from Pest, he was short of financial means), and learned the customs and manners of the average people. He

49 Cited in Munkácsi, 90. The Vambery article appeared in Új Magyar Múzeum (1857): 150.

155
acquired the name Rashid Effendi, which, along with his command of the quotidian western
Osmanli language spoken in Istanbul, gave him the idea of posing as a Turkish dervish from
Istanbul on his way to Persia during his second voyage. Acknowledging the dictionary as an
important linguistic achievement, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences appointed Vambery its
corresponding member. (An equally important acknowledgement of the usefulness of his
dictionary was when during his voyage, Vambery met a Swiss traveler who used his
dictionary.50)

In 1859, in Vambery’s absence, Ballagi read to the Academy his study A török-csagatai
és magyar nyelvek egybehasonlítása, (The comparison between the Turkish-Chagatai [eastern
Turkish language] and Hungarian Languages) which Akadémiai Értestő (Academic Newsletter)
published under the title Csagatai-török-magyar egybehasonlító kis szótár (Chagatai-Turkish-
Hungarian Small Dictionary).51 His Chagatai studies were the result of his archival research in
Istanbul between 1857 and 1861. This work demonstrated to his mentors and sponsors on several
accounts that through his Turkish studies, Vambery served both the modern Hungarian linguistic
research and the historical inquiry into the Asian origins. While he studied sources from the
period of the early medieval migrations to the early modern period of the Ottoman occupation of
Hungary, he also read them as mirrors of the different stages of the evolution of the different
Turkish languages and dialects. He assumed that because the Hungarian forefathers migrated
westward from Central Asia, the eastern Turkish language could be informative of the history of
the Hungarian forefathers. Later he proved to be right, however, during these four years, the
work he accomplished in Istanbul neither brought definite proof to the question of Hungarian-

50 Vambery, Küzdelmeim, 180.
51 Munkácsi, 90-91.
Turkish affinity, nor unearthed some unexpected and decisive historical source about the Asian warrior forefathers.

Shortly after returning to Hungary, he started planning his second voyage, at this time to further east. In his farewell speech to the Academy on July 29, 1861, Vambery stressed that the Academy could not pursue its goal, the beautification of the Hungarian language if the origins of the language and the nation were still lost in the historical fog. He emphasized that he planned to follow in the footsteps of the thirteenth-century traveller Julianusy as well as the future Tibet scholar Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (1784-1842) who travelled to the east in order to find those fellow Hungarians who remained in Central Asia as the medieval chroniclers reported. However, unlike them, with the help of modern science, Vambery knew to differentiate between linguistic and ethnic origins. The goal of his voyage to “search for the linguistic truth instead of the more beautiful and romantic Hungarian ancient homeland.” He did not plan to conduct ethnological but strictly comparative linguistic research. He stressed the importance of his travelling by emphasizing that advancement in theoretical work could not compensate for the lack of practical experience with the spoken language. In his view, the insufficient knowledge of Turkish languages in Europe hindered the advancement of comparative linguistic research. He argued that his practical experience with and immersion into Ottoman society gave him an advantage over other scholars in traveling “among coarse peoples who live far away from the disciplinary

52 Brother Julianusy left Hungary in 1235 to find the Hungarians who after leaving the Khazar borderland did not continue with the Hungarian tribes toward the Carpathian Basin. Julianusy’s main achievement, however, was that he notified the Hungarian king and the Pope of the imminent Tartar attack, which was largely disregarded and in 1241-42, the Golden Horde robbed and devastated Hungary. Kőrösi Csoma applied to the Transylvanian legislation for support for his voyage that hoped to accomplish the same goal. His research, that instead of finding the Hungarians in Central Asia produced the first Tibetan dictionary, was finally supported by the Royal Asiatic Society.

hand of European civilization and who, inspired by wild fanaticism, despise everyone and believe to be inferior.”\textsuperscript{54} He noted that he wished to use his Reshid effendi-persona to enter Persia and continue further east.\textsuperscript{55}

Interestingly, in contrast to his Hungarian autobiography, in which he quoted his address from 1861, in his English autobiography, he stressed that the Academy members were convinced by the patriotic arguments that he presented.\textsuperscript{56} This speech, however, was meant to quiet doubts about the importance of Turkish research: Vambery reflected on the contemporary understanding that Hungarian, Turkish, and Finnish were considered part of the Altaic language family. While complying with the general scopes of the Academy and the specific goals of comparative linguistics, it also outlined Vambery’s own scholarly program. By inserting the cultural anthropological methods of the traveling scholar into the accepted tools of the discipline, he stretched the “limitations” of comparative linguistics.

**The Second Study Tour of Central Asia**

After his second departure for Istanbul and before he continued from there to further east, Vambery published two important historical papers in Hungary: the translations and his commentaries of the late sixteenth-century Turkish chronicler İbrahim Peçevi’s description of the 1526 Mohács battle, in which the Ottoman forces triumphed over the Hungarians and the Hungarian king Louis II died, and a Turkish Chronicle of Hungarian history the *Târîkh-i Üngürûsz*. Also, in *Hungarian Linguistics*, Hunflavy published part of Vambery’s collection of Turkish sayings, which in 1862 appeared in its completed form in the *Linguistic News* under the

\textsuperscript{54} Vambery, “Farewell,” 108.

\textsuperscript{55} See discussion in the previous chapter.

The first word in the collection, abuška (husband), served as the title of the book. Abuška was the critical translation of an unknown sixteenth-century author’s work—a quasi-dictionary designed to help western Turkish speakers read the late fifteenth century poet and scholar Mir Ali Šir’s works written in the Neva Eastern Turkish dialect. Later, Vambery discovered the original works on which Abuska was founded and published them in his translation.

The changing reception of Abuska in Hungarian linguistic circles reflects the transforming perspective on the Hungarian-Turkish linguistic affinity and Vambery’s early work. In his 1915 Vambery memorial paper, the Ugorist Bernát Munkácsi noted that the publication of Abuska resulted from a close cooperation between Budenz and Vambery; the former added an introduction to the latter’s linguistic analysis. Munkácsi quoted Budenz’s aforementioned 1862 academic inaugural speech about Hungarian’s Turkish affinity, in which he had praised Vambery’s Turkologic research. During this period, when both Budenz and Hunfalvy professed the close affinity between Hungarian and Turkish, Vambery’s research in Istanbul and Central Asia promised to produce proof of the affinity between the two languages. Hence, Budenz must have been inclined to contribute to the Hungarian publication of Abuska. In Munkácsi’s view, the importance of Abuska—as well as the other Vambery studies that registered and compared the differences between the Turkish dialects and languages—was its service to Turkology (and not

57 Munkácsi, 93.
58 Munkácsi, 94.
59 Munkácsi, 95.
Hungarian linguistic research, giving away that by 1915, Budenz’s and Hunfalvy’s research that demonstrated that Hungarian belonged to the Ugric group and only distantly related to Turkish).  

**Vambery’s changing personal relations with Hungarian linguists**

Vambery’s rather scattered correspondence in the archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences demonstrates that as long as he could write to Pest, he kept in contact with his colleagues: he not only sent his studies to them but exchanged personal notes with several of the Hungarian scholars. His letters to Budenz during 1861 and 1862 illustrate that Vambery’s initial relationship with Hunfalvy’s linguist circle was rather positive based on their shared understanding that Hungarian and Turkish were related and the relationship of affinity between them might be informative of the national origins as well. Vambery’s letters to Budenz reflect as their relationship gradually evolved, and through the cooperation on *Abuška* and by the time of Budenz’s academic inaugural speech it became rather intimate. Vambery discussed with Budenz all his prospective publications as well as other matters that impacted his scholarly work. Through the letter’s sarcastic tone, the difference between Vambery’s public and private identifications as a scholar also becomes apparent. Whereas Vambery’s ironical remarks matched the tone of his academic reviews, in contrast to his writings in the scholarly journals, Vambery never subjected Budenz to malicious remarks. This was to change as their initial amicable relationship was replaced by bitter hostility.

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60 Munkácsi was Hunfalvy’s student and inherited the professional bias of the two “Finnists” (as Vambery referred to Hunfalvy and Budenz). In the second phase of the Ugric-Turkish War, he became the leader of the Finnist camp after 1895, which explains the tone in which he discussed the place and the value of Abuška in Hungarian linguistic scholarship and the Vambery oeuvre. Munkácsi opened his examination with a quasi-apology for not having appreciated Vambery’s work at the time which reflects the self-conscious prejudice that (despite the apology) still influenced his writing.
In his letters from August to September 1861, Vambery addressed Budenz as “my dear friend” or occasionally “Drága Jóskám!” (my dear Jóska). Hinting at their shared passion for all things Turkish, occasionally he addressed Budenz as “Drága Juszufom!” (my dear Jusuf). On August 19, assuming that Budenz must have been busy with Abuška, Vambery wrote him, “Allah will bless you for that and do not forget your friend Rashid!” His “posing” as Rashid effendi contributes to the friendly and joking atmosphere of the letter, but also underlines their common scholarly grounds, just like the Orientalized address “Dear Jusuf!”

In addition to the preparations for the publication of Abuška the letters give insight into how Vambery presented the work he did in Istanbul and the preparations. In September, Vambery explained to Budenz that his discussions of the Turkish sayings that Hunfalvy recently published in Linguistic News was only a partial presentation: “we have time to write their more detailed linguistic and ethnological examination, and then, I hope we will show Europe what the Osmanli thinks.” In this letter, Vambery also offered Budenz to take his honorary fee from Pester Lloyd, one of the German-language Pest papers that published his impressions of the Ottoman capital. Vambery was also publishing for papers like the Pesti Napló (Pest Journal) as well as some German papers. From this first study tour, Vambery’s practical linguistic studies coupled with his journalistic activity. Before he introduced himself to English readers as a Turkish linguist and ethnologist and expert on the Ottoman Empire, he was already known to the Hungarian public and the readers of German papers both as a journalist and a Turkologist at the beginning of his scholarly career. Nonetheless, on November 15, 1861, he reported that he had

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61 HAS Archives and Old Books Collection, MS 5450/204-213  
62 HAS Archives and Old Books Collection, MS 5450/204.  
63 HAS Archives and Old Books Collection, MS 5450/206.
followed Budenz’s advice and given up his political and other literary writings to focus only on linguistics. This declaration is revealing about Budenz’s very strict understanding of the scope of their scholarly research and that Vambery wished to appeal to it. Here, unlike in his autobiographical works, Vambery did not remind Budenz of his hectic material conditions, which was the primary reason for him to engage with journalism. Nonetheless, on February 22, 1862, he complained to Budenz that the Pest Journal had failed to pay for his reports. In his November 15, 1861 letter, Vambery also mentioned the question of the Turkish-Tatar dictionary, which was published only eight years later, and stirred the controversy known as Ugric-Turkish War. From Vambery’s letters it remains unclear if, at this early phase, Budenz had any observations regarding the dictionary project, which caused the break between the two.

On February 2 of the following year, Vambery congratulated Budenz on the occasion of his academic inauguration. “My dear Jusuf! ... you caused me great pleasure and it is my real victory that Hunfalvy’s disciple confirms my opinion.” The reference is obviously to the topic of the speech, which examined the Hungarian-Turkish linguistic affinity. In Vambery’s last letter before leaving Istanbul, hinting about the difficulty involved in the official process of acquiring Oriental manuscripts, he articulated his contempt toward the Academic bureaucracy: “They do not understand the merits of Orientalism.” This was the first time that his letters referred to his broader scholarly field instead of repeatedly underlining the relevance of his research to Hungarian scholarship.

64 Vambery, Küzdelmeim,
65 HAS Archives and Old Books Collection, MS 5450/213.
66 HAS Archives and Old Books Collection, MS 5450/212.
The correspondence, in addition to being informative of the two scholars’ relationship, also reveals the two minority scholars’ commitment to Hungarian academics. There was not a single German word in their correspondence, even though Budenz had been in Hungary for less than four years and Vambery’s mother tongue was probably German. Making Hungarian the language of their scholarly correspondence demonstrates that the Jewish and the German minority scholar also in their private contacts felt comfortable to contact each other in Hungarian, the Hungarian language usage points beyond their official identifications as contributors to the Hungarian linguistic research.

Munkácsi argued that the relationship between Budenz and Vambery deteriorated after Budenz published his review of Vambery’s Turkish-Tatar study in 1869 and that personal questions also factored into the break between the two. Vambery, in contrast, claimed that he was rejected by the Academy members immediately after his return from Central Asia in 1864. Budenz’s 1861 critical review and translation of the sixteenth-century chronicler Mahmûd Terdsümân’s Târîkh-i Üngürûsz (Hungarian History), which Vambery had previously written about, reveal that their friendship did not compromise their scholarly ambitions. However, it did not stand the test of Budenz’s critical attitude toward Vambery’s work either.

After summarizing the content of the manuscript, Budenz underlined that many of the hiatus in the earliest history of the Hungarian tribes were the result of factors the Turkish chronicler had already identified. The chronicler had relied on Latin sources which, mainly for

67 According to Küzdelmeim, Vambery’s mother, nee Malawan came to Hungary from the Moravian town of Lundenburg, today Breclav in the Czech Republic, close to border with Lower Austria and Slovakia.

political reasons, could not offer a precise account of the events they recorded. Nonetheless, the chronicler himself was also biased: he left out the chapters of the original narrative that recorded military defeats. At this point, Budenz’s article focused its criticism on Vambery’s examination. Budenz emphasized that, unlike Vambery, he did not find the author positively biased toward the Hungarians. Budenz underlined the derogatory attributes the author used to describe non-Muslims and thus implicitly criticized Vambery’s pro-Turkish disposition as well. Budenz pointed out that since other Turkish chronicles identified the Mahmûd as their source of Hungarian history, Vambery wrongly identified this author as a Hungarian. Even if the chronicler was born in Hungary of a Hungarian father, he received a Turkish education, possibly at the Jannisary, as the striking military spirit of his writing demonstrated.  

The chronicle references a Hungarian original that was written in Latin and Budenz believed the Turkish author found in Székesfehérvár. He called the Academy’s historical department to research the identity of this possible original and find it. Whereas Vambery discussed the manuscript as a sample from the Istanbul archives, Budenz emphasized its relevance to Hungarian historical studies. His final conclusions, however, were irrelevant to Vambery’s assessment and reveal that he used this article to confront Vambery’s lack of objectivity, since Budenz could have reached the goal of helping Hungarian historians recognize the possible Latin source of the Turkish manuscript even if he had published “only” his translation and omitted his critical notes. Instead, he publicly examined Vambery’s imprecise philological approach to the text and revealed that, in his eyes, linguistic precision was of foremost importance.

69 Budenz, TU, 285.
Budenz’s ever vigilant analytical linguistic aptitude sharply contrasted Vambery’s dilettante enthusiasm. Their different attitudes toward linguistic questions, which Vambery and Hunfalvy repeatedly contextualized in national political terms, manifested during this short and early chapter of their careers. Hunfalvy’s encouragement and Vambery’s success at finding valuable manuscripts and important topics in the rather understudied field of Turkology convinced Vambery that he could work around his missing training. Budenz disapproved Vambery’s lack of methodology and political bias from early on. However, the crucial change in their relationship resulted from the confirmation of the closer affinity between Hungarian and Ugric languages, which emerged from Budenz and Hunfalvy’s research during the period Vambery was away.

During spring 1862, Vambery joined a caravan of pilgrims and, dressed as a dervish, he posed as an Osmanli-speaker Muslim mendicant ascetic as he travelled through Persia and Turkmenistan, toward today’s Afghanistan. He was afraid of taking notes when in the company of his fellow caravan travelers for his incognito might be revealed and, therefore, he could not really continue the research he started in Istanbul. While he was away, the Academy launched 

*Linguistic News* in 1862, which became the new oracle for the linguistic research Hunfalvy and his circle started a decade earlier.70 The study of linguistic affinity remained at the center

70 In the editorial of the opening issue, Hunfalvy outlined the evolution of the work of the linguistic department and the Academy that led to the periodical’s founding—and included his Hungarian Linguistics as an important preparatory step. Hunfalvy, “Előszó,” (Foreword) *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* 1 (1862): i. In 1862, the membership consisted of Hunfalvy, Arany, Toldy, Budenz, Ballagi, Szende Riedl, Gergely Czuczor, János Fogarasi, József Vass, and the president of the Committee, Móric Lukács. They were a mixed group of linguists, historians, philologists, the literary historian Toldy, the poet Arany, and the lawyer Hunfalvy, who had no formal linguistic or literary training, nonetheless stood out as an unofficial leader, with his colleagues generally arguing similar academic-political ideas that Hunfalvy had been articulating since 1850. They all understood that the ideals of the scholarly study of the language, the language renewal movement, and the modern linguistic endeavors harmonized.
research interest, which the articles in *Linguistic News* thoroughly documented. A section of the periodical’s opening issue was dedicated to the description of the work of the Linguistic Committee of the Academy and it detailed one of the Committee’s stated goal, the compilation of a new Hungarian dictionary. The linguist Szende Riedl proposed the project in a paper addressed to the Committee. He recalled the patriotic and international scholarly interests connected to the study of Hungarian language and asked his colleagues to use his research as a basis for the future dictionary. Riedl maintained that the study of Altaic languages as well as Hungary’s good name abroad demanded the publication of a dictionary that complied with high academic standards.\(^{71}\) Another member, the classical philologist János Fogarasi proposed to broaden the scope of the dictionary by inviting input from learned authors from both Hungary and Transylvania.\(^{72}\) Finally, the Committee accepted the proposal and outlined the division of work between the members: Toldy was responsible for studies on the old Hungarian language, Vass on dialects, and Arany on composition and “phraseology.” In the study of the connections of Hungarian to different language families and languages, Ballagi participated by studying Hungarian’s Semitic relations, Budenz studied its Aryan connections, and Hunfalvy researched its ties to the Altaic languages. Vambery’s work seemed not to be missing from the Academy’s linguistic program that wished to insert Hungarian research into a broad horizon of linguistic studies.

Two of Hunfalvy’s publications from 1863 and 1864 indicate the advancement of both the theoretical study of linguistic affinity and his and Budenz’s Ugric-research that led to the construction of Finno-Ugric relations of affinity. Only from 1864 did the examination of

\(^{71}\) Ibid., 141-142.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., 142.
Reguly’s collection reach the stage in which they could refute the Hungarian–Turkish affinity. On March 2, 1863, in front of the linguistic department of the Academy, Hunfalvy delivered a talk “A Nyelvtudományról: Müller Miksa” (About Linguistic Scholarship: Max Müller), which was later published in the Linguistic News. Hunfalvy was among the most vehement critics of the Turanian theory which became connected with the name of the German philologist Max Müller. In this paper, Hunfalvy entered into a rather one-sided debate with Müller over two issues. First, Hunfalvy questioned Müller’s linguistic taxonomy that cast Hungarian along with other non-Aryan and non-Semitic languages into the Turanian group. Second, and more importantly, while in his famous 1861 monograph Science of Language Müller denied the validity of the equation between ethnic and linguistic affinity, Hunfalvy underlined the important role comparative linguistics could play in the historical research for ethnic origins. Hunfalvy wrote, “The linguistic classification aids the genealogical (racial) classification.” At this level, he still advocated the Hungarian-Turkish affinity as proven by the most-up-to-date comparative linguistic research methods.

The two questions of the study of linguistic and ethnic connections were related: since Hegel’s historical arguments and Humboldt’s pioneering work on language usage, scholars were intrigued by the question whether and to what extent languages reflected ethnic genealogy and national (pre)history. These issues greatly determined Hegel’s and Fichte’s philosophical arguments on nations and nationalism as well; they believed that language reflected the

73 Müller was accepted as a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1874 for his original research as well as his merits in the systematic synthesis of international philological studies. Hunfalvy, “A Nyelvtudományról: Müller Miksa” (About Linguistic Scholarship: Max Müller), Nyelvtudományi közlemények (Linguistic News) 2, nos. 1-2 (1863): 69-94.

74 Hunfalvy, 79.
community of fellow nationals. The genealogical interpretation of the evolution of linguistic communities deeply influenced comparative linguistics. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Hungarian scholars based their comparative linguistic studies on August Schlechter’s *Stammbaum* theory which became known in the early 1850s. Schlechter returned to the Hegelian argument that languages and language communities appeared in prehistoric ages. He envisioned languages having developed from one common root, which grew into a tree that divides into various branches and further splits into smaller and smaller branches. Each branch represents a linguistic family, which can be divided to groups comprising individual languages. The historical development leads from a common ancestor to many “scions;” the vertical genealogical relationships represent the linguistic affinity or relationship between languages.

Scholars widely believed that the phonological changes in every language contributed to the evolution of new languages—which, along with the transformations of grammatical structures, could be studied as if they were natural scientific phenomena. However, idioms were believed to reflect on human thinking and creativity as well. These beliefs bore a scholarly dilemma: how to differentiate the universal traits of linguistic phenomena and the genealogical and linguistic connections that held communities together from the beginning of human history. In Germany and Western Europe, starting in the 1850s, questions about the concept of race were gradually deferred to ethnologists. Müller resolved this dilemma by claiming that languages were cultural, not genealogical, identifiers. He focused on the historical consciousness of each language community and put aside the question of blood relations or racial relations among the members of the linguistic community. He established the differentiated categories of ethnological and phonological races and suggested that the relationship between philology and
ethnology should be that of “mutual advice.” In Hungary, at the beginning of the 1860s, Hunfalvy was still discussing the question of linguistic affinity as a methodological one, without unambiguously describing the correlation between the history of the Hungarian language and its speakers.

Nonetheless, Müller’s Turanian category was based on very scant understanding of the languages that he grouped together, which Hunfalvy obviously criticized. Many of these languages, in fact, were either not written or acquired an alphabet and a literary tradition much later than Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek, or Latin. In order to support his criticism of both the methodology and the results of Müller’s linguistic classification, Hunfalvy opened his 1863 article with a quote from Müller’s introduction to his latest study which claimed that “Languages carry within themselves the most ancient and proving annals of the histories of the human spirit.” Hunfalvy continued with a discussion of the evolution of the correlation between linguistic and “genealogical” descent in Sanskrit studies and the field of Indo-German studies.

By slightly shifting Müller’s cited claims, Hunfalvy underscored how linguistics provided the only way to shed light on the early history of those peoples whom Müller misclassified. He

75 Benes, 215. Benes expresses similar assessment of both Müller’s and Ernest Renan’s philological determinism that among others Maurice Olender expressed in his Languages of Paradise (New York: Other Press, 1992), namely that because they used philological arguments to define essential characteristics and cultural attributes of “Aryans” and “Semitic,” their scholarship did cater to racial stigmatization. Their work inspired – among others’ - Goldziher’s studies, the topic of the next chapter.

76 Only in his 1864 monograph A vogul föld és nép (The Vogul Land and People) did Hunfalvy directly address the question of the correlation between the concepts of nation-formation and linguistic community. This study also marked the change in his approach to the relations of affinity of the Hungarian language: instead of arguing for the Turkish proximity, his attention was turned toward the (Finno-)Ugric relations that Vogul exemplified. Hunfalvy, A vogul föld és nép (The Vogul Land and People) (Pest: Eggenberger, 1864). In response to Hunfalvy’s and Budenz’s linguistic and ethnological studies, Vambery was the linguist who first argued that a language’s history did not correspond with the history of the linguistic community.

77 My translation from Hunfalvy’s Hungarian article. Hunfalvy, 70.

78 Julius Klaproth had named the language family. See Benes, 84.
stressed that the basis of establishing linguistic affinity was the study of grammatical
collection and phonetics, which Bopp’s research on the establishment of the Aryan linguistic
family demonstrated.79 The importance of Aryan studies lay in its methods, which Hunfalvy,
Budenz, and many other German, Finnish, and Russian scholars viewed as compliant with the
scope of Ural-Altaic (and not Turanian) research.

Hunfalvy argued that the difference between the Turanian and Ural-Altaic terminologies
already revealed that neither Müller’s historical nor his linguistic claims justified grouping
Finnish, Hungarian, Turkish, Malaysian, Thai, and other South-Asian languages into one
language family. With regard to the historical argumentation Hunfalvy demonstrated that
Müller’s criterion, namely the state forming capacity that differentiated Aryans and Semites from
Turanians whom he described as nomads was mistaken, since it was unclear if the Aryans had a
common state prior to their migration. If Müller argued that the establishment of a state defined
the basic features of a people, Hunfalvy stressed that “the Turanian [man] self-consciously
sustained the national language.”80 From the linguistic point of view, Hunfalvy repeated his
reference to Bopp’s research. Instead of looking for the proofs of affinity in the stem words,
pronouns, or numbers, Hunfalvy emphasized the importance of conjugation and declination. He
“urged” Müller to first establish the level of connection between the languages he labeled as
Turanian and only then discuss the characteristics of Turanians, underlining that the so-called
reference to the underdevelopment of the Turanian languages should not be the criterion for the

79 Hunfalvy, 79.
80 Hunfalvy, 84.
establishment of affinity between them. In his view, the linguistic affinity between Finnish, Hungarian, and Turkish was in itself proof that Müller’s classification was wrong.\textsuperscript{81}

Hunfalvy’s 1864 article “A magyarok eredete” (The Origins of the Hungarians) displays a small shift in his position on both general linguistic methodology and Ural-Altaic linguistics.\textsuperscript{82} The title of the article—which appeared in the popular scientific periodical, the \textit{Budapest Szemle} (Budapest Review)—itself demonstrates that when discussing a question of national concern, he was interested in addressing a much broader, lay audience. Naturally, the article itself also testifies to an atmosphere in which scholarly questions were offered for discussion to the well-read public of non-professionals in scholarly journals. In this article, Hunfalvy was interested in the history of the Hungarian people and argued that the most informative sources in reconstructing the national past were the results of linguistic research and historical documents. However, he emphasized that historical documents were biased sources because their language reflected the spirit and opinions of their authors. In contrast, language studies offered flawless evidence of the past conditions of its speakers, because language developed before it was written down and thus subject to intellectual manipulation.

According to Hunfalvy, the study of Finnish and Turkish revealed that its speakers once had been living in a common community somewhere at the feet of the Altaic mountains. His article helped to establish a possible scenario for the evolution of the current Altaic language communities. In his opinion, the Turks most likely had left the common home first while the Finnish and Ugric ancestors continued to live together and migrate to the Ural region. The ancestors of Finns and Ugors parted ways as they left the Urals, and thus the different

\textsuperscript{81} Hunfalvy, 84-87.

\textsuperscript{82} Hunfalvy, “A magyarok eredete,” (The Origins of the Hungarians) \textit{Budapesti Szemle} XIX, no. 3 (1864): 4-97.
nationalities, among them the Hungarians, became gradually differentiated. In closing, Hunfalvy declared that many historical sources underpinned the linguistic reconstruction of Hungarian origins.

Two years later, after reviewing the latest developments in European linguistics, Hunfalvy even more confidently predicted that scholarship would bring definite refutation of Müller’s Turanian grouping. However, he retreated from his advocacy of the dual reliance on linguistic and historical research. Instead of historical sources he believed that archeology and linguistics were the two disciplines that could draw a proper map of the prehistoric world. Both periodicals that Hunfalvy edited until the mid-1870s advocated for comparative linguistics as the scholarship that could inform modern Hungarians of their linguistic origins and, therefore, their origins as a people.

**The Finno-Ugric turn**

As it was mentioned above, in the judgment of the Hungarian scholars, also from his second journey Vambery returned empty handed. There were two reasons why they were disappointed with Vambery’s travels. First, as Hunfalvy’s 1864 *The Vogul Land and People* demonstrated, the examination of the Reguly-collection led to a break-through in the understanding of Hungarian’s affinities and the elimination of the Hungarian-Turkish affinity. Second, since Vambery could not take elaborate notes while in disguise, his travel was reduced

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83 This theory of the historical development of the Finno-Ugric languages offers the par-excellence explanation of why languages divided by geographical distances should be considered related.


85 In 1876, Hunfalvy published *Magyarország ethnographiája* (Hungary’s ethnography), and two years later he resigned from his editorial post at *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* (Linguistic News). Hunfalvy gave Budenz the leadership in linguistic research in order to return to his ethnological and historic studies. See, Pápay, 46.
in their eyes to quasi-anthropological observation tour, in which Hungarian academics had no interest.

In contrast, as Vambery could already understand while contacting the different foreign embassies in Teheran, both England and Russia found his experiences valuable information for future political designs. “Rejected at home” and welcome in England, Vambery followed the advice of the British envoy to Teheran whom Vambery met both on his way to Central Asia and on his return and published his Central Asian travelogue in English.86 Once in England, Vambery soon realized that his travels could be turned into a good source of earnings, since in addition to politicians, the British public was keen to learn about far away and exotic parts of the globe—especially places that were geopolitically important to the Imperial Crown. Vambery published several travelogues about his Central Asian journey and they were translated into several languages. While these publications provided some income, they did not pave the way for an academic career, even though Vambery repeatedly emphasized that his travels had academic motivation. In the forewords of the English and the Hungarian editions of Central Asian Travels, he again stressed— as he had at the Academy before his journey— that empirical experimentation would advance European knowledge of Turkic languages better than library-bound philological inquiry. In addition to his popular travelogues and ethnological work for both English and Hungarian readerships, Vambery continued to publish his linguistic findings in Hungarian and German during the second half of the 1860s.87 He did so despite the marginalization of

86 Vambery, Küzdelmeim, 223.
87 His works from the period include “A sivatagon,” (In the desert) Budapesti Szemle. Új folyam (Budapest Review New Edition) 1865; “Egy magyar perzsa követségről,” (A Hungarian in Persian emissary) Akadémiai Értesítő (Academic News) (Budapest: HAS, 1867); “A keleti török nyelvőről,” (About the eastern Turkish language) Értekezések a nyelv és széptudományok köréből (Discussions about linguistic and liberal sciences) (Budapest: HAS, 1868) A keleti török nyelvekről (About the eastern Turkish languages) (Pest, Akadémia 1869); Čagatische Sprachstudien (Chagatai linguistic studies) (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1867) Középázsiai utazás, melyet a Magyar
Turkology from the national linguistic enterprise as a consequence of the Finno-Ugric turn and that he felt less relevant to Hungarian patriotic linguistic scholarship after his “triumphant” return than before he left. Despite all, he successfully applied for a teaching appointment at the University of Pest in 1865—following his conversion to Protestantism at the end of 1864,—where he met his future world-famous student Ignaz Goldziher.

Hunfalvy’s 1864 *The Vogul Land and People* and Budenz’s 1867 *Word Correspondence between the Hungarian and the Finno-Ugric Languages* opened the Finno-Ugric chapter of

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88 “A sivatagon,” *Budapesti Szemle. Új folyam* 1865; “Egy magyar perzsa követségről,” *Akadémiai Értesítő* (Budapest: HAS, 1867); “A keleti törők nyelvről,” *Értekezések a nyelv és szépirodalom köréből* (Budapest: HAS, 1868) A keleti törők nyelvről (Pest, Akadémia 1869); *Cagatische Sprachstudien* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1867) Középázsiai utazás, melyet a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia megbízásából 1863-ban Teheránból a turkman sivatagon át a Kaspi tenger partján Khívába, Bokháraba és Szamarkandba tett (Pest: Emich G. 1865); *Vándorlásaim és élényméime Perzsiában* (My wanderings and experiences in Persia) (Budapest: Franklin, 1867); *Vázlatok Közép-Ázsiából* (Sketches from Central Asia) (Pest,? , 1868) the list is based on the Vambéry bibliography available from [http://www.terebess.hu](http://www.terebess.hu); Internet, accessed on September 20, 2013.

89 Characteristic of Vambery, he emphasized that he met with the king, and Franz Joseph himself appointed him as a faculty member. See, Vambery, *Struggles*, 261. From his letters to his Lutheran pastor friend Áron Szilády it is known that the Catholic board of the University opposed his employment. See, MS 4453/72-78. Vambéry’s autobiography similarly recorded the hostility he experienced from the University. He described his return to Hungary from England where he shortly became the Lion of the season. “The fact that this Hungarian, who had been so much fêted abroad, was of obscure origin, without family relations, and, Moreover, of Jewish extraction, spoiled the interest for many… The Catholic Church, that hotbed of intolerance and blind prejudice, was the first in attack. It upbraided me for figuring as a Protestant and not as a Catholic, as if I, the freethinker, took any interest in sectarian matters!” Vambery, *Struggles*, 262-63. Vambéry ingeniously communicated that he had been unwelcome at the University not only because he was of Jewish origin but because he converted to Protestantism, both undesirable in the eyes of the catholic board. According to the Annals of the University of Pest, in the winter semester of the 1865 academic year, Vambéry taught the following courses: Tartar-Turkish Language and The Eastern Muslims’ Bourgeois Development (the study of the customs, social conditions, and cultural state of the Turks, Arabs, Persians, and Tartars—considering the differences between these groups and Christian bourgeois development). The titles of the courses already reflect Vambéry’s interest in ethnology, which later became the focus of his Turkological research.
Hungarian comparative linguistics. Hunfalvy’s book wished to prove how the latest investigations had revealed that the closest language to Hungarian was the Vogul. As in his earlier writings, he introduced his readers to the methodology he used through a review of the development of comparative linguistics including Gyarmathi’s work, which he defined as an important preparatory study. Hunfalvy pointed out that instead of linguistic “material,” – vocabulary --, through the examination of verbs and conjugation Gyarmathi rightly drew attention to the study of the “structure”–the system of derivatives, suffixes, case-endings, and prefixes—as the more informative method leading to the establishment of linguistic affinity. Whereas Gyarmathi’s work was on a more basic level than Hunfalvy’s, he still believed it was founded on good principles.

Without mentioning the Stammbaum model, Hunfalvy argued that the lack of the linguistic differentiation between sexes and the vowel harmony characteristic of every Altaic language pointed to the existence of a very ancient common language of the Altaic speakers, the Altaic Ursprache. This first linguistic period (which was actually quite lengthy) terminated with the departure of the Turkish, Mongolian-Manchurian, and Samoyedic speakers at an unknown date. The departure left the community of the ancestors of the Ugric and Finnish speakers intact. When the Finnish and Ugric groups parted ways, it signaled the end of the second linguistic period, of which no written records remained. The numbers between twenty and one thousand and the objective-verb conjugation are characteristic of these languages and testify to their common linguistic development during this period. The two language groups, Finnish and Ugric,

91 Hunfalvy, Vogul, 16.
further split into different languages—a process which lasted several centuries. Therefore, in Hunfalvy’s opinion, the development of Hungarian lasted from the prehistoric to the historic era, and as he would later argue, because Turkish speakers left the ancient community before Hungarian and Finnish would emerge as individual languages, the Turkish affinity could not be validated linguistically.

More importantly from the perspective of Vambery’s future development as a scholar, Hunfalvy explained the connection between comparative linguistic research and inquiry into national origins. Unlike before, in this book he recognized that searching for the national past had an “attractive charm,” and acknowledged that language leads the way because it “reflected the conditions predating historical knowledge.”92 In his opinion, linguistic affinity unintentionally forced the thinker to contemplate national origins. He stressed that without inquiring into the relations of ethnic affinities, Stahlenberg and the scholars following him in Finno-Ugric studies all believed that Finns and Hungarians were ethnically related. More generally, because languages reflected both on the cognition of its speakers and on the natural conditions in which they lived before historical times, language affinity revealed the common geographical whereabouts of the ancestors of the modern peoples. Unless, Hunfalvy added, peoples changed their languages completely.93 Accordingly, he argued that nations were born out of linguistic communities, which were comprised of individuals connected through blood relations whom also outsiders joined. They were probably speakers of related languages and lived close, much like blood relatives. The formation of a national community could happen within a relatively small geographic area. Hunfalvy believed that the majority always

92 Hunfalvy, *Vogul*, 323.
93 This addition became one of the disputed claims Vambery relied on in his ethnological work.
assimilated the minority, who gave up their native language. In Hunfalvy’s theory, linguistic community equaled nationhood and made language usage the criteria of nationality in the prehistoric past. Naturally, the theory could have strong political interference and impact on the image of modern nationhood. If language was the sole criteria for nationality, then voluntary language change allowed non-ethnic Hungarians like Hunfalvy (or for that matter Vambery) to join the nation.

In contrast, three years later, Budenz’s study examined the question of Finno-Ugric affinity in further depth and set the scholarly agenda for future Ural-Altaic studies. It did not make stipulations about linguistic or ethnic community formation. Budenz urged Hungarian scholars to concentrate on Finno-Ugric languages for two primary reasons. First, in order to reconstruct the basic language of a linguistic group, (and not of the broader family which comprises several groups), the languages in the group needed to be subjected to comparative linguistic inquiry. This should eventually lead to the second phase, the reconstruction of the group members’ common ancient language. Here Budenz relied on the interpretation of linguistic affinity that is based on vertical relations of descent. His accompanying list of words demonstrated the Finno-Ugric roots of the core Hungarian vocabulary. He also repeated Hunfalvy’s earlier arguments concerning the scope of comparative linguistics and claimed that the reconstruction of the linguistic relations and ancient Ugric vocabulary were an obligation of Hungarian linguistics due to the Finno-Ugric character of the language.  

Budenz compiled a list of scholars and their papers that contributed to the early growth of Finno-Ugric studies in Hungary. To stress the importance of continuing such studies, he declared

that by “setting such task for itself, [Hungarian linguistics] will securely function and gain a clear objective; its investigations will rise above occasional and disconnected detailed-ness.”

Budenz’s discussion testifies that he presented himself as Hunfalvy’s heir as the unofficial leader of Hungarian comparative linguistics. Being trained at the University of Göttingen, he had the advantage over his patron and Vambery. Budenz articulated a purely linguistic program consisting of a disciplinary agenda rather than a program for a geographically defined interdisciplinary field being constantly contextualized in national politics. During the ten years Budenz edited *Linguistic News*, he restricted its subject matter to Finno-Ugric studies.

Despite this Finno-Ugric turn, Hungarian linguists at the Academy still counted on Vambery’s research in Turkology and especially the eastern Turkish languages. In *The Vogul Land and People*, Hunfalvy pointed out that the Turkish vocabulary in Hungarian was a product of borrowing, in a period when Hungarian’s particular character and vocabulary had acquired a rather solid form. These words testify to the different living conditions and landscape of geographic regions where Hungarians lived in close proximity to Turkish ethnic elements, and therefore were informative of the early history of the Hungarian people. Three years later, in his aforementioned study, Budenz argued that the reconstruction of the Mongolian-Manchurian-Turkish protolanguage should be considered a separate task from Hungarian and Finno-Ugric linguistics. In his commemorative paper, Munkácsi noted that the Academy was expecting Vambery to conduct research that would shed light on the conditions and mechanism of this borrowing of Turkish words and an inventory of the number of Turkish words in Hungarian.

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95 Budenz, 380.
96 Pápay, 46.
Hungarian Scholarship and Minority Integration

Munkácsi observed that upon his return to Pest in 1864, Vambery expected the Hungarian Academy of Sciences to celebrate him, honoring him as was by the European delegates in Teheran. According to Munkácsi, Vambery was so offended that he did not even report on his travels to the Academy, which had sponsored his trip and its members continued to believe that Vambery’s Turkological studies had a role in Hungarian linguistic research. Thus Munkácsi painted a very negative and vain picture of a Vambery who did not display academic open-mindedness. Even disregarding Munkácsi’s role in the Ugric-Turkish war, he had good reason to articulate such a strong disapproval toward Vambery’s attitude upon his return, since Vambery’s way differed in most of its aspects from his.

Munkácsi along with the equally celebrated Ignác Kunos, who also participated in the 1897 Orientalist Conference in Paris, studied Turkish with Vambery. Like their professor, both were Jewish and assumed names that sounded Hungarian (Munkácsi was born Munk and chose the Hungarian name of the Carpathian city of Munkács today Munkachevo in Ukraine. Kunos originally had the surname Lusztig and chose a name that referred to one of the Turkish peoples, the Cumans, in Hungarian kunok, who were gradually settled in Hungary between the eleventh and thirteenth century.) However, Munkácsi and Kunos did not convert to Christianity. They conducted research together among the Csángó Hungarians in Romania. While Munkácsi was an expert on Ugric languages and Kunos was a Turkologist, their academic agenda was similar and contrasted sharply with that of their professor. Munkácsi and Kunos engaged with linguistics without directly addressing a nationalist agenda. Their attitudes resembled Budenz’s and that of Vambery’s world-famous Islamicist student Goldziher: without openly discussing the current political significance of their findings, they held scholarship in Hungarian was an act of patriotism in and of itself. In their scholarship, the discussion of the concept of nationhood,
nationality, and ethnogenesis was less emphasized and loosely connected to Hungarian studies. They referred to current social and political questions indirectly through the research of related linguistic phenomena and historical processes. This difference in scholarly attitudes only amplified the students’ criticism of Vambery’s lack of disciplinary training and erroneous linguistic work, which the next chapter will explore.
CHAPTER FOUR

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the politicized character of the Academy’s linguistic and historical research framed Vambery’s career, and his research built on the understanding that Hungarian was related to Turkish and that linguistic affinity informs ethnic origins. He travelled to Istanbul twice, supported by the Academy, because it was believed that his research would yield fruits in the field of the study of the Central Asian origins of Hungarians. Thus it can be argued that not only retrospectively in his autobiographies, but also at the time as a young autodidact, he successfully appealed to both the emerging self-orientalist discourse and the legacy of 1848-49. However, with the emergence of the modern Finno-Ugric research, the scholarly milieu changed and his scholarship was vehemently criticized.

This chapter argues that by partly reinstating the country’s sovereignty, the Compromise in 1867 further fuelled nationalist politics, while also allowing for the development of historical and linguistic studies that were less bound by the traditional perspective on national origins. It gave a different political perspective on scholarship and the work of the Academy. Parallel to this, the Jewish Emancipation Act in late 1867 and the Jewish Congress in 1868 altered the perspective of Hungarian Jewry regarding their relationship to the Hungarian state and people. These events influenced Vambery’s and Goldziher’s career and work differently, and the differences between Goldziher’s and Vambery’s paths are manifest in various aspects of their studies, career choices, and professional interests.

Vambery, who after his season in London returned to Hungary and worked on eastern Turkish languages, in 1869 published *Turkish Tartar World Correspondence*. It included his advocacy for Hungarian’s Turkish origins, which provoked attacks from linguists. Not only it did
not hinder his advancement in the University, his advocacy of the Turkish affinity and eastern origin earned him popularity outside of academic circles.

Because he was Vambery’s junior of eighteen years and was raised in a lower-middle class Jewish family, where his education was considered a priority, Goldziher’s studies and the first decade of his participation in Hungarian academic life open a window to another path of Jewish intellectual integration in mid-nineteenth-century Hungary. The chapter discusses some of his early articles that discussed both his research in the field of Jewish mythology, Arab history and literature, as well as the state of philological and religious history instruction in Hungary. His first monograph *Mythos Among the Hebrews* was published in 1876. It summarized Goldziher’s efforts related to ancient Hebrew mythological scholarship, Hebrew and Semitic philology, biblical exegesis, mythological studies, and the history of the ancient Middle East. *Mythos* was also part of his early endeavors to touch upon the question of Jewish integration in Hungary, resembling the *Wissenschaft* scholars’ endeavors in Germany to propagate emancipation through modern Jewish scholarship. His inaugural address in the same year “The Spanish Arabs and Islam,” revealed his broad understanding of the religious dynamics within the medieval Arab empire.\(^1\) It was also a sophisticated discussion of the current political interpretations of east and west.

The two works constituted an important milestone in Goldziher’s career: they summarized his program for modernization of Hungarian Oriental scholarship. He joined those

\(^1\) In Hungarian, the study was titled “A spanyolországi arabok helye az iszlám fejlődése történetében, összehasonlítva a keleti arabokéval” which translates as “The place [i. e. role] of the Arabs in Spain in the development of Islam compared to that of the eastern Arabs.” The translator and Goldziher-disciple Joseph De Somogyi (aka József Somogyi) translated it in the following way: “The place of the Spanish Arabs in the evolution of Islam as compared with the eastern Arabs.” In the following, I will demonstrate the many layers of reading that Goldziher offered in this one study. Somogy reveals in his translation of the title his focus was on the development of historic Islam and the four different schools of religious law.
Hungarian scholars, like Hunfalvy and Budenz, Vambery’s “enemies,” who wished to distance their field from any self-Orientalist discourse without reducing the capacity of scholarship to comment on political and social issues.² The examination of both Mythos and “Spanish Arabs” demonstrate that even the reference to self-Orientalism was foreign to Goldziher. He systematically avoided reacting to it, as it was oppositional to his concept of one undivided and international Oriental study field. His stress on the importance of philological and historical methods did not allow any consideration of national political interests or stakes in scholarship. He famously told to one of his students, “Scholarship has no country, but the scholar does have his country.”³ It explains not only his refusal to engage with self-Orientalism, but also the deep imprint that nineteenth-century Romantic Hungarian nationalism left on both of these early works as well as his insistence that confessional biases should not compromise the study of Hebrew and biblical exegesis. Ultimately, he wanted to speak to both Hungarian and non-Hungarian audiences and he believed that the universal values he discussed in his works and universally accepted linguistic methodology promoted his objective.

Whereas the optimism of Eötvös and the other engineers of the Compromise defined the mood of the period of Goldziher’s departure for Germany, he returned from his studies to Hungary during the period Hungarian politics took an illiberal turn, which was provoked by the 1873 agrarian crisis. Despite receiving a state scholarship to Germany (1868-1872) and later to

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² Hunfalvy’s report of the 1874 International Orientalist Congress that took place in London, reflects an awareness amongst scholars of the political reality in which Oriental scholarship developed, although it was relegated to a mere acknowledgement. What he emphasized instead was that orientalists consider themselves from a big family where everybody is equal and everybody’s research is equally important. The task of Oriental scholars, in his understanding, was to bring the culture of the east close to the west. Hunfalvy participated in the Turanian section and in his address he discussed Finno-Ugrian affinity and pointed out that the Turanian term was wrong. In general, he noted that judging from the great turnout of lay audience, in England, Orientalism received much more attention than in Hungary. He believed it was due to the imperial role England played.

the Middle East (1873-74), after the publication of his first monograph, Goldziher did not become a regular faculty member either at the University or at the newly opened Rabbinical Seminary. Instead he became the secretary of the Jewish Congregation of Pest and remained in this position for three decades. Thus, the young Goldziher experienced both the general optimism of the Compromise as well as the growing disappointment with it and the economic situation in Hungary.

The emergence of modern political antisemitism illustrates the illiberal turn of the third fourth of the century, which influenced not only Goldzihers but also Vambery’s and Stein’s careers. In his 1875 address, the parliament member Győző Istóczy (1842-1815), before asking the government whether it planned to block Jewish immigration to Hungary, reminded his fellow representatives that, despite what they claimed, the Jews did not constitute a religion, but a “closed social cast.” While claiming to be Liberals, Istóczy argued, Jews in Hungary were intolerant and planned, with the help of other Jews elsewhere, to rule the whole world. He added that, unlike the Orthodox who wished to preserve the purity of the Jewish blood, Neologs wished to acquire world power by mingling with non-Jews. In the same year, Istóczy founded the Antisemitic Party and three years later, he was the first to propose that Jews should found their own country in Palestine.

Also in 1875, the Balkanist Benjámin Kállay (1839-1903), who later became the Monarchy’s longest serving finance minister and the governor of Bosnia, launched a daily newspaper *People of the East.* Kállay intended it to be the mouthpiece of the right wing

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4 According to Kállay’s biographer Károly Dán, Széchenyi’s 1858 *Ein Blick auf den anonymen Rückblick* in which he criticized the Austrian post-1849 harsh politics as well as John Stuart Mill’s work especially influenced the young Kállay’s thinking, which by the Compromise thoroughly changed. Kállay became one of the most vehement advocates of the Hungarian imperial idea. See, Károly Dán, “Kállay Béni és a magyar imperializmus,”
opposition. Like the editors of the other *People of the East* periodicals, Kállay reiterated some of Széchenyi’s arguments in his opening editorial. He criticized the government for neglecting the “organic ideals that shape the future of the nation,” disregarding the natural resources of the society, and not preparing plans of action for the future. He declared that the *People of the East* did not expect success from the government which believed it could balance the state budget without substantial administrative reform, is afraid to break away from chimeras, and wishes to gain the necessary force to save the nation from national illusions.⁵

Both Istóczy and Kállay agreed that the current course of Hungarian politics did not serve the goal of making Hungariandom a strong ethnic community and Hungary a powerful country – and they considered the two necessarily interconnected.⁶ Whereas Istóczy blamed the government’s philosemitism, Kállay explained that the government did not follow Széchenyi’s teachings. The two arguments illustrate that following the illiberal turn in the aftermath of the Compromise, whereas antisemitism did not Orientalize Jews, self-Orientalism acquired a more conservative outlook.

Kállay claimed that the greatness of Hungary depended on its respect for its eastern heritage. His argument revealed the influence of both the literati’s early eighteenth-century self-Orientalism and Széchenyi’s *The People of the East*, who argued similarly to them. In his 1874 *Aesthetikai levelek Vörösmarty epicus munkáiról* (Aesthetic Letters about Vörösmarty's epic

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⁶ Istóczy argued that for him the Jewish question was merely an economic problem, while at another time he named it a social problem. His parliamentary addresses are available from [http://mtdaportal.extra.hu/books/istoczy_gyozo_orszaggyulesi_beszedei.pdf](http://mtdaportal.extra.hu/books/istoczy_gyozo_orszaggyulesi_beszedei.pdf); Internet; accessed March 30, 2014.
works), the literary historian Ferenc Toldy argued that historical precision was irrelevant to epic poetry, because its significance lay in the fact that it offered “philosophical truth”:

We do not know the mythology of the Scythian-Hungarian nation, because soon after its arrival in Europe the preponderant Christianity suffocated it. I will not examine here what impact it had on the life of the nation and its poetry. … Our nation is eastern, it lived in close connection with every other eastern nation, civilized and uncivilized alike, which does not necessitate that it be manifest in the philosophy of its language. Could it gain its religion from elsewhere than Orientalism, and do we need to worry about the historical truth, if we have the philosophical one?7

Similarly, the poet and Academy secretary János Arany observed that even those intellectuals who unconditionally accepted the new scholarly findings about the Finno-Ugric affinity found it hard to detach themselves from the customary understanding of national origins.8

The respected archeologist Ferenc Pulszky’s address at the January 1874 meeting of the History Department of the Academy illustrates that some scholars also shared the growing intolerance. His expressed “fear” that the Turanian character of the nation might disappear completely, revealed the xenophobia toward the west in self-Orientalism. Whereas he praised the wisdom of the first Christian king Steven in inviting Germans and Italians to the country to help


8 See Arany’s epigram from 1878 “Budenzhez” (To Budenz) in Akadémiai papírszeletek II (Academic paper sheets) on the refusal of the Academy to give the Turkologist Gábor Bálint Academic membership. “Igazi vasfejű székely a Bálint/Nem arra megy, amerre Hunfalvy Pál int.” (Bálint is a real headstrong Sekler/Instead of the direction into which Pal Hunfalvy points, he goes elsewhere.) available from http://mek.oszk.hu/00500/00597/html/vs187704.htm#63; Internet; accessed October 25, 2013. As the chapter on Vambéry’s career discusses, Budenz and Hunfalvy were the two leading linguists who developed the modern scholarly theory of the Finno-Ugric affinity.

186
to develop it culturally and economically, in doing so, “the Hungarian blood was continuously refreshed, and aside the language no other Turanian characteristic remained in our nation.” In Pulszky’s opinion, it was the task of the modern generation to safeguard the purity of the language against modernization.

Despite the rise of antisemitic and conservative opposition that engulfed the Academy as well, Goldziher believed that he could succeed in the career he was trained for. In the same years, Vambery was more occupied with political writings, mostly for English audiences. However, in 1876, Hunfalvy’s Magyarország etnographiája (Hungary’s Ethnography) was published, inspiring him to return to the topic of Hungarian national origins, which will be discussed in the next chapter. This chapter focuses instead on how Vambery and Goldziher

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9 The original Hungarian text: “Szent István királyunk nem kevés dicsérete az előrelátás, mellyel ezen elvet felismerte, s az olyaszok s németek bevándorlását előmozdította, mi által a magyar vér folytonosan felfrissített adoptio s bevándorlás által oly annyira, hogy nemzetünkben a nyelven kívül alig maradt meg turáni jelleg. Ránk tehát késő utódokra egy egészen másféle kötelesség nehezedik, tudniillik örködni nehogy az idegen befolyások hullámai nemzeti tulajdonunkat, nyelvünk tisztaságát elsodorják, nehogy a civilizáció áldását nemzetünk felolvasásának árán vásároljuk meg.” Ferenc Pulszky, “A magyarországi avar-leletekről” (About the Avar findings in Hungary) Értekezések a Történelemtudomány köréből (Historiographical Studies) VII (1873-74): 12.

10 Whereas neither Vambery’s political works of the 1870s on the Russian-British “Great Game,” nor the History of Bokhara and the pioneering Turkish ethnographical writings form part of my analysis, it should be noted that they contributed to the tone and the interpretations of Vambery’s studies on the Hungarian ethnogenesis, like the Origins of the Hungarians as well as the autobiographical works. Among the 1870s political works are: Oroszország hatalmi állása Áziában, Történeti tanulmány, (Pest: Atheneum, 1871) Russlands Machtstellung in Asien, (Russia’s power in Asia) (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1871) Bokhara története, Geschichte Bocharas, (History of Bokhara) (Stuttgart, 1872) Zentralasien und die englisch-russische Grenzfrage, (Central Asia and the Enlish-Russian Border Question) (Leipzig, 1873) Der Islam in XIX Jahrhundert, (Islam in the Nineteenth Century) (Leipzig, 1875) Keleti életképek. (Budapest: Atheneum, 1876) Sittenbilder aus dem Morgenlande, (Images from the East) (Berlin: A. Hoffman & Co., 1876). Die Primitive Kultur des turko-tatarischen Volkes (The Turkish-Tartar People’s Primitive Culture) (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1879). Munkácsi notes that Vambery’s Törik-tatár nyelvek etymológiai szótára, (Etymological Dictionary of the Turkish-Tartar Languages) was published in German the next year: Wörterbuch der turko-tatarischen Sprachen (Leipzig 1878). It received almost no reaction in Hungary. In connection to the German publication, however, he noted that Radloff’s 1882 Phonetik der nördlichen Türkischen refutes many of its arguments. In Munkácsi’s view, Vambery enforced many etymological correspondences without basis—almost emulating Budenz’s techniques. Nonetheless, in his autobiographical work, Vambery acknowledged the passion with which he tried to reveal the etymological parallels between the expressions of different Turkish languages. He also admitted that lacking the proper linguistic training led him to make some mistaken arguments. Küzdelmeim, 326. Munkácsi’s discussion: Munkácsi, 110-112.
wished to synchronize their research with Oriental scholarship Hungary as well as the ways in which they approached the theoretical notions of nationhood, ethnogenesis, and the roles that language and religion played in it. For these two scholars, the discussion of these concepts was closely connected to their fields. (The next chapter will continue discussing this topic too.) This chapter demonstrates that these men wished to both play a formative role in Hungarian Oriental scholarship and, at the same time, to be a part of international orientalist circles. In their own fields, Turkology and Islamic studies, both would come to be considered founding fathers, and it was their work during this period that allowed them to become so. Despite Goldziher’s growing antagonism to Vambery and alternative understanding of Orientalism, their views on Hungarian nationhood showed many similarities.

**First Encounter between Goldziher and Vambery: Jewish Studies, Oriental Scholarship, and Jewish Emancipation**

From 1861, Habsburg-Hungarian relations were characterized by a “thaw.” In this year, the king assembled and shortly afterwards disassembled the Diet after long years of suspending dialogue with the Hungarian political elite. During the short period of the 1861 Diet, the question of Jewish emancipation was addressed, but without any decisive outcome. In 1865, after Vambery’s conversion, he began teaching Turkish at the University, and Goldziher became his student; in this same year, the Diet discussed the question of Jewish emancipation – again. While nothing definitive resulted from the discussions in 1865, in 1867, shortly after the Compromise, Prime Minister Gyula Andrássy submitted the proposal for the Emancipation Act to the Hungarian parliament, which accepted it. During these years, Goldziher grew from a teenager into a young scholar. He both experienced the antisemitic atmosphere at the University and enjoyed Vambery’s and Ballagi’s mentoring. He was a witness as the issue of emancipation occupied Hungarian politicians and the ways in which Jews reacted to it – though he did not
discuss it in his diary. He only mentioned that through his Jewish studies, he also became involved for a short while in the preparations for the Jewish Congress.\textsuperscript{11} The changes and the extremism of the period are reflected in Goldziher’s development: from an Orthodox Jewish youth, whose studies as a private student were dominated by traditional Jewish scholarship, he became a recipient of a Hungarian state scholarship and doctoral candidate in Arab philology.\textsuperscript{12}

**Family History and Studies**

At the opening of his diary, Goldziher briefly described the origins of his family, too. Like Vambery’s, his ancestors also arrived in Hungary in the eighteenth century from the west, but in contrast to Vambery’s, Goldziher’s family settled down in the much richer western region of Hungary. While Vambery could only deduce his family’s place of origin from their name, based on a relatively broad variety of sources, several of the Goldziher family members had studied the Goldzihers’ origins, and their findings complement the genealogical information that Ignaz Goldziher recorded in his diary.\textsuperscript{13} Goldziher noted that he was originally a “Hamburger”

\textsuperscript{11} In 1868, during three months, prior to the Congress, Goldziher edited the periodical *Izraelita Közlöny* (Israelite News). Goldziher, *Napló*, 56.

\textsuperscript{12} Goldziher’s path from traditional Jewish studies to Oriental scholarship and philology reminds of Momigliano’s emphasis on the high number of Jewish intellectuals in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Italy. Momigliano stressed that North-Italian Jews were highly educated in traditional Hebrew literature and in general knew Hebrew, and this education transpired in the high level of their secular education as well.

\textsuperscript{13} Sándor Büchler, a family member and rabbi, traced the Goldziher family history back to Hamburg and Altona. Büchler married Goldziher’s niece, the daughter of Ignaz’s sister and brother-in-law, whom together with the other siblings Goldziher raised after the parents’ early deaths. In a letter entitled Goldziherék családfája, (The Goldzihers’ Family Tree) Károly Goldziher, Ignaz’s younger son, pointed out to the historian of religions József Waldapfel that as a Jewish surname Goldziher first appeared in fifteenth-century Spain and it referred to the profession of gold-file making (Goldzieher means gold-puller in German). (It is found at the Oriental Collection at the HAS: MS 4244/77.) Sephardi Jews fleeing Spain were admitted into Altona, and Büchler believed that the granddaughter of a certain “Spanier” (Spaniard) Nathan ben Mozes, who was among the founders of the Altona Jewish community, was married to a Goldzieher. The Hamburg community elected Moses’s son Abraham as their president. (Glückel von Hameln, whose memoirs are one of the most precious records of German Jewish history in the early modern period, noted that the Goldziehers were among the richest members of the community. It was believed that the Goldziehers were related to Heinrich Heine as well as the Viennese Arnstein family.) The name of Moses Goldzieher from Hamburg, probably a descendant of Abraham Goldzieher, was recorded in the books of the city of Kőpcsény, and it is believed that he was the first Goldziher in Hungary. Today, Kőpcsény, or Kittsee, is situated on the Austrian side of the border with Slovakia, close to Hungary.
and that his ancestors settled down in the so called seven-settlements in Western Hungary in the mid-1700s. Though both Goldziher’s paternal and maternal grandparents were closely associated with the famous Bratislava Orthodox Rabbi Hatam Sofer, his education did not remain within the confines of rabbinical scholarship.

For the young Ignaz, his father hired a private tutor, Moses Freudenberg, a widely respected bible and Hebrew scholar, who gave him Talmud and Torah lessons and helped him prepare for annual high school examinations in secular subjects -- he was a private student at the Székesfehérvár Cistercian high school. Following the public friction between Orthodox and Reform congregations in Székesfehérvár, his father joined the progressives, while his private tutor, according to Goldziher’s diary, was critical of both factions. Nonetheless, his studies

in Western Hungary were first allowed to settle in noble towns like Köpcsény. It was one of the “seven communities” that the Eszterházy family founded in the seventeenth century and opened for Jewish settlers in the eighteenth century. Another aristocratic estate owner of the area, the Batthyány family, opened five settlements for Jewish immigrants during the eighteenth century. The Jewish population of Burgerland stems from this period. The Goldziher descendants today live all over the world. In 1995, they compiled a family tree and history: Etienne Sadi Kirschen (editor), The Diaspora of a Hungarian Family: the Goldziehers (Brussels: Toison d’or, 1995). In contrast, the literary historian and novelist Géza Hegedűs, whose mother was a Goldziher descendant, noted that the family-legend of the Goldziher family’s arrival to Hungary was the result of a more dramatic journey of a certain Fernando Torquedor, Dominican priest. Recording the family history in the 1980s for the Israelite Literary Society, Hegedűs argued that the Goldzihers’ history intertwined with the Transylvanian Protestants’. In Hegedűs’s opinion, his ancestor Anselmus Goldziher moved from Germany to Hungary at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Hegedűs, though could not determine what of the exact connection was between Anselmus and a later descendant Moses Markus, whom he believed was his common ancestor with the orientalist Ignaz and the ophthalmologist Vilmos (Wilhelm) Goldziher. According to Hegedűs, Moses Markus’s eldest son was Ignaz’s father, the second son was Vilmos’s father, and the third son was Hegedűs’s great-grandfather. This somewhat contradicts Ignaz’s belief that his paternal grandfather was Vitus Goldziher. See, Géza Hegedűs, “Egy Goldziher-unoka családai emlékei,” (The memories of a Goldziher grandchild) Évkönyv (Yearbook) 1981 (Budapest, MIOK, 1981), 194-210. Ignaz and Vilmos in fact were first grade cousins. According to Büchler, the Hatam Sofer named their grandfather Vitus Goldziher, who was a merchant, his friend and a notable, learned scholar. Both of his grandsons were proud of him. Ignaz Goldziher explained that his library was founded on his grandfather’s books. Based on Goldziher’s diary, Haber emphasizes that when the family moved to Pest, Ignaz brought with him his library that at the time already included six hundred books. He felt, with the books, he also inherited his grandfather’s religious spirituality and vehemently debated with his cousin Vilmos: in their childhood correspondence, Ignaz advocated Orthodoxy while Vilmos defended Reform. In his diary Vilmos confirmed Ignaz’s claims: he noted that his grandfather’s teachings had long-lasting influence, which was reflected in the fact that Ignaz was the “most educated and original man whom I [Vilmos] encountered in my whole career.” (MS 4244/77)
continued peacefully and there were no arguments between his father and tutor. Based on Goldziher’s description of his studies with Freudenberg, Lawrence Conrad emphasized that the rigorous schedule of studies must have made Goldziher’s childhood “bleak and endlessly stressful.” Another student of Goldziher’s life, Peter Haber likewise stressed the intensity and lengthy hours of study the young Goldziher was subjected to. Goldziher, however, writing his diary at the age of forty, when he was already a father of two, was rather proud of the education that he received as a child. In his eyes, theirs was a pious Jewish family that respected learning and, as its male members were occupied with scholarship, the family provided a very warm support system that enabled him to study from a very early age. He remembered Freudenberg providing him both ethical and intellectual knowledge at the same time, which for Goldziher became the standard for proper scholarship for the rest of his life. The extent to which his studies became the center of his life is demonstrated by the meticulous list of his readings and writings in his diary, which dwarf the records of any other aspect of his life.

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14 Goldziher, Napló, 28. For a detailed discussion of schism in Hungary, see Katz’s A House Divided and Frojimovics’s Torn history.


Goldziher described also his father as having contributed to his studies both materially and academically. Neither the teachings of Reform Judaism nor secular scholarship were unknown to the young Goldziher. At the age of twelve, with paternal financing, Goldziher published his first study *Sichat Jiczchak*. He recorded in his diary that his father bought him Gesenius’s *Hebrew Grammar*, which first introduced him to Protestant bible scholarship.

Gesenius was one of the Protestant German orientalists who, in the early nineteenth century, wished to explore the common origins of Indo-European and Semitic languages. Their undertaking was part of the Liberal Biblical Criticism, which used linguistic examination to engage with a then modern historical examination of the sacred texts, thus challenging traditional assumptions on their authorship, the history of the Israelites, and other issues. Today their project is viewed as only one step removed from the traditional political agenda of German Protestant theology, which depicted the Jewish intellectual heritage as inferior to Christianity’s. Gesenius’s work gained instant acknowledgement and praise among German scholars. How Gesenius’s dictionary of the *Mikra* (Hebrew Bible) was received in Hungarian Jewish circles is not a well-researched subject. However, today’s scholars do know that the Italian Rabbi Samuel David Luzzatto, a respected authority of modern Jewish scholarship and the author of the first comprehensive “Jewish” historical linguistic study of Hebrew, acknowledged Gesenius’s work as an important contribution to Hebrew linguistic scholarship.

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19 Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebräische Grammatik* (Halle: Renger, 1813). Gesenius’s book was republished over twenty times since the first edition. It was published in Hungarian in 1832. Considering his German diary and that at home the Goldzihers spoke German, Goldziher most probably had a German edition.


21 Samuel David Luzzatto, *Prolegomena to a Grammar of the Hebrew Language*, translated by Aaron D. Rubin (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2005.) The original work *Prolegomeni ad una grammatica ragionata della lingua ebraica di Samuel David Luzzatto da Trieste* was published in 1836. See also Yakov Shavit, "וָגָם גֶּזֶּנִיָּס בָּרָךְ יְהִי".
Arriving in Pest, the fifteen-years-old Goldziher continued to broaden both his secular and religious education, though not as a private student but within the framework of academic institutions. He studied Hungarian philology and other humanities subjects at the University, in addition to taking Turkish, Arabic, and Persian lessons with Vambery. In his diary, Goldziher stressed that as a teenage student, he believed everything Vambery told him. Only later did he realize that Vambery was not such a “great orientalist” and that many of his teachings were either outdated or factually wrong. He wrote: “we disregarded grammatical and syntax-phenomena and we examined the Turkish syntax not based on theoretical study but instincts.” The same way that Goldziher praised Freudenberg, his private tutor, for instilling in him what he considered knowledge infused with ethics, the adult Goldziher condemned what he viewed as Vambery’s opportunism as a scholar. This also manifested itself in the ways Vambery promoted Goldziher within academic circles and outside of them.

Less than two years after Goldziher started his university studies, Vambery arranged for the publication of Goldziher’s Turkish folktale translations in *Hazánk és a Külföld* (Our Homeland and the Abroad) and also articles related to Oriental research in the *Sunday News* (for which Vambery himself regularly wrote articles). In his diary, Goldziher described how Vambery bragged about his student’s achievements to the Academy, while the enthusiasm and the pride Vambery took in Goldziher was in fact confusing and imposed stress on him. Vambery’s enthusiasm for his student’s linguistic talent should not be surprising, especially since he was also starting his University career, and the forty-year-old Goldziher failed to

(And also Gesenius be blessed) Haaretz, April 16, 2010; available from http://www.haaretz.co.il/literature/1.1197789; Internet; accessed November 7, 2013. As Marco Di Giulio pointed out, Luzzatto also inspired and encouraged the instruction of Hebrew as a spoken language based on philological research. See “‘There is no time more pleasurable than when I converse in the sacred language.’ A plan for the revival of spoken Hebrew in 19th-Century Italy,” *Hebrew Studies* 53 (2012): 203-230.
mention that his journalistic career continued after this: during his Middle Eastern travels he reported to Hungarian papers and, for which he was most likely compensated. All of his confusion aside, Goldziher did acknowledge that his mentor helped him to receive the prestigious *pro diligentia* prize twice.

Thirdly, the mature Goldziher emphasized that Vambery “incessantly scolded ‘German scholars’ with revolting generalizations,” which twenty five years earlier as a teenager he could neither verify nor refute. Nonetheless, Vambery played a central role in Goldziher’s early career. Despite their later personal antagonism, the forty-year-old Goldziher noted in his diary that, “I would be an evil soul if I ever forgot or denied that I can thank Vambery for my sincere attraction to Oriental studies.”

In Pest, Goldziher also enrolled in Samuel Löw Brill’s Talmud *shiurim* (lectures), which “Colleguim Talmudicum” he highly praised in his diary. He studied not only his “beloved Talmud,” but also read Abraham Geiger’s and Leopold Zunz’s works, the German orientalist and Old Testament exegete Heinrich Ewald’s *History of Israel* (1843-1852) as well as Max Müller’s philological and religious historical works. In the summer of 1868, Goldziher met Mór Kármán, who became his close friend and influenced his early Hebrew scholarship.

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24 Tuska Benes points out that Ewald opposed Gesenius’s arguments about the complete lack of authenticity of the Hebrew Scriptures and pointed out that among the rewritten myths original passages were to be found in the Hebrew texts. See: Benes, 98-99.

25 Kármán, who in 1874 changed his original surname Kleinmann to the Hungarian-sounding Kármán, was a disciple of Rabbi Leopold Löw, the 1848 activist in Szeged. Kármán continued his studies in Pest, and Goldziher met him at Brill’s seminary. According to his diary, the young Goldziher was very impressed by Kármán’s general learning, broad literacy, and knowledge of various topics of mutual interest. The conversations with Kármán woke Goldziher’s interest in mythology and ancient religiosity, which Goldziher’s first monograph, *Mythos* demonstrates. Goldziher was particularly impressed with Kármán’s way of thinking. He recognized in Kármán a systematic thinker who could see beyond the particularities and recognize and explain broad
Vambery also introduced Goldziher to Ballagi, who loaned him Protestant theological books and convinced him not to continue his private high school studies. Goldziher enrolled in the Protestant Gymnasium where Max Nordau was his classmate. Through the books that he received from Ballagi and the private readings of the pioneers of Wissenschaft des Judentums, Goldziher was drawn even closer to modern Jewish scholarship and the intellectual realm of Protestant biblical criticism and German philological methods, which Gesenius’s book had opened to him but Vambery had “scolded.” Goldziher’s intellectual maturation as an Oriental scholar resembled that of German philologists and German Jewish scholars associated with Wissenschaft des Judentums. Nonetheless, through Vambery’s and Ballagi’s influence, Goldziher advanced toward an increasingly secular inquiry into linguistics and the history and religions of the ancient and medieval Middle East. His training was equally influenced by Hungarian interest in the Orient and the political milieu of the years preceding the Compromise. He further distanced himself from the exclusive realm of Orthodox Jewish scholarship during his years studying at the University of Pest. His early transformation illustrates the ways in which the Hungarian state could influence the integration of Jewish scholars.

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Correlations. Goldziher argued that he could thank Kármán that he had successfully finished his doctoral studies and had become a scholar who did not lose his way in the details. Most importantly, Goldziher was fond of Kármán’s character and his attitude toward scholarship; Goldziher compared him to his tutor Freudenberg, whose lectures provided both intellectual challenge and ethical teaching. Goldziher, Tagebuch, 42.

26 According to Goldziher, Ballagi was compensating for his break with the Jewish community by supporting Jewish talents like himself. Goldziher, Napló, 36. In contrast, Goldziher failed to note that with Ballagi he shared an interest in Renan’s work, and it is unclear if he was familiar with Ballagi’s 1863 Renania. Goldziher’s diary is a very sarcastic text; sarcasm was second nature to Goldziher and many other intellectuals. (See third and sixth chapters.) In this part of his diary he also noted that in math and physics he received aid from a young law student, Nathanael Grünhut, “who at that time arrived from [the town of] Paks and studied at the university, now, as a Catholic and under the name Antal Tolnai he works as a judge in Fiume.” Goldziher, Tagebuch 28. Goldziher, Napló, 39. Nordau, acquainted with both Vambery and Goldziher, tried to involve both in the Zionist project. He connected Vambery with Herzl. However, he developed a true and deep friendship with Goldziher while in high school, which continued later. Their correspondence, which Alexander Scheiber published in 1956, testifies to it. Alexander Scheiber, “Max Nordau’s letters to Ignace Goldziher” Jewish Social Studies 18, no. 3 (1956): 199-207.
Encounter with Eötvös

Just as in Vambery’s case, Eötvös played a central role in facilitating the state’s influence. In 1868, Vambery introduced Goldziher to Eötvös, who since 1840 supported the cause of Jewish emancipation. Following the Compromise, Eötvös became minister of education and served as the president of the Academy, and in this capacity asked Vambery to recommend a talented student deserving of the state’s support to study abroad. Eötvös recognized Goldziher’s talent and awarded him a state scholarship to study Arab philology in Germany. In one of the few rare references to the general Hungarian political situation in Goldziher’s diary, he described his first meeting with Eötvös, which took place in April 1868, five months after the Emancipation Act was accepted and shortly after Goldziher matriculated:

During this period occurred one of our century’s most important world events: 1867, the restoration of the Hungarian constitutionality. It did not remain un-influential on the future development of my life. Minister of education József Eötvös asked for suggestions regarding which students should be educated abroad to become future university professors. Vambery and Ballagi, who were in contact with him, praised me so much that he called me to visit him.27

In June, two months after their meeting, the minister told him “Well, Goldziher, we are settled,” and Goldziher received his scholarship to study in Germany.28 In contrast to Vambery, who in his description of meeting Eötvös stressed their shared patriotism and belief in the importance of the study of the origins of the Hungarians, Goldziher described Eötvös as the champion of religious tolerance and wisdom. During the years he studied in Berlin and later in Leipzig, he visited the minister whenever in Hungary to share his experiences. According to his diary, Eötvös was very pleased with his progress and saw in him a future university professor in

27 Goldziher, Napló, 44.
28 The Jewish congress was assembled only in December, and at that time Goldziher was already studying in Berlin.
Pest. In contrast, his parents were pessimistic about his future career; they were skeptical that a Jewish youngster could make an academic career in late-nineteenth-century Hungary. This opposition illustrates the substantial gap and the tension between the young Goldziher’s Orthodox Jewish home and the secular studies at the Catholic state University.

**Studies in Germany**

Goldziher’s studies in Germany and research in Holland and Vienna constituted an important withdrawal from the Hungarian milieu: it seems as if in Germany, Goldziher was not occupied with the problems he faced daily in Hungary, and indeed, the Orientalism he learned there was not subjected to the same political concerns as in Hungary.29 Interestingly, in his diary, he did not discuss the relevance of Oriental studies to the discussions of the Jewish integration in Germany, though he met Abraham Geiger and other scholars associated with Wissenschaft des Judentums personally.

Starting in 1868, Goldziher studied in Berlin, where the main focus of his education was Hebrew philology. His professors were the Gesenius disciple E. Rödiger, a former consul in Damascus, J. G. Wetzstein, and the Arabist F. Dieterici. In Berlin he also developed a personal relationship with the Wissenschaft scholars Moritz Steinschneider, Heymann Steinthal, and Abraham Geiger—whose lectures he attended. Goldziher described how Steinschneider inspired him to focus on Jewish philosophy and Jewish-Arabic literature. Thanks to Steinschneider, Goldziher prepared the manuscript for his doctorate, *Studien über Tanchûm Jerûschalmi*, while

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29 From 1867, Goldziher had been publishing on Hebrew and Arabic linguistic and literary, and Jewish religious and historical topics in Jewish periodicals like the *Israelita Közlöny* (Israelite News), *Magyar Israelita* (Hungarian Israelite), Leopold Löw’s *Ben Chananja*, (from 1869 in) the *Akadémiai Közlöny* (Academic News), and Ballagi’s *Tudományos Protestáns Szemle* (Scholarly Protestant Review). By publishing scholarly articles he kept in touch with the intellectual interests of the Jewish reading public and the scholarly circles in Hungary of the early 1870s, but only after his return could he actually participate in Hungarian scholarly life.
still in Berlin. In his dissertation, Goldziher discussed the medieval Jewish biblical exegete and poet Tanchum Yerushalmi’s Arabic work on the vocabulary of *Mishneh Torah*, which mirrored Goldziher’s interest in medieval Jewish philosophy and biblical exegesis.\(^{30}\) Goldziher argued that his time in Berlin was important less because of the lectures he attended than because of his solo research. His diary also mentioned that he became acquainted with Gustav Jahn during a private study that the two undertook with Rödiger. Jahn introduced him to “Tübingen theology” and Hegel’s philosophical work. With Jahn’s encouragement, Goldziher read Strauss and Bauer and felt they helped him better understand Geiger.\(^{31}\) He said little about Steinthal’s impact in his diary, though his first monograph about Hebrew mythology *Der Mythos bei den Hebräen und seine geschichtliche Entwicklung: Untersuchungen zur Mythologie und Religionswissenschaft* (Mythology Among The Hebrews And Its Historical Development: Research in Mythology and Science of Religion, in the following *Mythos*) based its theoretical approach on Steinthal’s *Volkerpsychologie* (folk psychology).\(^{32}\)

In 1870, Goldziher defended his dissertation in Leipzig, where he had transferred in order to learn more Arabic with the period’s foremost authority, Heinrich Leberecht Fleischer. Fleischer was the student of French scholar Silvestre de Sacy, who singlehandedly transferred the center of modern Arabic philology from Paris to his homeland, Germany. Thanks to

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\(^{30}\) Moses Maimonides’s *Mishneh Torah* was compiled between 1170 and 1180 in Egypt, where Maimonides fled from Spain. As the Hebrew title suggests, a name that was also used for the fifth book of Moses, מִשְנֵה תּוֹרָה Deuteronomy, which in a sense gives an “overview” of the written Jewish law. Maimonides wished to summarize Jewish religious law in its entirety. Yerushalmi (circa 1261/62-1300), who was born in Palestine, was considered one of the greatest authorities -- and was often named as the “Abraham Ibn Ezra of the East.”


\(^{32}\) In the Introduction, Goldziher credits Steinthal’s work as the first impulse to start his study. Introduction to *Mythology Among The Hebrews And Its Historical Development*, translated by Russell Martineau (London: Longman, 1877), xxix. In the following: *Mythos*.
Fleischer’s work, Germany emerged as the center of modern Arabic philology in Europe and was eventually regarded as the leading workshop for Oriental studies in general. Goldziher could not have been educated in a better place. In Leipzig, the list of his teachers’ names included the Syrian scholar Krehl, the Sanskritist Brockhaus, and Drobisch, who taught psychology. In his diary Goldziher noted that Fleischer’s lectures stressed linguistic questions, but during their private conversations he inspired Goldziher’s interest in Muslim law and the history of Islam. Fleischer introduced Goldziher to his family and invited him to his home. In Fleischer’s seminars, Goldziher found himself in the company of diligent and talented students who—like Goldziher himself—later became formidable scholars. He excelled and earned the nickname “little sheikh,” next to Fleischer’s title of “big sheikh”.33 He chose to defend his dissertation and to take his examinations in the fields of ancient history and philosophy. After his defense, he continued to Leiden, where he audited lectures by Calvinist and Lutheran theologians such as A. Kuenen and J. H. Scholten. In addition, he attended lectures by the classicist C. G. Cobet, and most importantly, he collected material for future research and forged lifelong friendships with M. J. Goeje and Reinhart Dozy, an authority on Arab Medieval Spain. In his diary, Goldziher argued that these Dutch scholars truly understood his Muslim works. Before returning to Pest, Goldziher also spent half a year in the Viennese Hofbibliothek collecting sources.

After his return to Hungary, Goldziher was still torn between the minister’s encouragement and his own enthusiasm toward his studies, and the real presence of antisemitism in the Hungarian ministry of education and University, which his parents also pointed out to

33 Goldziher, Napló, 54.
him. Eötvös had sent him abroad to study with the leading scholars of the time in order to introduce the latest scholarship to Hungary through his appointment to the University. Eötvös, however, could do nothing to diminish the University faculty’s antisemitic antagonism toward the young Goldziher – at least this is what the reader learns from Goldziher’s diary. During their last encounter before Eötvös’s death in February 1871, Eötvös told Goldziher not to be discouraged by the University faculty’s antagonism toward him. In this meeting, Eötvös told Goldziher that if the University of Pest refused to appoint him, he would do it himself. Goldziher replied that such an appointment by the minister would create an even more uncomfortable situation for him and he wondered if a university appointment was a vain dream because of his Jewishness. (Though, Goldziher also believed that the leading linguists like Hunfalvy and Budenz were opposed to him as Vambery’s student rather than as a Jew.) A decade and half earlier Vambery had faced a similar problem and had no scruples in turning directly to the King. Based on Vambery’s autobiography, the conversation with Franz Joseph did not touch on Vambery’s (former) Jewishness or Protestantism. In contrast, the description of Eötvös’s eruptive reaction to Goldziher’s suggestion about the possible antagonism toward his Jewishness reinforced Eötvös’s image as pro-emancipation advocate and representative of modern Hungary. Eötvös asked Goldziher,

if he didn’t know that they lived in a free country where every citizen enjoyed equal rights? We Jews by all means want to believe that we are living in the Middle Ages. [He, Eötvös, asked] whether I believed that he [Eötvös] was unnecessarily throwing the country’s money out of the window, just for his own delight, not benefitting the future education of Hungarian scholars?35

34 He described the faculty members as “Jew-eaters.” The phrase Judenfresser (Jew eater) was a commonly used attribute and substitute for antisemite. Goldziher, Napló, 60.

35 Goldziher, Napló, 62-63.
With Eötvös’s death in 1871, his promise to appoint Goldziher went unfulfilled. After his habilitation, Goldziher did not receive the Hebrew chair. The Catholic Péter Hatala was appointed instead - this was the University’s only faculty position in Hebrew after Eötvös abolished it at the theological department in 1869. Goldziher became a corresponding Academy member in 1871 and Privatdozent of Oriental languages in 1872 at Pest University. His return to Hungary confirmed his parents’ pessimism. For the twenty-two year old Goldziher, who studied with the foremost experts of the era, the return to the Hungarian capital must have been devastating. Not only as a Jew, but also as an Oriental scholar with “German training” he was not received the way he hoped.

In Simon’s view, from its beginning in the early 1870s, Goldziher’s career was paradigmatic since his quest for creating a modern scholarship in Hungary was equally a scholarly and political program: he followed Spinoza’s example when hoped to contribute to the creation of a state with which both as a Jew and a scholar could identify. In many respects Simon accepts Karády’s claim, namely that the Jewish role in the modernization of the country was unparalleled. For Simon, the Jewish scholar Goldziher’s career exemplified this phenomenon and also explained why it was doomed to fail in its endeavors.

Self-Orientalism and Linguistics: the Prelude to the Ugric-Turkish War

The years following the Compromise brought substantial change to both Goldziher’s and Vambery’s lives. In addition to being appointed an irregular faculty member in 1868 and

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37 Fleischer praised Goldziher’s talent and diligence and after he was informed that Goldziher was not appointed faculty member as previously promised, he tried to seek a position for his student and awarded him the recently created Fleischer prize.
regular faculty member in 1870 at the University, Vambery established himself as an important authority in Turkology and a controversial scholar of Hungarian prehistory. The publication of his *Turkish-Tartar Word Correspondences* in 1869 constituted a watershed in his career in Hungary from two points of view. Based on his previous eastern Turkish studies, it discussed comparative linguistic methods and the broader historical implications of linguistic affinity and, therefore, it shaped his relationship with Hunfalvy, Budenz and other academics involved in the research of Hungarian linguistic and ethnic origins. The same political changes that opened the way for Goldziher toward state scholarship framed Vambery’s endeavor to actively shape the discussion on Hungarian origins through the engagement with Turkology.

**Chagatai Studies: Eastern Turkish Linguistic Research Preceding the Turkish-Tartar Comparison**

The study of the eastern Turkish languages like Chagatai allowed Vambery to establish himself as a Turkologist and define his role in the discussions about the origins of the Hungarian language and nation. By presenting the most up-to-date and comprehensive knowledge about “Chinese Tartar,” Uzbek, and “Turcoman” languages, including a review of their phonetics and differences from the western Turkish languages, Vambery’s studies served the international community of Turkologists. In addition, Vambery also viewed them as conducive to the deeper exploration of the Hungarian-Turkish affinity. He emphasized this idea in the Introduction to his 1867 *Čagataische Sprachstudien* to which he added a literary review and *Chrestomathia*, with a German translation of excerpts from various original Chagatai texts. Prior to Vambery’s *Čagataische Sprachstudien*, only three known studies—published in Paris and London—examined eastern Turkish languages, which explains why many authors, including Munkácsi,

38 Szentpétery, 494.
acknowledged that this study broadened and deepened the very scant European scholarship of eastern Turkish languages on an unprecedented scale. Accordingly, Vambery’s German publication must have been the first German academic book on this topic. This work brought him international recognition as a linguist and demonstrates that, despite his lack of linguistic training, Vambery could join the forefront of international academic Orientalism, albeit in a rather marginal field. He was yet to achieve similar success in Hungary.

Uyghur Studies

Though it was published in the year following Turkish-Tartar Word Correspondence, Vambery’s Uyghur study Kudatku Bilig once again demonstrated that he viewed Central Asian linguistic studies as an avenue to the study of Turkish-Hungarian affinity. As part of his Uyghur research in 1867, Vambery reviewed Wilhelm Radloff’s Proben der Volksliteratur der türkischen Stämme Südsibiriens (Excerpts from the South Siberian Turkish Tribes’ Popular Literature) for Linguistic News. Radloff introduced readers to the unknown literature of the peoples in the southern Altai region. In his review, “A délszibériai török fajok szépirodalmáról,” (About the South Siberian Races’ Literature), Vambery maintained that Radloff’s prospective dictionary and future Uyghur studies would allow the comparison of Hungarian words of

39 Munkácsi lists the following works that until Vambery’s book informed Europe of Central Asian languages. A Jaubert Elements de la grammaire Turke (Paris, 1823), A. L. Davids A Grammar of the Turkish Language (London, 1932), and E. Quatremere Chrestomathie turk-orientale (Paris, 1841). Munkácsi, 101. To this list, Kakukk adds the Beresine dictionary from 1851 as well as underlines that Vambery’s dictionary was much richer than any previous one. In addition, she notes that two of Vambery’s students, Ignác Kunos and József Thúry, continued his Eastern Turkish studies. Kakukk, 13.

40 Munkácsi argued that Vambery’s interest in Kudatku Bilig went back to an 1866 Academy address, in which he presented his Chagatai research. Vambery continued to argue that comparative examination of the western Osmanli and eastern Turkish languages would be conducive to historical research of the Hungarian language. Even two years after Hunfalvy’s Vogul Land and People, Vambery believed that he would be able to prove the Turkish-Hungarian affinity; nonetheless, he also realized that he would need to rely on international research to support and give additional prestige to his research related to the historical study of the Hungarian language. Munkácsi, 103.
Turkish and Ugric origins, which consequently would inform the study of Hungarian-Turkish affinity. Vambery successfully raised interest in Uyghur studies among the Academy members; in 1868, he received the manuscript of *Kudatku Bilig* through official channels from the Viennese Royal Archives. *Kudatku Bilig*, a poem by Yusuf Hass Hadjib of Balasagun (today Kyrgyzstan), written in 1069 in Uyghur and recorded in Nestorian writing, presented a mystery to orientalists of the time. In the process of deciphering the content of the manuscript, Vambery could rely on his familiarity with the area’s languages and the notes that various readers of the manuscript had added in Persian or Chagatai with Arabic or Uyghur script.\(^{41}\) The Academy also played a central role in the publication of Vambery’s work on the manuscript, the 1870 *Uigurische Sprachmonumente und das Kudatku Bilig. Uigurischer Text mit Transcription und Übersetzung nebst einem uigurisch-deutschen Wörterbuch* (Uyghur Linguistic Monuments and the Kudatku Bilig. Uyghur text with transcription and translation with Uyghur-German dictionary).

Based on their Uyghur research, Radloff and Vambery are considered the founders of modern Turkology.\(^{42}\) Radloff was one of the many German orientalists who, generation after generation, made careers in Russia by studying the many languages of the Romanov Empire.\(^{43}\) Vambery’s success in deciphering the Uyghur text was a pioneering achievement, which suited both his Hungarian and international scholarly ambitions. His Uyghur translation attracted

\(^{41}\) Munkácsi, 104.

\(^{42}\) Ignaz Goldziher, Vámbéry Ármin tiszt. tag emlékeze, *A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia elhunyt tagjai fölött tartott emlékeszédek* 17, no. 6 (1915): 152.

\(^{43}\) As it was mentioned before, the eighteenth-century reports of a Finnish affinity with Hungarian emerged from an exchange between Göttingen linguists and those German scholars who served Peter the Great and Catherine II at the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. Collecting stories and songs among Central Asian peoples, Radloff contributed to the Russian Empire’s ethnographical research in the fashion that Leibnitz had suggested to Peter the Great a century earlier. In addition, Radloff published his collections with German translations, which, in contrast to Reguly’s work, could rely on the interest of the international orientalist community.
further attention following the Turfan expeditions and the discovery of the Orkhon inscriptions at the end of the century. The Orkhon monuments, like the Rosetta stone in Egyptology, were the key to understanding a series of ancient Asian texts and the development of distinctive cultures, which were the result of the convergence of Chinese, nomad, Persian, Greco-Indian and Buddhist influences at the heart of the Asian continent. At the end of the century, the monuments opened research on the Silk Road; Aurel Stein, Vambery’s protégé, became a central figure in this research. Vambery’s *Kudatku Bilig* translation helped Radloff to revisit the text. In 1910, Radloff published *Das Kudatku Bilik des Jusuf Chass-Hadschib aus Bālasagun*, first in a facsimile form and later in a phonetic transcription accompanied with a German translation and critical notes. Additionally, he published an Uyghur dictionary which completely invalidated Vambery’s work. Nonetheless, as Radloff noted in the closing remarks of the 1910 edition of *Kudatku Bilik*, despite Vambery’s many mistakes, his work provided a solid basis from which Radloff could start his research. Munkácsi underlined that when comparing the two translations, Vambery’s findings were amazingly accurate.

**The Study of Turkish-Tartar Affinity**

In *Turkish-Tartar Word Correspondence*, Vambery built on his previous eastern Turkish linguistic studies. The text was divided into three chapters: “A török-tatár nyelvről általában,” (Generally about the Turkish Tartar language), “A magyar és török nyelvek közti rokonságról,” (About the affinity between the Turkish and the Hungarian languages), and “A hangváltozásról,” (About the phonetic change). Vambery also added a comparative dictionary of Uyghur.

44 Kakukk, 15.
45 Munkácsi, 105.
46 In *Nyelvtudományi Közlemények* (Linguistic News) 8 (1870): 109-189.
Chagatai, Osmanli, Yakut, and Chuvash to the third chapter.\textsuperscript{47} The structure of this study demonstrated how he continued to divide his attention between the international Turkologist and the Hungarian comparative linguist circles.

Vambery started his linguistic examination with an overview of the geographical expansion of the settlements of Turkish peoples in Asia. He pointed out that, despite the current geographical distance between the territories of the northernmost Yakut and southernmost Uyghur peoples, the affinity between their languages prove that their ancestors (as well the forefathers of other Turkish speakers) once lived in one community. He placed this ancient Turkish homeland in south Siberia, north of Lake Baikal’s northwestern shores and argued that in prehistoric times different tribes had migrated westward, northward, and in a southwestern direction.

According to Vambery, the relatively small amount of Persian and Arab vocabulary in Uyghur meant that the Uyghurs’ ancestors were the first to leave the ancient Turkish settlement. This comparison between the different Turkish languages allowed scholars to reconstruct the historical process of the migrations, during which the various changes in the current Turkish languages took place. In making this argument, Vambery not only established the relations of affinity between the Turkish languages, but also sketched their historical development and demonstrated that the connections between the Turkish and Hungarian ancestors could be included in this historical process.

\textsuperscript{47} The linguistic material of \textit{Kudatku Bilig} also suited this study. In addition, Vambery used Boetling’s Yakut and Budenz’s Chuvash unpublished studies to support his assertions. Vambery, \textit{Török-tatár szögyeztetések}, 124. He does not name the Boetling source, it was most probably Otto Böthlingk’s (or Boethling as Vambery spelled his name) 1851 \textit{Über die Sprachen der Jakuten} (About the Yakuts’ Language).
The second part of Vambery’s study attracted the most interest, since its topic was the Hungarian-Turkish affinity, which had already been refuted in linguistic circles by the time the study was published. Interestingly, Vambery’s advocacy was based on the idea that Hungarian belonged to the Ugric language family, which, within the “Turanian languages were intermediary between Finnish and Turkish.”48 Vambery explained that linguistic affinity should be based on correspondence between nouns, verbs, syntaxes, and conjugation systems. In his view, the Hungarian language corresponded with the Finno-Ugric languages both in its basic vocabulary and grammatical structure, but resembled Turkish only in its vocabulary.49 In Vambery’s view, Ugric was the primary identity, which manifested in the basic vocabulary of Hungarian, including the numbers, names of body parts, and phonetic forms. Turkish identity was a secondary identity, the product of a later historical development during which the Hungarian ancestors cohabited or (as Vambery put in a conditional form) may have mixed with Turkish groups. He emphasized that this meeting between “pure” Hungarian and Turkish elements “was not rare among Turanian people.”50 In order to further illustrate the hierarchy between the Ugric and Turkish identities of the Hungarian language, he pointed out that Budenz demonstrated hundred words of Finno-Ugric origin more than the number of words of which he proved they were of Turkish origins. He divided the words that he studied into three groups: stem words, words with Turkish suffixes (which he believed were borrowed from Turkish), and about sixty words that were adopted into Hungarian in a later period.51 Vambery observed that the

48 Vambery, 116. His choice to use the term Turanian instead of Altaic was just one of the points that provoked Budenz’s attack that I discuss below.
49 Vambery, Ibid., 116.
50 Vambery, 117.
51 Vambery, 118.
publication of Radloff’s upcoming vocabulary nonetheless might make the numbers of words of Finno-Ugric and Turkish origins equal, adding that the difference between the number of Finno-Ugric and Turkish words did not impact the strength of his thesis.

Whereas Vambery followed his colleagues’ practice of identifying peoples with the languages that they spoke, he also argued that historical events interfered with the direct correspondence between nationhood and language. He pointed to an earlier Hunfalvy paper that quoted the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII, or Porphyrogenitus (the Purple-born), who argued that the Kabars who left the Khazar Empire and joined the Hungarian tribal alliance “taught their Khazar language” to their new allies, the Hungarians, who afterwards used both the Khazar and the Hungarian languages. Vambery compared this development to the language change of the Bulgarians, who switched from their original Turkish language to a Slavic tongue. This example’s primary importance was that Constantine labeled the Hungarians as Turks, a rather general ethnic designation, in contrast to the more specific names that he used to refer to the rest of the nomadic steppe peoples. Considering the Emperor’s precise knowledge of the steppe nomads, this general label for the Hungarian ancestors was a sign that the mixing of Ugric and Turkish elements had already taken place. Vambery viewed the Byzantine statesman’s quote as proof that the advanced Turkish culture became dominant and defined future Hungarian customs despite the Turks’ minority status. Such an assessment directly contradicted Hunfalvy’s interpretation of the assimilation of minorities as a phase of nation building. He believed that a minority always lost its linguistic and ethnic identity during the process of integration into the majority. Vambery’s theory, on the other hand, considered the role of a minority more influential in the shaping of the national culture. In addition, it enabled him to theorize that the Conquest could have taken place after the merger of the Ugric and Turkish groups, since the
Huns and Avars were also Turks. The Huns, who formed part of this ethnic mixture, must have retained the memory of the fourth-century Hun occupation of the Carpathian Basin. Vambery later developed this idea and reflected on Hunfalvy’s equation of the prehistoric linguistic community and nation by arguing that, while the Hungarian language continued to develop throughout historical times, the nation acquired its final form only during the Middle Ages, centuries after the Conquest of the current territory of Hungary.

Before proceeding to the last part of his study, Vambery summarized: “the Hungarian language was of Ugric origin but because of the nation’s connections with other groups and consequent historical transformation, it is of equally Ugric and Turkish character.” Accordingly, Vambery bent the comparative linguistic claim of ethnic purity to serve the ethnological argument of the conquering Hungarians’ mixed character. Over the next forty five years, Vambery maintained this position. The mixed nature of Hungariandom remained central to his arguments. This contradicted the logic of linguists, who assumed a common pure origin of the related languages/ethnic groups, as well as the arguments of lay speakers who, continuing the centuries-long tradition, found the key to an essentialist definition of Hungarian-ness in eastern origins. A vision of Hungarian history as an evolution of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural mixing was fairly provocative, and ultimately proved prescient when Hungary faced problems rooted in its multiethnic composition at the end of the century. At this point, however, Vambery’s claims still addressed the character of the Hungarian language and its relation to Turkish. The reaction to his claims also remained within the confines of the linguist community.

**Casus Belli: Budenz’s Review of Turkish-Tartar Word Correspondence**

Budenz’s review harshly criticized Vambery’s study. He started his “Jelentés Vámbéry magyar-török szóegyezéseiről,” (Report on Armin Vambery’s Hungarian-Turkish word correspondence) by referring to the Hungarian linguists’ anticipation of this study, since it
promised to answer the long-posed question of how many Turkish words were in the Hungarian vocabulary. Given his familiarity with several Turkish languages, Vambery was the best candidate to answer the question linguistically. However, he chose to approach it historically. Budenz emphasized that he completely accepted Vambery’s argument that Turkish words became part of the Hungarian vocabulary through either borrowing or “enforcement” of Hungarian speakers after the two languages had acquired their individual characters and the two communities lived side by side. However, the assertion that this process led to affinity and the emergence of a “secondary linguistic identity” was contrary to the concept of linguistic affinity. Similarly, Budenz pointed out Vambery’s lack of professionalism in using the determination Turanian instead of Altaic and in counting words that originated from ancient “Turanian,” as the basis for proof of Turkish-Hungarian affinity. He argued that this classification also contradicted the scholarly view that defined linguistic affinity as a vertical and historical relationship between languages, which acquired their own forms over time deriving from a common ancient language. According to the scientific understanding of the time, Turkish-Hungarian affinity could not be established since Turkish separated from the ancient Altaic community before Hungarian acquired its own distinct form. The words to which Vambery referred could support the notion of Turkish-Ugric affinity, which nonetheless, should be subjected to a separate and broader research.

Budenz underlined that the misuse of the technical expression affinity would not, in itself, be such a grave problem, but it became so because it led to erroneous assumptions and

53 Budenz, 70.
produced a biased work on which serious comparative linguistic research could not rely. Due to his bias, Vambery created forced and fake correspondences. He often noted a different meaning than the words’ primary or consensual meaning or changed the spelling, both of which were ethically problematic procedures. In addition, Vambery disregarded the importance of suffixes. Budenz underscored his claims by quoting examples. Finally he performed a detailed examination of the word list that closed Vambery’s study and constituted the most important part, since it was a direct reaction to Budenz’s 1868 list of Hungarian words that were of Finno-Ugric origin. In order to demonstrate Vambery’s errors, conscious etymological twists, and faulty assumptions, Budenz grouped the words in Vambery’s list into four categories: 1. Correct correspondences, which demonstrated either borrowing from the Turkish or Ugric-Turkish affinity. 2. Correspondences that might have seemed correct, but were revealed to be erroneous upon further examination. 3. Strikingly incorrect correspondences. 4. Words that had no purpose on the list, because they were irrelevant to the examination of affinity. Budenz closed his review with the following words: “Lord, you gave rain, but there are no thanks in it,” implying that Vambery’s work was a disappointment.

However, Munkácsi emphasized what Budenz was unprepared to see and could not possibly foresee, in his review of Vambery’s work: Vambery extended the research of Turkish words to a broad variety of Turkish languages and introduced about fifty words to the pool of the vocabulary in question.54 Like Vambery’s Uyghur studies, *Turkish-Tartar Word Correspondence*—though erroneous and incomplete—raised awareness and contributed to the

54 In his commemorative paper, Munkácsi quoted Budenz’s closing words in order to argue the opposite of what Budenz meant. In fact, Vambery’s list was the trigger for Budenz’s future compilation of Turkish words in Hungarian and an invaluable preparation for the scientific classification of these words as well as the establishment of Ugric-Turkish affinity.
elevation of scholarly rigor and the widening of the academic horizon. Again, additional research could reveal the (possible political and/or scholarly) reasons why the Academy recognized the study as an important contribution to Hungarian linguistics and in 1870 awarded Vambery the Sámuel-prize.55 But Vambery waited to be granted actual regular membership at the Academy until 1876.

**History, Myths, and Mythology**

The Compromise caused a substantial shift in Hungarian historical scholarship. Similarly to what linguists discussed in the fifties, in the aftermath of the Compromise, historians believed that modern historical scholarship served the politics of Hungarian modernization. Accordingly, the historians’ attitude toward the research on national origins transformed: they reevaluated the role of myths enveloping the earliest history of the nation. In July 1867, at the general assembly of the recently formed Hungarian Historical Society, the Society’s president Imre Mikó stressed that since the earliest history of the nation was unknown, mythology “filled in the gaps.” As historical scholarship developed, collection of data helped to shed light on periods previously known only through legends and myths. As in Mikó’s view, Hungarian historiography had reached the most advanced level, historians needed to focus on synthesis (as opposed to earlier phases of gathering sources and examining materials) and stop nurturing mythological arguments that encouraged nationalist dreams. Vambery made this same argument in his farewell speech at the Academy six years earlier. Mikó felt that mythology should be subjected to literary examination, and he called on historians to purge all unsupported mythological arguments from Hungarian historiography.56

Károly Szabó, one of the era’s leading historians, made a similar argument. In a collection of his essays written since the 1840s and published in 1869, *A magyar vezérek kora Árpádtól Szent Istvánig* (The era of the Hungarian Leaders from Árpád until St. Steven), he stressed that all Hungarian medieval chronicles were built on myths and declared that historians should rely on them, but only through a critical lens. In his eyes, Anonymus’s chronicle was a first-rate source. Although it could not replace contemporary historical documents, it nonetheless carried valuable information for the reconstruction of the Hungarian past.

While modern historians purged mythology from historiography, they resurrected the national mythological material that reflected the conquerors’ pagan and Asian beliefs as an important historical source. They directed special attention toward the intellectual and cultural history of the Hungarians, as opposed to previous historical works, which had focused on political history. Szabó’s work was just one of several historical inquiries into the earliest history of the Hungarian tribes written since the Reform Era that considered their religious customs, lifestyle, and culture an important subject of historical research. In his 1868 article “Nemzeti történetünk kezdetei,” (The Beginnings of Our National History) in the recently launched

57 As his collected essays were published in 1869, Szabó offered a summary on his research in the previous decades. He argued that during the previous decade, next to the period of the Hunyadis (John who stopped the Ottoman offensive at today’s Belgrade in 1456 and Matthias whose Renaissance kingdom was among the strongest in Europe of the time), this was the most studied epoch of Hungarian history. He provided a list of studies that focused on the pre-Conquest period until the foundation of the Christian kingdom. Szabó’s list includes: Mihály Horváth’s 1847 *Párhuzam az Európába költözködő magyar nemzet s az akkori Európa polgári és erkölcsi míveltsége között* (Parallel between the Hungarian Nation moving into Europe and the civil and moral culture of contemporary Europe), Toldy’s 1850 article in New Hungarian Museum “A magyarok míveltségi állapotjai a kereszténység felvétele előtt,” (The Hungarians’ Cultural Conditions before the Conversion to Christianity) Gusztáv Wenzel’s “Észmetöredékek a magyarok eredetéről,” (Literary Fragments of the origins of the Hungarians), and Arnold Ipolyi’s 1854 *Magyar mythologia* (Hungarian Mythology). In 1861, the Catholic priest and historian Vilmos Frankő published his *A magyar nemzet míveltségi állásának vézlata az első fejedelmek korában és a kereszténység bezhatalálnak története* (The Outline of the Hungarian Nation’s Culture in the era of the first Leaders and the History of the Introduction of Christianity).
historical periodical *Századok* (Centuries), the literary historian Ferenc Toldy stressed that tradition, mythology, and poetry preserved the earliest memories of the nation.\(^58\) In his opinion, the impressed heart associated the most decisive monuments of the nation’s life with an invisible power … of the amalgamation of simple tradition, historical memory, religious belief, and extenuating poetry rose mythology. At this point, history became rather poetry and mythology… The task of the historian is to get to the truth.\(^59\)

Toldy’s tone demonstrates how the nationalist enthusiasm and modern research methodology could equally influence historical inquiry at the time.

Goldziher’s articles in Hungarian periodicals about mythology, which were published both before and after his first monograph *Mythology Among the Hebrews* or *Mythos* (1876), demonstrate that he wished to open a dialogue with experts of various disciplines and bridge the gap between Hungarian historiography and the developing international scholarship of comparative linguistic, comparative mythological, and historical scholarship. However, as turn-of-the century studies show, Hungarian scholars made little effort to engage in a dialogue with comparative mythology in general. Hungarian prehistorical research was subjected to comparative linguistic, ethnological, and archeological studies, which complemented the examination of Arabic, Byzantine, and other eastern sources. Hungarian mythological studies, on the other hand, remained a rather more isolated religious subject, which was particularly favored by Catholic clerical authors and was shaped by a fairly conservative confessional agenda. The librarian and archivist of the Eger Catholic cathedral chapter Kabos Kandra’s 1897 *Magyar mythológia* (Hungarian mythology) condemned Max Müller’s comparative mythological studies

\(^{58}\) *Századok* was launched in 1867.

\(^{59}\) Ferenc Toldy, “Nemzeti történetünk kezdetei” (The Beginnings of Our National History) *Századok* (Centuries) 2, no. 5 (1868): 381.
for contradicting Creutzer’s theory of ancient monotheism, which had deteriorated into polytheism and then was replaced by Christianity. It was only in the twentieth century that Hungarian mythology was “liberated” from this rather monolithic approach through the work of ethnographers and linguists.  

**Teaching at the University**

In 1872, when Goldziher started teaching at the University, his courses included “Arabic language,” “Introduction to Aramaic literature,” and two courses which were free lectures open to the public: “The Arabs’ impact on European culture” on Monday evenings and “Explanation of Solomon’s parables” on Tuesday afternoons. (His academic inauguration address in 1876 was topically related to this course.) In the next semester, he taught Arabic and Hebrew as well as “The most important stages of the development of Islam.” According to his diary, this teaching stint at the university was a disappointing experience. He thought the students were not diligent and did not study—nor did he enjoy even the best rapport with his colleagues. His Hebrew language and literature courses paralleled those of Péter Hatala, who was appointed Hebrew chair in 1873 and the Catholic clergyman János Ruzsicska, who openly opposed Eötvös’s support for Goldziher’s studies in Germany. In addition, Goldziher worked alongside Vambery and Budenz; he had antagonistic feelings toward both of them.

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60 About the development of religious historical studies in Hungary see Tibor Porció, *The Study of Religions in Szeged* (Pés: JATE press, 2010). Porció emphasized that Goldziher was the first Hungarian scholar to “draw attention of the scholarly public in Hungary to the evolving discipline (i.e. science of comparative religion; “Vergleichende Religionwissenschaft”) in an unbiased manner.” Porció, 10.

61 Magyar Kiályi Egyetem Tanrendje a 1871/72 és 1872/2 félévre, 10-11.old. Course Listings for the 1871/72 and 1872/2 Semesters at the Hungarian Royal University, 10-11.

62 Hatala taught about the history of the revelation in the Old Testament, Hebrew grammar, and prophecies about the messiah, while Ruzsicska instructed Arabic, Syrian, and Chaldean law. About Ruzsicska, Goldziher wrote in his diary: *Napló*, 41.
Goldziher’s diary mentioned teaching Hebrew at the Protestant Seminary only superficially in order to emphasize that, while the Protestant theologians trusted him, the Jewish congregation’s leadership later saw him as a harmful educator for Jewish youth. While this malicious remark reflects the forty-year old Goldziher’s state of mind, at the age of twenty-two he could have been equally disappointed. Over very short time, Goldziher developed a rather condemnatory view of his homeland’s intellectual milieu and social life:

The pitifulness of the Pest’s intellectual life was depressing after the rich spirituality of the past four years. There was no social circle which I could join. The cliques-system was in its full swing. Opposite the ruling circles a guard of the moderns was organized. … a lively group of people of unscrupulous ambition.

Nonetheless, his negative impressions did not hinder him from publicly discussing a program for the modernization of Oriental scholarship in Hungary. One article, which he wrote after his return to Pest, was published in Hungarian Public Instruction. In his diary, Goldziher described the periodical as the mouthpiece of the “moderns.” He claimed that among them, his friend Mór Kármán counted as the “strongest person.” Later Kármán became one of the reformers of Hungarian public education. Goldziher’s article, along with the Hebrew textbook that he edited per Ballagi’s request, reflect that his lifelong investment in shaping education in Hungary was simultaneously a scholarly and a political program. He connected the modernization of the country’s educational system and intellectual life with the modernization and integration of Jewish scholarship and religious studies: the basis of Jewish reform. The removal of Hebrew instruction from theological studies was the first step towards this grandiose plan.

63 Goldziher, Napló, 72.

64 Gusztáv Heinrich, editor of the periodical Magyar Tanügy (Hungarian Public Instruction), was the leader of this clique, at least in Goldziher’s eyes. Goldziher described him as an overtly ambitious and not well-educated person, who, nonetheless, became influential among educators and students equally through his periodical. In Goldziher’s opinion, the only “strong” person and respectable intellectual among the “moderns” was Mór Kármán, whom he met in 1868. Goldziher, Tagebuch, 49-50, Napló, 69.
Hebrew Instruction

In the foreword of his Hebrew textbook, Goldziher emphasized that in the second edition, unlike in the first, he had chosen to borrow examples directly from the Bible with the intention that students could familiarize themselves with the spirit of biblical language from the beginning of their Hebrew studies. In the foreword, he gave a linguistic and philological introduction in which he defined Hebrew through its relation to other Semitic languages and highlighted the historical development of the Hebrew language itself. Similarly to his article in Hungarian Public Instruction, Goldziher’s Hebrew textbook demonstrates Goldziher’s identification with the Dutch system of theological education and the German philological approach to Hebrew instruction in higher education.

His article, “A héber tanulmányok főiskoláinkban” (The Hebrew studies in our colleges), in Hungarian Public Instruction argued that the current level of Hebrew linguistic instruction for future theologians in Hungary was insufficient to conduct biblical exegesis. He believed that this Hebrew instruction did not equip students with enough knowledge to sufficiently scrutinize Hebrew literature (which he attempted to integrate in his Hebrew textbook), but instead it was an unnecessary source of torture for theology students. The final examinations tested them in Hebrew grammar even though they were not studying to become linguists. In Goldziher’s view, the theologian’s scope was not the study of the language but the making of it as a tool of biblical study. He suggested following the German example, which would require future theological students to study Hebrew in the last years of high school, just as future students of the humanities

faculty were required to matriculate in both Latin and Greek.66 This way, argued Goldziher, theology students could engage in real exegesis from the beginning of their university studies. In addition, he stressed that Hebrew grammar instruction should continue at the university level, though not with the theological faculty. It should be taught by the humanities faculty so that future orientalists could also enroll in Hebrew grammar courses.

Goldziher’s proposal extended far beyond the subject of Hebrew instruction; it advocated the establishment of a modern Oriental scholarship which was independent from theological or confessional concerns. Indeed, as Orientalism in Western Europe was born as a result of “Europe’s discovery of Asian religions” and the “gradual emancipation from biblical studies,” by stressing the insufficiency of theological instruction, Goldziher pointed out the lack of modern, i.e., non-theologically defined, Oriental scholarship in Hungary.67 Like other orientalists in Western Europe, Goldziher considered religious history and the study of Hebrew secular subjects to be related to Orientalism. He believed that Hebrew instruction stood above confessional divisions and that shifting it from the theological to the orientalist field was closely connected with the principle of freedom of education.68 He emphasized that “every free thinker” would see free scholarship as benefitting from “granting Hebraistic studies the same civil rights” that they enjoyed in most German universities. Not only would the faculty of humanities expand as a result, but Hebrew literature would also be taught “from the same perspective as modern scholarship makes ancient literatures its subject” rather than the inaccurate, but more common

68 Interestingly, in five years, when the rabbinical Seminary was opened, the rabbinical students were required to study at the University and most of them chose Oriental studies: in a way, Goldziher’s model was integrated into the modern Hungarian rabbinical education.
“confessional point of view.”

“This is not a question of formality only,” he added, “but a matter of principle, strictly relevant to every modern worldview.”

What he did not discuss is that the proposed change would have also ameliorated his difficult position at the University.

His articles written for Hungarian audiences in the following years show that his program for the creation of modern Oriental scholarship reached beyond Hebrew philology. They can be grouped around two themes. Some of them were connected to the organizational aspect of the modernization of the Oriental scholarly field. In addition to Goldziher’s article about the instruction of Hebrew, in 1873 and 1874 he discussed instruction in the subject of mythology in “A mythologia tanításáról” (About the instruction of mythology) as well as the current situation of mythological scholarship in “A mythos tudomány jelen állásáról és új problémáiról” (About the current position and new problems of mythological scholarship). In the two articles, he pointed out the gap between the level of the instruction of mythology in Hungary and the advancement of comparative mythological studies. He stressed that in Hungary the instructors lagged far behind the academic level and the students were paying the price for it. He outlined a general road map that could close the gap and introduce Hungarian students to the study of mythology on a level that matched the advancement of European scholarship. He also wrote an article about his book acquisitions during his Middle Eastern travels on behalf of the Academy. He explained the criteria of his choices and added much information about the dissemination of

69 Ibid., 98.

70 Goldziher, “Hebrew studies,” 98.

71 For a complete bibliography of Goldziher’s works see Bernát Heller, *Bibliographie des Oeuvres de Ignace Goldziher* (Bibliography of Ignaz Goldziher’s Works) (Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1927); Sándor Scheiber, A supplementary bibliography of the literary work of Ignaz Goldziher (also included in Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume I, ed. Sámuel Löwinger and József Somogyi, 419-429) (Budapest, ?, 1848). I rely on the combined bibliography published in the volume *A zsidóság lényege és fejlődése* (The Essence and Development of Jewishness) (Budapest: Műlt és Jövő, 2000). This volume was titled with the title of one of Goldziher’s studies but includes several other articles and short studies too.
knowledge and scholarly book publishing in Egypt, and thus he laid out his plan for the future
broadening of the Academy’s Oriental literary collection.

The second type of articles addressed both Hebrew and Arab philological and cultural studies. A larger number of them discussed topics that related to the emergence of Arabic ethnic and imperial consciousness, the latter of which was connected to the rise of Islam as well. “A történetudomány helye a az arab irodalomban” (The position of historical scholarship in Arabic literature), published in Ballagi’s Protestant Scholarly Review in 1872, was the first among these. Interestingly, in 1895, when the Hungarian parliament accepted Judaism as a state religion and the country was in the midst of the preparations for the Millennium Festivities, he published “A történetírás az arab irodalomban” (Historiography in Arabic literature) in Budapest Review, which illustrates that he reacted sensitively to both Hungarian historians’ interest in the role of history in national identity formation as well as the Hungarian public discussions about national history. Between 1873 and 1875, his articles “Nemzetiségi kérdés az araboknál” (The nationality question among the Arabs), “Muhammed és az arab nemzeti hiúság” (Muhammad and the national vanity), and “Tanügyi reformok Egyiptomban” (Educational reforms in Egypt), as Simon also pointed out, also illustrate his interest in Islamic and Arab cultural history as well as the contemporary changes in the Arab world.72

Goldziher’s Semitic and Hebrew studies were similarly connected to the theoretical study of nationhood, the connection between mythological studies and research about national origins. In addition to his articles about mythology in Hungarian Public Education, Goldziher published “A nap és a hold sémi nevei” (The Semitic names of the sun and the moon) and “A sémi faj

72 Simon, “Adalékok a Nemzeti és polgári fejlődés antinómáinak és egy tudomány születésének kelet-közép összefüggéseivel” (Additional information to the correlations between the antinomies of national and civic development and the birth of a scholarship in East-Central Europe), in Goldziher Ignác, 57.
őshazájáról” (About the Semites’ ancient homeland) in Linguistic News, which was edited by Hunflavy. The latter article especially emphasized that the discussion of the whereabouts of the ancient Semitic homeland equally involve ethnologists, linguists, and historians. In addition, the poet József Kis, in the 1875 Zsidó Évkönyv (Jewish Yearbook), published Goldziher’s “A vallásos eszme fejlődése a régi hébereknél” (The development of the religious idea among the ancient Hebrews). The topics and the places of publication of these articles foreshadowed the holistic program of Mythos: its multidisciplinary approach, focus on Hebrew cultural history embedded in Semitic philological research, as well as its consideration of a broad readership. Goldziher wished to engage the Jewish lay readership, academics, and the readers of Public Education equally in the study of Orientalism. The articles also demonstrated that Goldziher believed that the modernization of Hungarian Orientalism could happen only if topics related to the Hungarian national identity discourse were discussed by introducing the latest theoretical and empirical findings of the international Oriental scholarly field.

Mythos

Since Mythos was never published in the Hungarian original, it is unclear if Goldziher simply translated his Hungarian manuscript or rewrote it in German as he did in the case of his Muslim Studies a decade later. The German and the English translations of Mythos

73 The article refers to the German edition of Mythos, which was published in the next year, thus, it is certain that by then Goldziher knew that his originally Hungarian book would be published first in German.

74 The whereabouts of Mythos’s Hungarian manuscript is unknown. His 1889 Muhammedische studien that appeared in English as Muslim Studies was the rework of his original 1881 Hungarian Iszlám. The difference between the two works manifests on various levels. The Hungarian study was written to a broad readership and includes a discussion of the biases toward Islam, modern and old equally. Muslim Studies, in contrast, was addressed to academics, and relies on a broad linguistic and historical apparatus meticulously recorded in the extended footnotes. Conrad erroneously judged the difference between the two publications: the Hungarian does not lag in scholarly importance behind the German, only considered a different type of readership. See, Conrad, “The Pilgrim from Pest: Goldziher’s Study Tour to the Near East (1873-74)” in Golden Roads: Migration, Pilgrimage and Travel in Medieval and Modern Islam, Ian Richard Netton ed. (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1993), 110.
demonstrated Goldziher’s twofold program of integration into the Hungarian academic conversation about mythology and history, as well as participation in the international scholarly conversation on comparative mythology in general, and Hebrew mythology in particular. The latter two were closely connected.

Mythos’s theoretical basis relied on a number of pioneering works, primarily Franz Felix Adalbert Kuhn’s Die Herabkunft des Feuers und des Göttertranks (The Origins of the Fire and the Gods’ Drink), Max Müller’s Comparative Mythology, and Heymann Steinthal’s two essays “The Original Form of the Legend of Prometheus” and “The Legend of Samson,” which he included in his book, and which offered a guide to bridging the universal discussion of mythology with the examination of Hebrew myths.75

In the first essay, Steinthal reviewed Kuhn’s mythological investigations before engaging with a psychological analysis of the fire myth in order to show the emergence of the legend in Indian and Greek mythology. In addition, he noted that behind the monotheist stories of the bible, the old “heathen” myths, paralleling those of the Indian and the Greek and Roman ones, could be still detected. In the second essay, Steinthal demonstrated the existence of Hebrew solar myths, proving that the ancient Aryans were not the only culture to adore the Sun. Accordingly, Steinthal’s study illustrated that mythological investigations, as part of the reconstruction of the

75 In his 1845 article, Zur ältesten Geschichte der indogermanischen Völker (About the Oldest History of the Indo-German peoples), based on comparative linguistic examination, Franz Felix Adalbert Kuhn reconstructed the earliest history of the Indo-European peoples. In 1859, as part of a collective endeavor of German scholars to reconstruct Aryan cultural history, Kuhn published his mythological study The Origins of the Fire and the Gods’ Drink, which discussed the earliest mythology of the Aryans. Max Müller’s synthesizing study on comparative mythology followed this endeavor. Müller published his book-long essay Comparative Mythology in 1856 and Introduction to the Science of Religion in 1873. Goldziher considered both studies as precedents to his book, whose subtitle, Untersuchungen zur Mythologie und Religionwissenschaft (Inquiries into the mythology and religious studies), demonstrated how he intended to discuss Hebrew myths as part of the development of the Hebrews’ religious beliefs. About the comparative philologists’ cultural historical program, see Benes, 216. About Müller’s mythological studies see, Burton Feldman, The Rise of Modern Mythology, 1680-1860 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 480.
earliest history of the Hebrews, complied with mythological studies in the Aryan field.

Considering Károly Szabó’s emphasis on the importance of mythology in the study of Hungarian history, which was broadly shared among Hungarian historians, Goldziher’s *Mythos*, which like Steinthal’s work stressed the universal validity of mythological research, coincided with other Hungarian scholarly endeavors toward the study of the Hungarian national origins.

Indeed, when Goldziher stressed that “the same psychological and linguistics analysis (which) has contributed so much light to the consideration of the beginnings of intellectual life in the Aryan race,” he meant more than advocating the uniform psychological makeup of Aryans and Semites. Scholars like Maurice Olender have argued that the central argument of *Mythos* was a refutation of the French orientalist Ernest Renan’s argument that Semites—as a race—were incapable of creating mythology. Renan and other scholars argued that Aryans possessed the highest mythological imagination, while Semites had an inherently monotheistic instinct. The two faculties, monotheist and mythos-creating, were considered mutually exclusive. To late twentieth-century authors, the Jewish Goldziher’s alarmed reaction to such arguments appears to be “natural” both on the private and professional level. This is especially true since the generic term Semite, which referred to all Semitic language speaker, was employed by Renan to single out Hebrews, the alleged forefathers of those European Jews like Goldziher, whose careers and everyday lives were damaged by modern antisemitism. Proving that Jews did create mythology (like other linguistic, ethnic, and religious groups) and did not have monotheist inclinations “in their veins,” would show that the Semitic-Aryan cultural gap, which inspired so many scholarly and just as many less academically-sound publications during the nineteenth century, was an

unfounded scholarly claim. Goldziher’s authorship of *Mythos*, however, painted him not only as a Jewish advocate, but also as a researcher who is involved in the development of the scholarly field. 77 His study was meant to demonstrate both the universal currency of comparative mythological methods and the universal nature of the human faculty to create mythology.

He demonstrated this point by pointing out that Turanians, like Semites, because they were not Aryans were also considered to be lacking mythology. This erroneous assumption, argued Goldziher, derived from the fact that the Turanian category wrongly included every language, and the speakers of those languages, who spoke neither Aryan nor Semitic languages. Further research was to establish the linguistic affinities of the so-called Turanian languages. Since it was an incorrect linguistic and ethnological category, it could not be a valid basis upon which to judge mythological faculty either. 78 The Finnish *Kalevala* perfectly demonstrated the mythological capacity of the Finno-Ugrian peoples, whom Müller considered Turanians. 79 This was not simply a gesture to Hunfalvy and the other Hungarian linguists, but it also allowed him  

77 Goldziher wrote that it cannot be a priori denied to any race as such, and that the coincidence of mythical ideas and modes of expression is the result of the uniformity of the psychological process which is the foundation of the creation of myths in all races, and this very uniformity of mythical ideas may consequently serve to psychologists as an argument for the thesis of the psychological uniformities of all races. (*Mythos*, xxiii)  

78 Accordingly, he connected the methodology of comparative mythology to the arguments of the Turanian or warrior Asian as opposed to Finno-Ugric identity of Hungarians. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the two qualifiers divided both the scholarly scene and the general public in Hungary. Goldziher’s claim clearly stated his accession to the Finno-Ugrist group -- in opposition to Vambery.  

79 Based on research on South African languages, the German linguist Wilhelm Bleek theorized a causative effect between the lack of gendered nouns and the incapacity of mythology. The *Kalevala* refuted this claim too, since Finno-Ugric languages do not use grammatical gender categories. In connection with the ethnological approach, Goldziher emphasized how Müller’s Science of Religion declared that the universality of the psychological processes lay at the foundations of myth creation, which contradicted that the mythological faculty would be dependent on racial inclination and the connection of racial categories with cultural development. Goldziher added that this argumentation was valid even if Müller himself employed the principle of the universality of psychological processes through concrete Turanian examples only — without reference to Semitic mythology.
to further emphasize that good science should be unbiased and based on thorough analysis.

Goldziher contended:

that the stories of the so-called Turanian humanity lend themselves to the comparative method of investigation quite as easily as the legendary treasure of the Aryan nations, is a proof of how common to all mankind is the mythological capacity.\(^80\)

Thus Goldziher’s “defense” of Hebrew similarity to “others” was based on his belief in the objectivity of scholarly methods and a commonly shared human psychological makeup, which also allowed him to draw parallels between Hungarian and Hebrew ethnogenesis.

**Connection between mythology and religion: ethnogenesis.**

To Goldziher, myth was a reaction to natural phenomena, while religion necessarily included an ethical element as well and the consciousness of the divine. Every human community produced mythology first, and later mythological stories were converted into historical and/or religious narratives. Goldziher differentiated between the polytheistic and monotheistic stages of religiosity: polytheism preceded monotheism. Influenced by the German Hegelian philosopher Friedrich Schelling, he connected the beginnings of the process of nation formation with the polytheistic stage.\(^81\) Goldziher quoted Schelling that a “‘magisterial power, legislature, morals, and even occupations are bound up with conceptions of the gods in all nations.’”\(^82\) The formation of ethnic communities and social institutions continued influencing religious beliefs after the emergence and solidification of polytheistic religion. Goldziher could


\(^{81}\) Goldziher, “Az összehasonlító vallástudomány jelen állásáról” *Budapesti Szemle* 26 (1881): 203-225; reprinted in *A zsidóság lényege és fejlődése*, 130. In his, *Critical-Philosophical Introduction to Mythology* (New York: Albany State University, 2007) Friedrich Wilhelm Schelling stressed that “polytheism has been the instrument of the separation of the peoples,” arguing that the separation of languages and the development of polytheism were congruent phases of the ethnogenetic process. Goldziher demonstrated that despite the missing proofs of the polytheist phase of the Hebrew history, the stages of development were identical in case of the ancient Hebrews.

\(^{82}\) Goldziher, *Mythos*, 265.
rely on no less an authority than Aristotle: “‘for men conceive not only the forms but the lives of
the gods as similar to their own.’”83 At the mythological and polytheist stage, the national
organization develops parallel to the cultivation and institutionalization of religious life. To
explain the transition from polytheism to monotheism, Goldziher adopted Steintal’s theory
“monotheistic revolution” as a result of the projection of the finite power of the ruler onto the
infinite power of the deity.84 As Steintal expressed this, “a valuation of what we have, a
measuring of it against the infinite.” On top of this, Goldziher argued, “the tendency of religious
ideas is directly dependent on the ideas which are embodied in political and social life.”
Therefore, in the historical evolution of the Hebrew community, the reminiscences of myths and
legends offered a guide to the modern student of this period.85

Religion did not terminate the mythological faculty but forced mythology into the
background of the national spiritual life. Based on this argument, biblical stories allowed not
only the backward decoding and reconstruction of their mythological basis, but also an
understanding of the stages of the evolution of the Hebrews’ religious life and institutions. Thus,
throughout the methodological introduction, Goldziher once more underlined that the universal
laws of the religious and national historical process were valid in the case of Hebrews.

By reconstructing the Hebrew ethnogenesis in Mythos as a progression from myths
creation to ancient historiography, Goldziher refuted the theory of ancient monotheism, which
Creutzer had advocated and, thus the theory on which Ipolyi based his interpretation of the

83 Ibid., Goldziher quotes Aristotle Politics I, I. 7. (in Greek.)
84 In his “Myth and Religion,” Steintal theorized other scenarios: religious absorption to a monotheist society (as in
the case of the barbaric peoples as well as the pagan Hungarians who converted to Christianity) and
philosophical speculation.
85 Goldziher, Mythos, 265.
Hungarian mythology as along with Renan’s argument of the Semites’ inherent monotheistic spirit.\textsuperscript{86} In addition, \textit{Mythos} demonstrated the error in identifying Jews as Semites. Through comparative linguistic examination, Goldziher outlined the dispersal of a former Semitic linguistic community into different peoples who spoke related, though distinctive languages. The Hebrews were one of them, which is why the etymological examination of other Semitic languages also aided his Hebrew mythological investigation. The distinction of the various Semitic languages was significant in order to refute the Renanian generalizations about the Semites. (At the end of the book he pointed out that correct etymological investigations, in addition to the recent excavations in Syria and Iran, could shed light on Arabic myths.\textsuperscript{87})

By proposing a chronology of Hebrew history that suggests the existence of a pre-religious period, Goldziher opened a dialogue with modern Jewish historiography associated with \textit{Wissenschaft des Judentums} on at least two points. The historical development that Goldziher’s \textit{Mythos} reconstructed ended with the appearance of the prophets and the Babylonian captivity, which witnessed the beginnings of Jewish historical writing. Abraham Geiger opened his 1865 \textit{Judaism and its History} with the discussion of this period and the discussion of Judaism’s fundamental tenets, which he considered to be the result of formative influence of the prophets, who brought the monotheistic idea of Jahveh (Jehovah) to its completion. Goldziher confirmed this evaluation, nonetheless, the different chronological frameworks revealed the divergent understandings of Geiger and Goldziher about who or what should be the subject of Jewish history. Geiger focused on the historically changing spirit of Judaism, while Goldziher was occupied with the question of the formation of the Hebrew nation.

\textsuperscript{86} Goldziher, \textit{Mythos}, 262-263.
\textsuperscript{87} Goldziher, \textit{Mythos}, 334-335.
Moreover, the two scholars directed their respective historical examination as polemics against different objectives. As Susannah Heschel suggests, Jewish-Christian theological debates framed Geiger’s writing. His aim was to emphasize the historical continuity between the Second Temple-era developments of Judaism and early Christianity and to direct attention to the influence of Judaism on early Christian religious arguments.\textsuperscript{88} \textit{Mythos}’ polemical tone was directed against claims that Hebrew religious development could not be inserted into the history of humanity. In this sense, Goldziher shared Leopold Zunz’s scholarly mission. Six decades earlier in “Etwas über die rabbinische literature,” Zunz contended that Jewish history had both a universal and a particularistic aspect: it served both the enrichment of human knowledge in general and Jewish scholarly development in particular.

Goldziher’s correspondence with the German reform movement reveals his religious objective too. Like in his article in the \textit{Jewish Yearbook}, in \textit{Mythos} Goldziher argued that the study of Hebrew mythology was a necessity for one “who feels the true meaning of religion … as a step in advance towards the highest ideal of religion, towards Monotheism true and unsullied by anything coarse and pagan, which is independent of legends and traditions of race…”\textsuperscript{89} This additional objective not only agreed with his endeavor to study Hebrew philology as a confessionally neutral field, but also pointed toward his future program of Jewish studies and


\textsuperscript{89} Goldziher, \textit{Mythos}, xxx.
Jewish Reform in the mid-1880s, in which he emphasized the centrality of religious studies in the proper exercise of religion.

**Hebrew mythology**

Nomadism was the first form of communal organization that demanded cooperation between individuals beyond the familial circle, and the first myths reflect on nomads’ understanding of the world around them. The many names given to those national phenomena which they observed were replaced by one commonly used term and, at a later phase, these unified terms became proper names, the names of mythological figures such as heroes and gods. Language “springs from the eye” -- Goldziher paraphrased Abraham Geiger’s historian son Ludwig Geiger’s saying to emphasize that the earliest stage of mythological thinking was determined by spatial sense. The understanding of time took its linguistic expression following the definition of spatial occurrences. For example “after” refers to an occurrence following a given event. The definitions of colors followed both spatial and chronological terminology.

Relying on Hunfalvy’s etymological investigations of the Hungarian word for daybreak, hajnal,

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90 Whereas Müller argued that as a result of the rise of mythology the original sense of mythological names were forgotten, Goldziher pointed to the Greek and Roman gods and heroes—Helios, Selene, and Aurora—whose names were understood to denote the Sun, his sister the Moon, and the Dawn (who opens the doors to the Sun) also in later ages. Though he did not make a connection with this argument, in the last part of the study that discusses the period of the Babylonian captivity, Goldziher explained that biblical authors felt compelled to provide an etymological explanation for the forefathers’ names. This further plunged the mythological origins of the patriarchs’ figures to oblivion. “It is quite correctly affirmed that Yischâk (Isaac) comes from sâchak ‘to laugh’; but it is no longer understood that the word designates the ‘Laughing one’ (the Sun), and so the laughter of the aged mother to whom the birth of a son is announced beforehand, or the laughter of the people on hearing the announcement, is introduced.” (Ibid., 334.) Thus Goldziher suggests that the name’s meaning was originally understood but the mythological interpretation of it was either forgotten or purposefully obscured through etymology in order to further accentuate the historical and religious importance of the biblical figures. Goldziher, *Mythology*, 39.
Goldziher demonstrated the general phenomenon of relating to the Sun through by describing its different colorings as they change throughout the day.\footnote{Goldziher, Excursus H in Mythos, 351. Reference to Hunfalvy’s article in Magyar Nyelvőr (Hungarian Language Guard) 3 (1874), 202.}

The nomad adored the night sky and associated it with the rain, while the agriculturalist, settled and dependent on the weather, turned his attention to the Sun.\footnote{Among other non-Hebrew examples, Goldziher quoted Vörösmarty’s Zalán’s flight to illustrate the mythological personification of the dark sky that covers man. Goldziher, Mythos, 111.} As such, the lunar mythology precedes the solar. The Hebrews’ nomadic lifestyle prior to entering Canaan also explains why their calendar is lunar: the “Hebrew day” starts on the night before because Hebrew nomads understood time as resulting from changes between night and daylight.\footnote{Ibid., 63.}

The Hebrews’ entrance to Canaan brought significant change to their mythology. With the transition to agriculture, the so-called myth of civilization, stories about the origins of arts and crafts, social order, and law appeared as well. Goldziher argued that a nomadic social order is created by power and not adherence to law; however, the agricultural society not only created a legal system but wished to explain its own origins. Myths of civilization reflected the transition from nomadic to settled lifestyle; Goldziher emphasized that myths of civilization were always attached to the Sun.\footnote{Ibid., 201. In the biblical story, Cain kills his brother Abel. As Goldziher noted, in Nabatean Sinaic, the word Cain means smith. Indeed, Cain, preparer of agricultural tools and founder of the first city Enoch, killed his brother Abel the shepherd (a nomad) – an allusion to the animosity between nomads and settled people which was characteristic of Canaan at the time the Hebrews arrived. More importantly, Cain was a solar hero while Abel was a figure of the dark sky. Their story, Goldziher pointed out, retold the story of the Sun “killing” the night—the solar myth inspired by the alteration of daylight and the darkness of the night. The roots of the biblical story of sibling murder, through a myth of civilization, could be traced back to an even earlier solar myth. The triumph of the sun over darkness marked that the nomadic Hebrews were to become settlers whose mythology would then record their interest in describing the origins of their civilization. Ibid., 214.}
The appearance of the Hebrews in Canaan was an important turning point also because of the cultural and political influence of the peoples already living in Canaan and their powerful northern neighbors, the Phoenicians. Goldziher emphasized that the Hebrew social and political institutions from this period emerged as a result of cultural borrowing from the Phoenicians and the other Canaanite peoples. Goldziher asked, “How else could a nation passing suddenly without political experience from nomadic to civil life produce these institutions without which a nation can neither constitute itself as a state nor continue to exist?”

The institutions of Hebrew judges and kingship were acquired through the Hebrews’ interactions with the Canaanites; in addition, the “community of language [with the Canaanites who also spoke Semitic languages] greatly promoted the introduction of the Canaanitis religion among the Hebrews.” The Hebrews were familiar with words like El, Elohim, and Shadday that already represented religious ideas to the Canaanites. For the nomadic Hebrews these terms described the sky that they adored. As they settled in Canaan, they borrowed the religious rituals from their new neighbors and fitted these words to new religious ideas. The transition from nomadic lifestyle to settlement following the encounter with the Canaanite groups was congruent with the acquisition of religion and history. As a result, the mythological faculty was overshadowed by religious ideology and theocratic history; mythological figures became gods and ancestors. This also

95 Less relevant to this argument about Hebrew ethnogenesis is the polemic against Renan’s argument about Arab “linguistic conquest.” Goldziher inserted it into the discussion of several examples from world history that paralleled the Hebrew conquest of the Canaan, namely when a nation conquers another nation that has a more advanced civilization and assumes its language and/or social, religious, and political institutions. Goldziher pointed out that the Hebrew conquest of the area west from the Jordan River followed this pattern as did the Arab conquest of the Middle East and Persia.

96 Goldziher, Mythos, 242.

97 Ibid., 247.
explains why Hebrew solar myths are rather poor compared to the richness of the Aryan solar mythology.

The story of Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac illustrates this transformation. The original name, Avram, (אברם), is composed of two words: av, meaning father, (אב) and ram, meaning high (ราม). (The Torah mentions him first in Genesis 11:26.) The name betrays the nomadic mythical origin of the patriarch’s figure.

In the destination of the Heaven the Semite starts from the sensuous impression of height and therefore forms the names denoting it from the roots samâ (shama) and râm, both of which express the idea of ‘being high.’ … One of the most prominent figures of the Hebrew mythology belongs to this category: Abh-ram the High Father.

Goldziher’s subsequent comparative etymology demonstrated how other Semitic languages related the words for rain and sky—supporting the conceptual association between the height and the sky’s darkness. Psalms 2: 4 reveals that the name Isaac, which means “laughing,” refers to the Sun: “He who sits in heaven and laughs.” Goldziher explained that the biblical text revealed the meaning of the original myth. He wrote: “The ‘Smiling one’ whom the ‘High Father’

98 Throughout hundreds of pages, Goldziher’s book presented many biblical figures that earlier represented a myth which later acquired an historical and/or religious interpretation. The story of Abraham and Issac is only one of the many Goldziher analyzed. In addition to the forefathers’ story, Goldziher analyzed the story of Japheth. In Judges 11:29-40, Japheth pledges to sacrifice as a burnt offering to God the first thing that appears at his doorstep upon his return from the victorious war against the Ammonites. His daughter is the first to greet him and he sacrifices her. The teaching of the biblical story only indirectly connects to the act of sacrifice; the lesson is that in commemoration of Japheth’s daughter, who asked for a two-month period before being sacrificed during which she retreated with her fellow maidens, it had become a Hebrew custom that unmarried women yearly gather to chant for four days as Japheth’s daughter did before being sacrificed. Nonetheless, Goldziher’s mythological investigation reveals that, in this case, the fatherly figure is the Sun, “the firstborn.” The meaning of the name Japheth (i.e. Jephtah (יפתח)) is “opener,” and Goldziher again provided a broad variety of examples from other mythologies to underscore the original mythical meaning:

In the evening the sunset sky is born from the lap of the sun, and in the morning, when in place of the red sunrise (which the myth does not distinguish from the red sunset) the hot midday sun comes forth, Jephthah has killed his own daughter and she is gone. Mythos, 104.

99 Ibid., 91-92.
100 Ibid., 93.
intends to slay, is the smiling day, or more closely defined the smiling sunset, which gets the worst of the contest with the night-sky and disappears.”\textsuperscript{101} The original myth describes the night as it follows the day, the father slaying his son.

This myth transformed with the beginnings of religious life, and continued to be shaped as the Hebrews passed from polytheism to monotheism. In the biblical account, (Genesis 22), it is \textit{Elohim} who requests the human sacrifice from Abraham and \textit{Jahveh} who stops Abraham from actually killing his own son: (In the 2003 English translation of the Jewish Publication Society, the word “God” is used for Elohim and “Lord” for Jahveh.)

Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, “Abraham,” and he answered, “Here I Am.” And He said, “Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you.” (Genesis 22:1-2)

Then an Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven: “Abraham! Abraham!” And he Answered “Here I am.” And he said, “Do not raise your hand against the boy or do anything to him. (Genesis 22:11-12)

Goldziher explained that Elohim’s call for human sacrifice illustrates the Hebrews’ adherence to Canaanite religion and rituals. The Hebrews “borrowed” the Elohistic cult from the peoples they conquered; they were not the only people who admired Elohim. Accordingly, Goldziher emphasized that modern biblical criticism (and Renan) wrongly described the existence of a “National God of the Hebrews” at this stage of religiosity. Elohim, the “highest divinity,” was neither a lonely god, nor a “Hebrew creation” --particularly since the nomadic Hebrews were at the myth creation stage and did not have a religion of their own. Based on the writings of Schelling, Müller, and Steinthal, Goldziher argued that the power of national consciousness, a notion that the Hebrews learned from the Canaanites, could only manifest itself

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 96.
through cultural practices which were already fully developed; in the Hebrews’ case this was mythology. He wrote,

    It [national particularity] must perforce gain expression somewhere, and could not do so anywhere except on a domain on which the most original impress of their own mind was still visible – in the myths, insofar as they were not yet swept away by foreign influence.  

    While national consciousness manifested first in the Hebrew myths, myths supported the sense of nationality, and this sense of nationality aided the development of monotheism.

**Hebrew religiosity**

As the Hebrews’ constant desire to distinguish themselves from the neighboring tribes inspired the idea of one god (as opposed to the many gods of the other groups), the earthly passion of exceptionalism was reflected in the religious vision of an exclusive god. Goldziher pointed out that “At the conclusion of the national development the Elohist monotheism attained perfection; but from the very beginning, the mind of the nation lived in the conviction that ‘Elohim was not like the Elohims of the nations.’” The use of the definite article ‘ha’ (ה) before Elohim (ha-Elohim), Goldziher pointed out, paralleled the way in which the Arab word of Allah, the highest god, acquired its particular meaning as the name of the only god. The crystallization of the Elohim-idea into monotheism paralleled the political transformation that accompanied it: the emergence of Jerusalem as the political and spiritual national center of the kingdom. Biblical memory associated this period with the names of David and Solomon.

102 Ibid., 251.
104 At this point, Goldziher’s historical reconstruction connects with Geiger’s Judaism and its History, which asserted that Judaism was established during the period of the First Temple, also known as Solomon’s Temple. Abraham Geiger, *Judaism and its History* (New York: The Bloch Publishing Co., 1911), 50.
Goldziher also noted that the strengthening and broadening of the Elohim-idea was closely tied to the political history of the Israelite kingdoms after David’s and Solomon’s realms were separated into northern and southern states. (At this point, Goldziher used the terms Hebrews and Israelites interchangeably.) While the northerners stressed that they were descended from Joseph’s father Ephraim, the southerners were considered the descendants of the “ugly Leah, Judah’s mother, who became Jacob’s wife only by deceit and craft and partly from slaves.”

Goldziher used linguistic, archeological, and ethnological illustrations in addition to biblical text to bolster the northerners’ claims. He demonstrated that national consciousness inspired the historical imagination of the community in a political way, too.

The Hebrew national consciousness and monotheistic concept acquired greater complexity and depth through the idea of Jahveh. It was rather this than monotheism, which was a Hebrew “ingenious original idea,” Goldziher stressed.

The second part of the story of Abraham and Isaac, in which Jahveh forbids Abraham to kill his own son, demonstrates the difference between the idea of Elohim and Jahveh and the “power” of Jahveh, and testifies to the

105 Goldziher, Myntos, 286.
106 The word Jahveh, based on the root y. h. v. (י. ה. ו.), could be translated as “the one who brings to be.” However Goldziher viewed its meaning as similar to the Muslim notion of Allah: the infinitely omnipotent only god, which etymologically parallels the Hebrew Elohim. The reason for this seeming contradiction is that as the Muslim concept, the word Jahveh was in previous use, but only through the prophets’ elaborations it gained its full meaning. In the second book of Moses when “God said to Moses ‘Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh’” (I am who I am) (Exodus 3:14), the biblical author expressed the metaphysical notion of the eternal quality of the deity. (Linguistically the sentence and the word Jahveh correlate as well, since ehyeh (אֶהְיֶה) and Jahveh (יהוה) come from the same root. The continuation of the passage demonstrates this correlation: “Thus shall you say to the Israelites, ‘Ehyeh sent me to you.’” (Exodus 3:14:1) Geiger’s discussion of the sentence “I am who I am” from Exodus demonstrates the difference between the two thinkers’ viewpoints. Geiger argued that “God, speaking of Himself, proclaims … ‘I am who I am,’ so man says to Him ‘He is!’ – the Only Existence, the All-Compromising … That term of unity resounds through all the writings of Judaism.” Geiger’s interpretation of the Jahveh idea was exemplary for Goldziher. For Geiger, Jahveisim was the point from which he started his investigation, he did not discuss the evolution of the idea, only its influence on the history of Judaism. For Goldziher, the discussion of Jahveisim brought his investigation close to the end, when Hebrew mythical creativity became almost completely subjugated by religious development—which also represents the beginning of Hebrew literary history. Geiger, 32.
progress leading to this more advanced stage of development, as a result of which the idea of an omnipotent and non-changing deity took root. By stopping Abraham from offering human sacrifice and executing Isaac, Jahveh represents that novel concept of divine. However, Goldziher did not enter the discussion of what exactly constituted to this new idea of Jahveh as he did not define the content of the idea of Elohim either.\textsuperscript{107}

**The role of the prophets**

In Goldziher’s view, the Jahveh idea could not form as a result of “speculation” but in a later time after the word entered into usage. Only then could it acquire its matured meaning. In contrast to the slow engagement with Canaanite customs, Goldziher believed that the idea of Jahveh demonstrated a different path for the development of the Israelites’ religious ideas: the influence of individuals. It appeared first among the Hebrew prophets. The prophets opposed the Elohistic idea not only as a result of their awakening national consciousness, but also because they believed it led to immoral religious practices that they recognized as “Canaanite decadence.” The significance of the Jahveh idea, Goldziher emphasized, was its “civilizing power,” the ethical message involved with that of national uniqueness.\textsuperscript{108} Goldziher stressed that

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\item \textsuperscript{107} Geiger similarly viewed Abraham and Isaac’s story as incorporating a historical and ethical teaching. As he was interested in the history of Judaism, Geiger demonstrated that the idea of Jahveh reflected the perfection of the idea of Jewish piety. Geiger wrote that it was not the “readiness to sacrifice” but its “omission …the deed of preserving him [Isaac Abraham’s son] … that he recognizes God in His sublime and true nature, constitutes his [Abraham’s] true, enlightened piety.” Geiger explained that this story of the Patriarch’s spiritual battle tells of Judaism’s antagonism toward the surrounding peoples’ religions. Judaism’s piety forbids the “degradation of the Divine Being” which is manifested in the merciless custom of human sacrifice practiced by neighboring religions. Of the story’s historical dimension Geiger emphasized equally the confrontation between the religious ideas of Judaism and the Canaanites and Abraham’s figure as the forefather of the Hebrews whose quest essentializes the battles of the whole nation to reach the perfect religion. In contrast, for Goldziher, this story demonstrated the result of a long development: the transformation of the mythological vision of the continuously changing day and night into the story of the divinely inspired father who would kill his son. Through the act of condemning and prohibiting the sacrifice, the Hebrews’ new idea of the divine unfolds. Meanwhile the mythological figures become historical ones: the forefathers of the Israelites. Geiger, 63-64.
\item \textsuperscript{108} Goldziher, *Mythos*, 299.
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the “handful Hebrews” (i.e. the prophets) disseminated the concept among the Israelites before it gained universal appeal. 109 Goldziher described the prophets as “not philosophers of culture” but “bad politicians, but unsurpassable representatives of the idea of nationality,” whose leadership was both spiritual and intellectual in nature. 110 As will be discussed in the following, like the nineteenth-century Hungarian literati and politicians who first articulated the idea of nationhood, the prophets’ task in Goldziher’s history was to disseminate the idea of Hebrew nationhood among the people. 111

In Goldziher’s view, Jahveism reached its fullest form only during the Babylonian captivity, during which the sense of national identity further developed. In the course of this development, the Hebrews started to adhere historical characteristics to the formerly mythical figures—like the forefathers—and thus the Hebrew myth was “utterly overthrown.” 112

Goldziher’s final claims brought him to the historical reconstruction of the Pentateuch and biblical criticism. He emphasized that these fields were beyond the scope of his undertaking. 113 Nevertheless, he felt it was important to examine the Babylonian captivity in

109 Geiger described the prophets as the “principal representatives of revelation,” and “organs” of the Jahveh idea, while Geiger focused on the development of Judaism which he identified with matured Jahveism. He stressed that the “Hebrew genius” manifested in Judaism:

Nor does Judaism claim to be the work of individuals, but that of the whole people. … The patriarchs were all equally endowed with the gift of prophetic vision, the genius of revelation which was latent in the whole people and found expression in individuals. Geiger, 47.

The difference between Geiger’s and Goldziher’s approaches corresponds with their varying focus on the nationalist and religious motives shaping Hebrew prophecy.

110 Goldziher, Mythos, 297.

111 In arguing so, Goldziher’s interpretation differed from Geiger’s, who instead stressed that the prophets’ religious mission prevailed over any nationalistic objectives. He wrote, “the most essential matter for them [to the prophets] remains: ‘For from Zion goeth forth the Law, and the word of God from Jerusalem.’” In Geiger’s view, the prophets appeared as the religious leaders of the ancient Hebrews and their historical role manifested in their part in the history of Judaism. Geiger, 40.

112 Goldziher, Mythos, 312.

113 Ibid.
order to establish the prophets’ influence in bringing the idea of Jahveh to its completion and to
demonstrate the deep impact of the Babylonian empire’s culture on Hebrew legends (for example, in the stories of the Flood and the Garden of Eden) as well as on Hebrew collective memory. He also declared that the biblical cosmogony, under Babylonian influence, lent to Jahveh a cosmopolitan characteristic, which further emphasized Judaism’s universal message. He stressed that the “Hebrews were the first to understand Jahveh, and that the extension of this understanding over all mankind is the ideal of Prophetism as it affects world’s history.” While the original idea of deity was closely attached to the Hebrew national sentiment, the god of the Hebrews would come to be considered the creator of the whole world. Goldziher emphasized the universal or cosmopolitan character the same way Geiger insisted that “It is mere nonsense to assert that Judaism teaches the doctrine of a national god, a god belonging exclusively to one people.” However, Goldziher added that Jahveh’s cosmopolitanism was in the service of further strengthening the nationalist sentiment and deprecating foreign vices. Thus Goldziher viewed the transformation of old customs and the dilution of mythical stories into historical and religious narratives as serving the zeal with which the prophets spread Jahveism.

**Nineteenth-Century Nationalism and Mythos**

The extent to which Goldziher’s reconstruction of the Hebrew ethnogenesis was influenced by the Hungarian occupation with national history and Hungarian nationalism manifests in his emphasis on the importance of cultural borrowing, the role of myth creation in the articulation of national peculiarity, the connection between political unity – or lack thereof – and the intensification of national sentiment, and the role of the prophets in the process of

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114 Geiger, 52.
Hebrew ethnogenesis. Goldziher argued that the act of borrowing the Elohim idea or the sentiment of national peculiarity from the Canaanites did not lessen the originality of the Hebrew religious, social, or political culture at the later stage, when the religious and political institutions were more matured. In connection to Goldziher’s writings on Islam, Susannah Heschel stresses that the emphasis on cultural borrowing intended

not to disparage Islam but to demonstrate its vitality—and also that of Judaism. Writing against the Semitic philologist Ernst Renan, who viewed both Islam and Judaism as stagnant Semitic religions, incapable of development and lacking mythology, Goldziher argued that Islam, like Judaism, has a receptive nature, a capacity to assimilate foreign ideas and rituals and to adapt itself to changing circumstances. Freed of the matrix of mythology, Judaism and Islam raised themselves to monotheism, which allowed them to inaugurate a history of scientific understanding.\footnote{Heschel, 100.}

In contrast to the emergence of Islam, which Goldziher described as a supranational movement, in his eyes, the Hebrews’ monotheism was congruent with the emergence of Hebrew national identity. Considering the public debates on the Hungarian ethnogenesis, the first clashes on the Ugric-Turkish war, and Goldziher’s interest in reconstructing the history of the formation of the Hebrews as a nation, his emphasis on the positive nature of cultural borrowing could just as well have been addressed towards Hungarian nationalists as towards comparative linguists—or both.

According to the Hungarian essentialist understanding, modern Hungarians were the descendants of their ethnically homogeneous Asian warrior forefathers. Alternatively, comparative linguists understood that modern languages and nations developed through differentiation and migration away from the Urheimat. Both theories considered cultural borrowing rather a negative than a positive notion, contrary to the ideal of originality or purity. In Mythos, Goldziher stressed that the act of borrowing was less important than the process

\footnote{Heschel, 100.}
through which the given group incorporated foreign elements into its own culture. For him, the
history of the ancient Hebrews consisted of a series of borrowings (of the idea of Elohim,
exceptionalism, the political institutions of the judges and kingship, idea of Garden of Eden, the
motif of the flood and more) and the subsequent acts of transforming the foreign elements into
organic parts of the Hebrew national culture. As Heschel pointed out, to Goldziher, it
demonstrated constant development, though not only with regard to religion. When compared to
Vambery’s *Turkish-Tartar Word Comparison, Mythos* seems to similarly advocate the positive
influence of cultural hybridity in national development, though in a more abstract way and
through the example of the ancient Hebrews, without any historical connection to the emergence
of the Hungarian nation.

To Goldziher, the Hebrew myths’ role in the awakening of the Hebrew national
consciousness was also to teach universal lessons, which nonetheless, he thought had specific
significance for his fellow Hungarians.

The fact that this noble [national self-] consciousness gives a distinct direction of
its own to everything that fills the human soul, is another proof of its power to
transform the spiritual life. In modern times the kindling of national self-
consciousness, advanced by the arousing of spiritual opposition to foreign
influences which had previously repressed national individuality, causes the
production of documents to prove the awakening of this national opposition,
documents which belong to the best part of literature and intellectual labor.\(^{116}\)

Similarly to the Hobsbawmian notion of “invented tradition,” Goldziher argued that since
modern nations lacked ancient mythologies, they invented myths as part of their “production” of
literary documents through which they expressed their national consciousness.\(^{117}\) Among the


\(^{117}\) The literary study of mythology was rooted in Jacob Grimm’s pioneering work which scrutinized folk stories to
study the development of German mythology and language. Hungarian thinkers considered Hungarian folk tales
and songs as vehicles of the most ancient literary materials and therefore started studying them during the second
half of the eighteenth century.
modern examples that he cited were Endre Horváth’s and Vörösmarty’s mythic figures and epic poems that in his opinion stood “in place of the mere fragments remaining of the old Hungarian cycle of myths, with the view of reviving national feeling and consciousness in their fellow countrymen.” Indeed, the Romanticist movement found Hungarian mythology an inspiration for modern poetry, while the literati considered folk songs and popular stories to be the best repository of ancient mythology. They read and collected Hungarian myths and legends. For them, these songs and stories represented authentic sources of national culture and literature that needed to be explored. Goldziher deliberately compared the emotional backgrounds of ancient and modern myth making and drew a parallel between the periods when the figures of the Patriarchs were born, when legends of heroes like David fighting Goliath in national garb, resembling the Hungarian story of Miklós Toldi, were composed. He emphasized that the ancient Hebrews’ mythology, similarly to the modern Hungarian, articulated national awakening. But, as his historian colleagues argued, he also stressed that only the former had scholarly value for ancient history students, thus hinting at the importance of the study of Hungarian ancient mythology.

118 Goldziher, Mythos, 252.

119 László Kósa’s A magyar néprajz tudománytörténete (The History of Hungarian Ethnological Scholarship) (Budapest: Osiris, 2001) stresses that the Romanticist turn to folk culture did not distinguish between ancient and national. In fact, it was believed that the national folk literature conserved the most ancient stories of Hungariandom. The first collection of folk songs György Gaal’s Märchen der Magyaren appeared in 1822 in Vienna.

120 Ibid., 256. In the Hungarian story, Toldi triumphs over a Czech hero. János Arany’s 1846 Toldi, which within a few years became a trilogy, is the best known modern literary elaboration of Toldi’s story. Arany relied on Péter Ilosvai Selymes’ sixteenth-century poem Az híres-nevezetes Toldi Miklósnak jeles cselekedeteiről és bajnokoskodásáról való história, which retold the events that took place probably in the fourteenth century. In his literary history, Antal Szerb defines Arany’s ethical message in his shaping of Toldi’s figure as the embodiment of Hungarianness, which is congruent with Goldziher’s view on the scope of modern mythological and legendary stories. See excerpts from Antal Szerb’s Magyar irodalom történet (Hungarian Literary History), (Cluj-Kolozsvár Erdélyi szépmives Céh, 1934); available from http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/sulinet/igyjo/setup/portrek/arany/szrj.htm#szrj2; Internet; accessed on January 10, 2014.
Goldziher’s discussion of the interconnection of political unity and nationalist sentiment, though it had expanded to a generalization out of the traditions of the Hebrews, could have described nineteenth-century multiethnic Hungary as well:

The consciousness of national oneness is enfeebled, if the political state does not coincide with the nation in a single idea. Hence we see how eager nations divided into separate political states are for a struggle for union, when once their national consciousness wakes out of sleep. On the other hand, in states formed by a union of peoples of various nationalities, we observe a certainly justifiable endeavor, on the part of the strongest and therefore ruling nationality, to inoculate the weaker ones with its own national sentiment, and thereby produce a common feeling of unity.  

As a member of the only minority in Hungary which, while maintaining its linguistic identification with the other German-speaking Jewish communities of Central Europe, acculturated and identified as Hungarian nationals, Goldziher shed light onto the political importance of nationality from the point of view of the Hungarian majority. Neither his argument about the conscious assimilationist policy of the ruling ethnic group, nor the claim according to which the separation of the same ethnic group into different political units fit directly into the historical reconstruction of the separation of the Hebrew kingdoms. His reference to the political division of the same ethnicity rather described the situation of the Slavic groups in Goldziher’s time. Indeed, the whole edifice of the Compromise was built on the idea of the undivided Hungarian political nation. Accordingly, Croatia was also part of the lands of the Hungarian Crown under the rule of the Hungarian political elite. Similarly to Hunfalvy or Vambery, Goldziher differentiated here between the ethnic and the political definitions of nationhood and, from the perspective of the majority, advocated that the realization of the latter was possible


through the hegemony of the ethnic majority. However, his argumentation also included the claim that the political hegemony of the majority necessarily involved the abandonment of the idea of the creation of an ethnically pure state.

Goldziher’s stress on the national political role of the prophets echoed nineteenth-century views of the political role the intellectual elite ought to take in national politics in Hungary. It is hard to resist associating the discussion of the prophets’ national engagement with the Hungarian poet Sándor Petőfi’s 1847 poem “A XIX. század költői” (The Poets of the Nineteenth Century). According to Goldziher’s student Károly Sebestyén, Petőfi was Goldziher’s favorite lyrical poet, while Arany, whose poems he cited early in the book, was his favorite epic poet. Petőfi likened poets of his time to Moses the prophet and leader of his people who delivered them to Canaan.

We wander in the wilderness like Moses and his ancient folk, following the fiery pillar God had sent to guide his flock. In our days God has ordered poets to be the fiery pillars and so to lead the wandering people into Canaan’s promised land.

Petőfi’s insistence on the moral powers of the poet who, like the prophet Moses, acted as the Hungarian people’s leader, not only parallels Goldziher’s interpretation of ancient Hebrew

\[\text{123 Petőfi was the young poet of the revolution of 1848 who died in 1849 during the War of Independence. His parents were Slovaks, who changed their original name Petrovics to Petőfi, which had a Hungarian sound, but Petőfi was never considered other than a Hungarian poet unconditionally engaged to the cause of Hungarian independence. Beyond the political importance of his work, in literary circles his poetry was compared to that of Heine and Byron, both of whom Petőfi admired.}

\[\text{124 Károly Sebestyén, “Goldziher Ignác, az ember,” (Ignaz Goldziher the man) in } A \text{ zsidóság (The Essence), 24}

\[\text{125 Translation by Edwin Morgan. Available from http://www.magyarulbabelben.net/works/hu/Pet%C5%91fi_S%C3%A1ndor-1823/A_XIX._sz%C3%A1zad_k%C3%B6lt%C5%91i/en/2073-THE_POETS_OF_THE_NINETEENTH_CENTURY; Internet; accessed on January 11, 2014.} \]
prophetism but also reflects the way in which Petőfi’s role in 1848-49 was viewed in the second half of the century.  

When reviewing Petőfi’s poems, Goldziher’s patron József Eötvös, who was himself a literary author and, unlike the revolutionary people’s leader Petőfi, a centralist politician, emphasized Petőfi’s Hungarian-ness and leading role in the nationalist movement: “Petőfi is especially Hungarian, even his shortest writing bears the stamp of the nationality, and this is the reason, why every Hungarian understands … not only his words but also the feeling that he expresses in his poems.” A few decades later, the literary historian and author Antal Szerb described Petőfi in similar terms as Petőfi had described the poets of the nineteenth century. Szerb stressed that Petőfi’s name lived in the collective Hungarian consciousness, and there was no need for history books in order to be reminded of his work, which proved that “Hungariandom knew how to appreciate its literary giants.” The prophet in Goldziher’s description was a leader who reminded the people of their national mission and knew no political compromise. Like Eötvös, who was an active promoter of the Compromise, “an experienced


127 The original: “Petőfi kiválólag magyar, legkisebb műve is a nemzetiség bélyegét hordja magán, s ez az ok, miért nemcsak, mint sok költőnknel, szavait, de az érzést is, melyet dalaiban kifejez, minden magyar megérti.”

128 Szerb, Magyar irodalom történet (Hungarian Literary History); available from http://magyar-irodalom.elte.hu/sulinet/igyjo/setup/portrek/petofi/szerbps.htm; Internet; accessed April 27, 2014.

129 Goldziher’s Oriental Diary testifies to his familiarity with contemporary Hungarian poetry (he quoted Eötvös (p. 84) and Kisfaludy (p. 95)) as well as the way in which he considered poetry a political discourse the same way as Petőfi did. The Oriental Diary preserved one of his poems, which expressed Goldziher’s loathing for the European Orient – as he called Cairo – “where Europe has spoiled everything healthy and tanned the honest Arab skins morally to death after French example!” The second stanza of his poem from December 23 relates to this anti-French sentiment:

Unscrupulous French shrewd foxes
Lead the Pharaoh with their leash;
With the finest new boot wax they besmear
Mohammed’s people for the glory of France,

Which blinds this good, weak people
With the vain luster of insipid external things
Whereby the good old kernel expires.
statesman of that age would have refrained from censuring the alliance with foreign powers”—in order to ensure the country’s survival, while the prophets “lash this political experiment at every step, and say that only the moral awakening of the nation can bring about the possibility of saving its moral existence.”

Goldziher could equally hint at the debates following the Compromise, the first critic of which was Kossuth who, writing from Paris his famous Cassandra—letter to Deák publicly condemned the Compromise as an unnecessary and mistaken act of renouncing of national rights.

Modern Jewish Historiography

Mythos is a sensitive reaction to nineteenth-century interest in national historiography through which Goldziher established a connection between scholarship and literary narration. Goldziher suggested that historical memory changes historically, and that historical reconstruction itself enriches the collective national memory and is powerful enough to alter the bond that holds the community together. He underscored the role of mythology and religion in this process, which perfectly fit the Hungarian historiographical approach to prehistoric research and changing definitions of nationhood. At the same time, as the difference between Geiger’s and Goldziher’s approaches to Jewish history illustrates, it opposed the historical reconstructions of those nineteenth-century German Jewish historians who depicted Jewish history as the history of a religious community, which, as Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi pointed out, echoed the religious

Goldziher’s poem sees the Egyptians as lacking leaders like poets or prophets and living without a national consciousness. Thus, they fall prey to the French vanities. Indeed, when compared to Petőfi’s work, Goldziher’s poem testifies to his conceptualization of the similar social roles intellectuals and literati ought to play in modern (Hungarian) society; they should embrace a modern version of the prophets’ spiritual leadership.

130 Goldziher, Mythos, 297.
identification of German Jews engaged in reform and acculturation.\textsuperscript{132} (Goldziher’s contemporary Heinrich Graetz also refuted the identification of Jewish history as religious history, though from different grounds.)

Indeed, Goldziher’s interest in the dynamics between the religious and the national, or ethnic, sheds light on the dilemma of nineteenth-century Jewish historians who associated themselves with the scholarly political program of \textit{Wissenschaft des Judentums}. As Yerushalmi described:

Modern Jewish historiography began precipitously out of that assimilation from without and collapse from within which characterized the sudden emergence of Jews out of the ghetto. It originated, not as scholarly curiosity, but as ideology, one of a gamut of responses to the crisis of Jewish emancipation and the struggle to attain it.\textsuperscript{133}

Although Goldziher was a third-generation \textit{Wissenschaft} scholar, his situation—his scholarly connection with Germany and political relationship to Hungary—allowed him to approach the question of whether Jewish history should be considered the history of a nation or a religious belief from a different angle.\textsuperscript{134} He gave his full answer in his (1887) study \textit{Zsidőság lényege és


\textsuperscript{133} Yerushalmi, 85.

\textsuperscript{134} In his \textit{Modern Nationalism and Religion}, Salo Baron, an advocate of conceptualizing Jewish history as of a national community, discusses the historical phenomenon of the correlation between the national and the religious in the development of a political community:

The Jewish people, through its religion, actually survived as a nationality without a state. In other words, alliance with either nationality or state or, more frequently, with both was the most characteristic feature of ancient religions. The rise of Christianity and Islam seemed to terminate this nexus between religion and nationalism.

Nonetheless, there is another type of correlation that Baron observes between nationalism and religion in general: “The monotheistic creeds … from Judaism to Christianity and Islam, rejected all syncretistic harmonizations. For them there was only one God, and those who refused to recognize and worship Him necessarily lived in error. This basic religious intolerance was inherited by European nationalism even in its formative stage.” Baron was convinced that the persecution of Jews during the Middle Ages was partly animated by “subconscious nationalist intolerance. Modern nationalism in its extreme, has inherited some of the worst attributes of medieval religious fanaticism without any of the latter’s redeeming features of mercy and eschatological justice.” Even

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fejlődése (The essence and development of Jewishness) and shorter 1913 essay *Hagyomány és dogma* (Tradition and dogma). The first study reconstructed the development of Judaism from the emergence of prophetism until modern times, and the second discussed the factors that keep Judaism a living spiritual and ethical tradition, constantly renewing itself and thus remaining the basis for modern Jewish study. Throughout the three studies, he argued that the basis on which collective Jewish identity was built had changed over the centuries and thus the content of Jewishness and the criteria for Jewish identification had also been transformed. Goldziher addressed the two latter works to Hungarian audiences, which demonstrates that he maintained that this methodological question was very important in relation to the Hungarian Jewish political framework.

**East Reinterpreted**

Goldziher’s academic inauguration speech “A spanyolországi arabok helye az iszlám fejlődése történetében, összehasonlítva a keleti arabokéval” (The place [i. e. role] of the Arabs in Spain in the development of Islam compared to that of the eastern Arabs) in 1876 complemented his previous works written to Hungarian readers by introducing them to the history of the medieval Arab empire. In this speech, Goldziher mastered what scholars like Conrad consider unbiased scholarship and which opinion Simon refuted. In Simon’s view, the study has several layers: its primary goal was, as stated in the title, to examine and compare the eastern and the western, i. e. Spanish Arabs’ role in the development of Islam, science, and arts.135 The

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after the two ceased to simultaneously shape the Jewish collective identity (as well as the Greek), religion and nationalism shared the same community-creating powers.


135 Simon, 100.
comparative study of the Mashreq and the Maghreb has been an important topic for orientalists for a long time. Goldziher intended, and in Simon’s view succeeded, to refute the popular belief that the culture that the Iberian Muslim states created was more liberal and progressive than those of the eastern Muslim societies’. One of Goldziher’s arguments was based on his examination of the geographical dispersion and teachings of the four Muslim legal schools.\textsuperscript{136} Goldziher contended that the fact that the most Liberal, the Hanafite school became dominant in the east and the most conservative, the Malakite dominated in Spain demonstrated that the eastern Muslim societies were more inclined to change and development. (Like his arguments in \textit{Mythos}, Goldziher noted in this instance as well that it was wrong and erroneous to define Muslim societies or any other as a priori incapable of change.)

Goldziher stressed that eastern Arabs were more culturally flexible because they encountered peoples like the Persians, who were culturally and otherwise richer and more sophisticated than they. The need to acculturate to the “culturally superior,” in Goldziher’s opinion, inspired the Hanafite school in the east, whereas the Malakite school could gain dominance in the west because by clinging onto tradition, they “conformed their sense of origin” when encountering the conquered.\textsuperscript{137} Simon emphasizes that like Goldziher’s 1873 study “The Nationality Question Among the Arabs,” the inaugural speech also discussed the most relevant

\textsuperscript{136} The four main legal Muslim schools are: Malikite, Hanafite, Shafi’ite, Hanbalite. Goldziher’s taxonomy relied on the analysis of the legal examination and inclination to change: on what basis the legal scholars were admissive to new behaviors and ideas. Goldziher contended that while “it was the tendency of Eastern Islam, in its religious and social institutions, to allow the freedom of the mind to prevail beside Tradition, whereas with the Spanish and Maghribi Arabs the system of religious and social life excluded… free thinking…” Goldziher, “Spanish Arabs II. Installment,” 184.

question to Hungarians, namely the nation formation of a multiethnic society. The Arab imperial program was successful in expanding the umbrella of Islam over different ethnic groups without taking away their cultural identity. As Goldziher’s other studies, including *Mythos*, pointed out, the dominant role of politics demanded – in this case – that Arabs give up any plans of ethnic and cultural homogenization.

However, there is an additional reading of Goldziher’s claims, namely that he erected a cultural hierarchy between the medieval east, the conquering Arabs, and Europeans, arguing that they represented different levels of civilization, eastern Arabs being the most developed. Western Arabs and Europeans followed them. Whereas during their centuries-long occupation, no Iberian words or institutions were borrowed and transplanted into medieval Arabic, the language of the eastern Arabs was enriched with Persian words. Although this was originally believed to imply that the Spanish Arabs demonstrated cultural superiority, in fact it proved only that there was no mutual cultural exchange between them and the Christian Iberians. Iberian Christians borrowed both words and institutions from the Muslim conquerors.

What Simon did not discuss, and it may be a sign of his bias as an orientalist, is that the inauguration speech can be read as a personal take on the European and Hungarian bias toward the culture and politics of the Orient. By arguing that eastern Islam was a more civilized and progressive cultural system, Goldziher discussed the politics in the medieval east, where the Hungarian tribes “stepped first on the stage of history,” in rather positive coloring. Unlike *Mythos*, “Spanish Arabs” did not mention any event or personality either from the distant or very

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138 During this period, Arab institutions like the lunatic asylums were established in Iberia, while as Goldziher argued, without borrowing words, Arabic find its ways to express notions lacking their terminology in the Arabic vocabulary. For example the Arabic *tamaddun* تمدن for civilization/urbanization or *al-aghlabbiyya* أغلبية for majority of votes.
recent Hungarian past, yet its argument paralleled Vambery’s explicit claims in his 1882 study, namely that, due to their Turkish, i.e. eastern origins, the Hungarian conquerors of the Carpathian Basin were culturally superior to their Ugric fellow tribesmen, the local population, and western Europeans. Not unlike the Hungarian ancient homeland that many Hungarian politicians and intellectuals at the turn of the nineteenth century, including Szekér, described, the medieval Arab east in Goldziher’s depiction displayed the characteristics of a modern progressive society, where cultural differences were tolerated and respected and acculturation benefitted all.

The next chapter demonstrates that during the 1880s, both Vambery and Goldziher advocated the east’s multiculturalism in an increasingly intolerant political atmosphere.
CHAPTER FIVE
WHO IS ORIENTAL IN HUNGARY?
MULTICULTURALISM, JEWISH HISTORY AND SELF-ORIENTALISM 1876-1890

The illiberal turn following the 1873 economic crisis was not the only force that shaped Hungarian politics from the 1870s on. Between 1873 and 1875, the left-center opposition started a fusion with the governing Deák-party, and when on October 20, 1875, the former critic of the Compromise and then minister of interior and Kálmán Tisza (1830-1902) formed his government, he brought about unprecedented political stability. During his fifteen years in power, until his resignation in 1890, the country experienced rapid economic, infrastructural and social transformation.¹ The country could take advantage of the Monarchy’s economic structure, and among other things, the Hungarian political elite successfully influenced the Monarchy’s foreign policy, which manifested in the Bosnian occupation in 1878.²

The foreign political situation equally influenced the mood in Hungary. Several years before the Turco-Russian War of 1877-78, the Monarchy’s foreign political decision makers were alarmed by the revolutions that swept over the Balkans, at that time part of the Ottoman Empire. For the Hungarians among them, the rebellion of the Slavic groups under Ottoman rule raised the specter of the further spread of pan-Slavism, a threat that overshadowed the events of 1848-49. Similarly, because Russia has already flexed its muscles by sending forces to Romania and Serbia, the anti-Slav and anti-Russian sentiment and hegemonic instincts over the Slavic population that characterized the 1830s and 1848-49 revived in the second half of the 1870s. The

¹ Ferenc Deák was the chief negotiator and “father” of the Compromise.
² Count Gyula Andrássy the elder was the common foreign minister of the Monarchy between 1871 and 1879. His and the Hungarian elites pro-English and anti-Russian attitudes influenced his politics and the decision to occupy Bosnia. He negotiated at the 1878 Congress of Berlin on behalf of the Monarchy.
Independence Party’s commentary on the fall of Plevna illustrates that during the 1877-78 Turco-Russian War, the Reform Era vocabulary that described Russia as the main enemy of Hungarian freedom came together with the growing sympathy for the lot of the Turks, with whom the Hungarian public identified the Ottoman Empire:

after the Poles, it is the turn of the Turkish nation; and once the Turkish Empire falls, there will remain only one nation in the East that is ready to live and die for freedom. This nation is the Hungarian one.

Victimization by Russia, the Oriental despot, did not change the tendency of the Hungarians to identify either themselves or the Turks with the east. The two represented the

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3 In the aftermath of 1848, just like following the Rákóczi War of Independence the beginning of the eighteenth century, many revolutionaries, including Kossuth, fled to Istanbul. The Ottoman Empire refused to extradite the Hungarian refugees, which contributed to the development of positive Ottoman-Hungarian relations during the second half of the century and contributed to the emergence of modern bibliographical studies. In return, these contributed to the positive public evaluation of the Ottoman Empire in Hungary. From the fifties, Hungarian historians focused on the collection of foreign sources on Hungarian history. As part of this endeavor, while living in Istanbul, a member of the Hungarian exile community, Gábor Szilágyi, acquired several Turkish manuscripts in an attempt to learn more about the Ottoman period in Hungary. Thanks to Vambery who met Szilágyi in Istanbul, this collection was acquired by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and formed the basis of its Oriental Collection. The historical research was expanded to Hungarian books that were taken from Hungary during the Ottoman occupation, as well, most famously the Corvinas (books named after the king) from legendary library of King Matthias Corvinus of the House of Hunyadi. In the nineteenth century, Hungarian scholars suspected that they were kept in Istanbul. From the early 1800s onwards, the estates pressured Vienna to request them from the Ottoman government through diplomatic channels. However, Vienna was only successful in acquiring Corvinas from several European private collections. In 1869, on the occasion of his visit to the opening of the Suez-canal, Franz Joseph asked Sultan Abul Aziz for the Corvinas, and he received four, which he forwarded to the Hungarian parliament. Upon their arrival in Hungary, they were immediately put out on display, and the public was in awe. The Hungarian response to the 1877-78 Turco-Russian war opened a new chapter in the history of the Hungarian reacquisition of the Corvinas. In 1877, university students organized pro-Ottoman protests on the streets of Budapest. Whereas the president of the University of Pest condemned the protests (for potentially creating an unfavorable atmosphere for the Alliance of the Three Emperors), Istanbul welcomed it and decided to send thirty-five Hungarian books back to Budapest. Among them were fourteen Corvinas. Since Vienna did not allow the high-ranking Ottoman official entrusted with the delivery of the rare books to personally hand them over to the Hungarian University Library, Sultan Abdul Hamid decided to make a personal visit to Budapest, where the students received him with a warm welcome and presented him with a sword. In the following decade, Hungarian researchers ascertained that these had been the last Corvinas preserved on Ottoman soil and they directed any future efforts to recover the legendary Library toward other, European collections. Edit Madas, “A Corvina újkori története Magyaroroszágon” (The Modern History of the Corvinas in Hungary), in A holló jegében: Fejezetek a Corvinák történetéből (In the Sign of the Raven: Chapters in the History of the Corvinas), ed. István Monok (Budapest: Corvina-Széchenyi Könyvtár, 2004), 75; available from http://www.corvina.oszk.hu/studies/hollo_hun.pdf; Internet; accessed March 22, 2013.
positive Orient, while Russia represented the negative. As long as it was possible to see the Ottomans as enemies of the enemy, the reforms introduced by Sultan Abdülmecid I were proof, in the eyes of the Hungarian Liberals’ at least, that the Ottomans were, modern rulers akin to European liberals after all. The fact that the very same Ottoman rule denied independence to Slavic nations was disregarded, just as Kossuth had disregarded the demands of the Slavic groups three decades earlier. A poem titled “Talpra magyar” (On your feet, Hungarian) published on March 3, 1878 in the satirical periodical Borsszem Jankó (Tom Thumb), pointed out the failure of the Hungarian Liberals to recognize the rights of the Slavic groups. The date of the publication fell close to the 30th anniversary of the 1848 Revolution (on March 15 of the same year). The poem’s title was identical to that of Sándor Petőfi’s famous poem “Talpra magyar,” which had become a symbol of the 1848 Revolution. Thirty years later, this satire of similar length built on the revolutionary wording of the original and thus emphasized the gap between Hungarian Liberal politics and the alleged Asian political legacy of the Hungarians: the love for freedom and sense of justice.

As a result of the Turco-Russian war, the Dual Monarchy occupied Bosnia Herzegovina in 1878 and annexed it in 1908, in accordance with the settlement of the Congress of Berlin (Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin). The aforementioned Kállay, who since the end of the 1870s built a formidable career in the common Austro-Hungarian state administration, became governor of Bosnia in 1882. During his political career, he published both academic works, like his 1878 A szerbek története 1780-1815 (The history of the Serbs 1780-1815) and political essays like Oroszország keleti törekvései (Russia’s Eastern Ambitions), which was published in the same year. It advocated the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia, which in fact had been Kállay’s position since 1873. He argued that it was in Hungary’s political interest to stop the
expansion of the Russian sphere of interest as well as the Hungarian’s cultural mission to lead
the Southern Slav modernization. Kállay believed that safeguarding of European Christianity and
Enlightenment required Hungary to fulfill its historical role and occupy Bosnia before the
“Russians or someone else would have done it.”

Five years later, in his 1883 Magyarország Kelet és Nyugat határán (Hungary on the
Border of East and West) Kállay stressed that Hungary’s geographical and cultural place on the
border between East and West, Asia and Europe defined its historical development: Hungary’s
past connected the nation to Asia whereas its presence made Hungary part of the European west.
He repeated that the country’s history and conditions meant that the Hungarian state was
destined to spread western civilization in the east and defend European cultural and political
values. In the interwar period, his claims inspired both revisionist and racial arguments.

Kállay stressed the purity of the Hungarian ethnicity: while Hungarians never excluded
themselves like the other eastern peoples, they “had always avoided merging with other races.”
Because of their perseverance, the Hungarians survived and sustained the spirit of the east. The
eastern characteristics no longer hindered Hungary’s development, but instead helped the
country to better understand the eastern way of thinking. In addition, eastern people viewed

5 In 1908, Elemér Halmay took over Kállay’s *The People of the East* and in 1915 added a subtitle “Das Junge
Europa” (The New Europe). The description of this periodical was: a “Hungarian newspaper for the international
politics and business interests of the Central Powers and the Eastern counties.” In 1919, the paper went through a
transformation and became a political, economic, social scientific, and literary review. In 1927, “The People of
the East” became the subtitle and “Revision” the main title; the paper became a mouthpiece of Hungarian
revisionist thinkers. Articles about the need and rightfulness of the territorial revision of the “unjust” Trianon
Peace Agreement of 1920 dominated the content. As the title reflected, the alleged cultivation of the Széchenyi
opus became only a secondary concern for the editors.
6 Kállay, *Magyarország Kelet és Nyugat határán* (Hungary on the Border of East and West) (Budapest: MTA,
1883), 68.
Hungarians as one of the most advanced western nations. It was Hungary’s Asian past that gave it a special advantage as an occupier in Bosnia. The founder of the Kingdom St. Steven’s (István) Crown unified the country politically and also embodied the unified spirits of east and west. “In hoc signo vinces!” Kállay announced what he thought to be the goal of the Hungarian leadership in the Bosnian occupation: to fulfill the Hungarian civilizing mission and bring “western light to the eastern darkness.”

Accordingly, Kállay believed that the Hungarian nation building should be an example for Bosnian nation building. In multiethnic Bosnia, he wished to make the Muslim Bosnian element, which was the largest ethnic group in Bosnia, politically dominant and, thus, downplay the interethnic and interreligious differences, and hoping that this way he could also diminish the Russian influence in the region. He encouraged the development of a literary and academic Bosnian language and wanted to make Islam a state religion in the Monarchy.

This chapter continues to discuss the differences and the parallels between Vambery and Goldziher’s Oriental scholarship during the period when Hungarian hegemony and imperial politics shaped foreign politics, and growing antisemitism and chauvinism characterized the domestic political arena. In contrast to what Simon claimed, namely that after the series of disappointments following Mythos Goldziher gradually abandoned his broad cultural program and turned to Islamic studies, this chapter demonstrates that he continued to be active in separate fields and produced substantial work both in Islamic and in Jewish studies. Moreover, continuing

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7 Ibid., 69.
8 Ibid.
9 Goldziher’s Arabic textbook, published a year after the annexation in 1908 contributed to this endeavor. The next chapter discusses Goldziher’s and Vambery’s involvement in the Hungarian imperial program.
his previous journalistic activities, he kept reporting to several Hungarian papers about the
conditions in contemporary Egypt and the Middle East. His 1880 *Iszlám* (Islam) addressed not
only the history of Muslim religiosity but discussed the current state of Islam and Muslim social
customs and politics. After the Bosnian occupation, his articles, in addition to his arguments
about Islam, were of possible interest to Hungarian decision makers too. Moreover, he began to
write about the history of Orientalism in Hungary and as the secretary of the Jewish
Congregation, focused on education and supported Jewish researchers.¹⁰

In contrast, Vambery reacted to the events in the Balkans in a sole German publication:
*Bosnien und die Herzegowina oder die slawischen Unterthanen der Porte* (Bosnia and
Herzegovina or the Slavic subjects of the Porte). Nonetheless, he published several works about
the impact of the west on east, however, these addressed his concern over an inevitable Russian-
English conflict over Central Asia. ¹¹ His scholarly work in Hungary focused on Hungarian

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¹⁰ As the secretary of the Jewish Congregation, Goldziher successfully acquired a scholarship for Kunos. In 1885,
Vambery wrote to Goldziher and asked him to arrange for some support to one of his relatives, as well as two of
his students, Munkácsi and Kúnos. Whereas it is unclear what happened with Munkácsi’s scholarship,
Goldziher’s diary testifies that in 1887, Munkácsi became the Congregation’s councilor of education. Kúnos,
supported by the Congregation, spent several months in the Ottoman Empire and he reported to the Hungarian
Jewish Review of several of his findings that had some relevance to Jewish studies as well.

¹¹ Whereas neither Vambery’s political works of the 1870s on the Russian-British “Great Game,” nor the *History of
Bokhara* and the pioneering Turkish ethnographical writings form part of my analysis, it should be noted that
they contributed to the tone and the interpretations of Vambery’s studies on the Hungarian ethnogenesis, like the
*Origins of the Hungarians* as well as the autobiographical works. Among the 1870s political works are:
*Oroszország hatalmi állása Ázsiában. Történeti tanulmány* (Pest: Atheneum, 1871) *Russlands Machtstellung in
Asien* (Russia’s power in Asia) (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1871); *Bokhara története. Geschichte Bocharas* (History
of Bokhara) (Stuttgart, 1872); *Zentralasien und die englisch-russische Grenzfrage* (Central Asia and the
English-Russian Border Question) (Leipzig, 1873); *Der Islam in XIX Jahrhundert* (Islam in the Nineteenth
Century) (Leipzig, 1875); “Mohammedanische Fürsten der Neuzeit und die europäische Civilisation” *Deutsche
rundschau* 4 (1875): 437-452. *Keleti életképek* (Budapest: Atheneum, 1876); *Sittenbilder aus dem Morgenlande,
(Images from the East) (Berlin: A. Hoffman & Co., 1876); *Die Primitive Kultur des turko-tatarischen Volkes*
(The Turkish-Tartar People’s Primitive Culture) (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1879).

Munkácsi notes that Vambery’s *Török-tatár nyelvek etymológiai szótára* (Etymological Dictionary of the Turkish-
Tartar Languages) was published in German the next year: *Wörterbuch der turko-tatarischen Sprachen* (Leipzig
1878). It received almost no reaction in Hungary. In connection to the German publication, however, he noted
that Radloff’s 1882 *Phonetik der nördlichen Türkischen* refutes many of its arguments. In Munkácsi’s view,
origins, and in 1882 he published his *A magyarok eredete* (The Origins of the Hungarians), which opened the Ugric-Turkish War. The focus here, however, will be on how in *The Origins of the Hungarians* Vambery further developed his multicultural concept of Hungarian nationhood countering both the growing nationalist intolerance in the country and the logic of the linguistic understanding of affinity. His discussion of the Hungarians’ relation to the Khazars intersected with the research of Sámuel Kohn, rabbi and historian, who in 1881 published a Hebrew source collection on Hungarian history. It formed the basis of his historical research on Hungarian Jewish history, which he summarized in his 1884 *Zsidók története Magyarországon: részben kiadatlan kútforrások nyomán. A legrégibb időktől a mohácsi vészig* (The History of the Jews in Hungary based on partly unpublished sources: From the most ancient times until the Mohacs Disaster). In this book, Kohn argued that Hungarian Jewish history, like the history of Christian Hungarians, reached back to times before the Conquest. Kabars, who had rebelled against the Khazar leadership, joined the Hungarian tribes, and participated in the Hungarian Conquest alongside Árpád and his tribesmen.

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Vambery enforced many etymological correspondences without basis—almost emulating Budenz’s techniques. Nonetheless, in his autobiographical work, Vambery acknowledged the passion with which he tried to reveal the etymological parallels between the expressions of different Turkish languages. He also admitted that lacking the proper linguistic training led him to make some mistaken arguments. *Küzdelmém*, 326. Munkácsi’s discussion: Munkácsi, 110-112.

12 Kohn was the chief rabbi of the Dohány street synagogue, the largest Neolog synagogue in Hungary and Reformed Jewish place of worship in the European continent. It was built in 1859, and at that time, it was the largest building of the city, which, in addition to its very rich Moorish-style ornamentation advertised the wealth and might of the congregation. Kohn was Goldziher’s neighbor and friend. He acquired for Goldziher the position at the Jewish Congregation in 1876, after other doors seemed to be closed for him. Kohn also married Károly Goldziher and Maria Freudenberg, the young Egyptologist, in 1913.

13 A Pest Jewish joke reflects the importance of the question of how far Jewish settlement in Hungary could be traced at the end of the nineteenth century. I know the joke from hearsay, only. Arisztid, Tasziló, and Grün (that is three well known characters of the Pest cabaret, among them one, Grün Jewish) speak about who’s family is more ancient. Arisztid argues that his ancestors served in Matthias Corvinus’ court. “That is nothing!” Tasziló says, “my ancestors arrived with Árpád through the Strait of Verecke.” Then Grün says, “That is all nice,
By arguing that Jews were ever part of the Hungarian tribal alliance and that Hungarian Jews were not Semites, Kohn’s book could be read as a refutation of the basic arguments of Hungarian antisemites, who in the light of the 1882 Tiszaeszlár blood libel trial renewed their attack on the immigration law and repeatedly stressed that Jewish difference from the rest of the population was insurmountable and harmful for the Hungarian state. The trial stirred a great deal of interest because it was a test of the new Hungarian penal code and ended with the acquittal of the Jews of Tiszaeszlár from the allegations of the murder of a Christian girl. As part of his Central Asian studies, Vambery similarly argued that, unlike in Asia, Jews in Hungary were not Semites but rather descendants of Central Asian peoples. This chapter discusses Goldziher’s open lecture series about the history of Judaism held in 1887 and 1888, which was published under the title A zsidóság lényege és fejlődése (The Essence and Evolution of Jewishness) as a diametrically opposite take on Jewish life in Hungary. Instead of being concerned with integration into the political nation, it focused on religiosity as the key to the development of Jewish life in a civic state. It constituted sharp criticism toward the Jewish Congregation and further illustrates the difference between Vambery’s and Goldziher’s interpretations of their roles.

However, when Árpád and his fellow tribesmen crossed the Strait of Verecke, my ancestors were already standing there and called “Leopard skin for sale!”

14 On April 1, 1882 a young Christian girl, Eszter Solymosi disappeared in the village of Tiszaeszlár and her mother, assuming that her daughter’s disappearance was connected to the Jewish celebrations of Shabbat Gadol, the Saturday before Passover and the elections of a new shachter (ritual butcher), reported to the authorities that her daughter was ritually killed by the local Jewish community in order to use her blood for the Passover bread (matzah). The trial upset not only Jews, but also the progressive intelligentsia, who viewed it as a test of modern Hungary. The 1878 V law introduced the so called Csemegi-kódex, the first comprehensive Hungarian penal code. The events and the trial inspired several literary pieces and feature films, and it is informative of the traditions of Hungarian antisemitism that the far-right wing party in the Parliament of 2010-2014 in the form of parliamentary addresses reopened the question of the identity of Solymosi’s murderer while other antisemitic organizations erected a memorial on her tomb and yearly hold services of remembrance there. For the most recent discussion of the case see, György Kövér, A tiszaeszlári dráma (The drama of Tiszaeszlár), (Budapest: Osiris, 2011).
as Hungarian Jewish public intellectuals.

1876 for Vambery: Return to Hungarian Studies

Prologue to The Origins of the Hungarians

In the foreword of his 1882 The Origins of the Hungarians, Vambery clearly stated that his thesis about Turkish-Hungarian ethnic affinity was closely connected with the effort to refute Hunfalvy’s claims, as presented in his 1876 Hungary’s Ethnography about the early history of the Hungarian nation. The structure of Hungary’s Ethnography illustrates that as in his linguistic works during the 1850s and 1860s, also in 1876, Hunfalvy considered linguistics the main analytical tool in studying the emergence of nations, even that in 1876, Hunfalvy shifted the discussion of Hungarian origins to the ethnological field, as it happened in Western Europe. Six years later, Vambery followed suit.

Hunfalvy divided his Hungary’s Ethnography into three parts. In the Introduction, he reviewed the different anthropological, ethnological, and geographical theories of classification from Blumenthal to Oscar Peschel in order to conclude that since language was the “real intellectual property of a nation,” it offered the best tool for the classification of mankind. In the second part of the book, he discussed the geographical and zoological conditions of Hungary and Transylvania in prehistoric times and the formation of the area’s different human cultures. In the third part, he moved on to the history of the Hungarians. He examined the earlier history through the chronicles of the Arabic Ibn Dasta, the Byzantine Leo the Wise, and Constantine Porphyrogenitus. He also utilized Hungarian medieval chronicles and sources from the early modern period. Finally, he concluded that the analysis of Hungarian and related languages offered the best guide to the study of the earliest history of the language and nation. He acknowledged the historic processes of the assimilation of different peoples into the Hungarian
national body during the Middle Ages and added an examination of the other language communities of the country.

In order to justify his shift to ethnology, Hunfalvy discussed the role of language in the study of the origins of different ethnic groups. He pointed out that, in contrast to the study of suffixes and derivatives and the grammatical structure, the vocabulary of a given language may shed light onto a population’s history, but it cannot provide decisive proof of the origins of the language. Borrowed words indicated the area of the settlement of a given nation at a certain period of its history, but these words could not establish the original identity of the language. Referring to the Austrian linguist Friedrich Müller’s ethnographical discussions, Hunfalvy maintained that only the original stem words were conducive to the study of linguistic origins.

Müller argued that physiological markers may help distinguish between “races, peoples, or nations,” because they are “nature given” and not a product of society, but they cannot be considered decisive. Language, in contrast, is not innate; it is a property of society and its people. Being a member of the people or the nation and sharing its inherited properties, an individual can maintain, develop, and inherit language—as well as passing it along to his or her descendants.

Hunfalvy also pointed to the geographer Peschel’s *Volkerkunde*, which observed that even within one ethnic group, physical attributes of individuals vary. Though Peschel’s work related to a discussion among geographers about the ideal trajectory of geographical studies, it allowed


Hunfalvy to emphasize the correctness of Müller’s suggestion that ethnography should not be considered with the question of the classification of races.\(^\text{17}\)

By eliminating this question from the scholarly research of ethnography, Hunfalvy could fully vindicate the validity of his political definition of nationhood, of which language was the best criterion. Underlining the voluntary character of nationality that the French orientalist Renan famously articulated, Hunfalvy stressed that language was a result of learning. Therefore, joining a nation or a linguistic community was not dependent on a given mother tongue, but was subjected to the free will of the individual.\(^\text{18}\) Hunfalvy also asserted that language created religion and shaped social institutions – a claim that the young Goldziher’s *Mythos* and mythological studies published in *Linguistic News* also emphasized.\(^\text{19}\)

When “translating” the theory to the case of the Hungarians, Hunfalvy made the distinction between people and nation (*nép* and *nemzet*) and argued similarly to medieval theoreticians. Whereas people (*nép*) referred to every inhabitant of a country, the members of the nation formed a linguistic community or nation (*nemzet*). However, there is a connection between the two; the people live off the land, reside in a defined geographical area, and develop a language through which a nation forms. Hunfalvy repeated his earlier thesis that nations were formed through genealogical ties as well as the voluntary joining and departure of the speakers of one language. He wrote, “One who acknowledges natural growth, that is physical descent only in connection to nation [formation], is not familiar with the lives of nations.”\(^\text{20}\)

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\(^\text{17}\) Hunfalvy, 37.  
\(^\text{18}\) Hunfalvy, 46.  
\(^\text{19}\) See previous chapter and the discussion of Goldziher’s work in the late 1870s in this chapter.  
\(^\text{20}\) Hunfalvy, 50.
proved to be the key to bringing the concepts of ethnic peoplehood and political nationhood into harmony. This assumption also reflected the implicit understanding that the language problem remaining unsolved created political tension among the different ethnic groups in the Dual Monarchy and semi-independent Hungary during the last decades of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries.

In the conclusion of his *Hungary's Ethnography*, Hunfalvy noted that none of the peoples living in the territory of current Hungary, including the Hungarians themselves, were indigenous, no matter how long their ancestors had resided in the area. In his view, the history of Hungary and the nation was a history of mixing and acculturation, in which the Hungarian element played the role of the protagonist and through which the content of Hungarian-ness transformed.

*The Origins of the Hungarians: the Opening of the Ugric-Turkish War*

Vambery’s main argument was that the Hungarians’ language and nation were of mixed Ugric and Turkish origins in which the Turkish-Tartar elements culturally dominated. Accordingly, he made a similar argument about Hungarian origins as well as nationhood and peoplehood, but approached the question in a very different way. In the foreword of *The Origins of the Hungarians*, he stressed that Hunfalvy’s work, which emphasized the Finno-Ugric origins of the Hungarian language, was one-sided because Hunfalvy had followed in the footsteps of Sajnovits, Gyarmathi, and Révai. He structured his book to elucidate the methodological mistakes and erroneous results of Hunfalvy’s study, while walking his readers through the three

\[\text{(Footnote: Vambery, *A magyarok eredete* (The Origins of the Hungarians) (Budapest: MTA, 1882), vi. About Sajnovits, Gyarmathi and Révai, the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century pioneers of the Finno-Ugric theory, see Chapter One and Two.)}\]
approaches which he considered relevant to investigating Hungarian ethnic origins: the
linguistic, the historical, and the cultural (anthropological).

In the first part of his study, Vambery reviewed the different peoples with whom the
Hungarians had any historical connection and added a wordlist to accompany his claims of the
Turkish origins of the Scythians, Saks, Huns, Avars, Pechenegs. He included a broad historical
review examining various European and Arab chronicles. As the Byzantine and Arabic
chronicles testify, the Hungarians migrated south and west over the centuries and came into
contact with various peoples, whose languages Vambery previously examined and identified as
Turkish. Vambery interpreted the chronicles, especially Constantine’s, which he had quoted
thirteen years earlier, and which dealt with the Hungarian-Kabar-Khazar relations, as
demonstrating that neither the Hungarian language nor the Hungarian people reached their
permanent forms before the Conquest (in the ninth and tenth centuries). In Budenz’s 1869
argument, this was a crucial point. Then, Budenz claimed that Hungarian had acquired its
matured form by the Conquest, so Turkish words in Hungarian could only be defined as
borrowed words. Vambery interpreted the events described in the Byzantine chronicle in a
different way: “Fear paints with dark colors; ignorance does so with even darker ones,” he noted
to elucidate that medieval European chroniclers’ animosity and unfamiliarity with the culture of
the nomads impacted their descriptions and ethnic designation of the peoples of the steppe. He
emphasized that the conquering Hungarians were a mixed people with a heterogeneous language,
as opposed to a homogeneous ethnic community speaking a monolithic language that
Constantine’s designation “Turks” suggested.

Finally, he scrutinized the Hungarian vocabulary for ways in which it reflected the
customs and institutions of the earliest stage of Hungarian communal life arguing that the words
reflecting on cultural practices were especially helpful in understanding the historical evolution of Hungariandom. The words designating concepts connected to cultural practices derived from both languages, however, Vambery believed that the words designating the most ancient cultural practices are the most informative of the Hungarians’ Turkish character. He underlined that in the special Hungarian case of linguistic and ethnic mixture, “we can call original element only the one that represents itself more effectively and with more words depicting the ancient cultural momentums.”

The list of such words—as designated by Vambery—including the names of animals (husbanded and wild), fauna, living conditions (household words, clothing, and tools), warfare and arms, family, legal institutions, world and everyday life, and religion. Examination of these words demonstrated that they were of Turkish origin. In his view, the linguistic testimony of the ancient morals and customs demonstrated Turkish origins and both Hunfalvy’s and Budenz’s failures to recognize Hungarian’s Turkish origin.

This reasoning led him to his final conclusion: only the Asian nomadic past and the influence of Sassanide Iran on the peoples of the steppe could explain the dynamics of the

22 While Vambery’s reasoning reflected the influence of Völkerpsychologie (folk psychology), the latest development in linguistics by the German scholars Heymann Steinthal and Moritz Lazarus, he did not reference their work. Through the post-Hegelian concept of folk psychology, Steinthal and Lazarus wished to strip Volkgeist of its metaphysical constituency and transform it into a researchable subject. Folk psychology intended to describe “the ‘essence of all inner and higher activity’ of a nation, as expressed in the language, myths, religion, customs and habits of the nation.” Egbert Klautke, “The Mind of the Nation: The Debate about Völkerpsychologie,” 1851-1900 Central Europe 8, no. 1 (May 2010): 1-19. Steinthal and Lazarus were two German Jewish scholars. Klautke and other authors argue that their interpretation of folk psychology and its role in the historical evolution of peoples closely correlated with their personal histories as emancipated Prussian Jews. Klautke suggests that their private backgrounds impacted their definition of nationhood. Steinthal and Lazarus emphasized the importance of language in the formation of a nation as well as the individual’s voluntary choice to join the nation. Klautke points out that in his writings to Jewish audiences and in his debate with the historian Heinrich von Treitschke, Lazarus underlined that they did not view Jews members of a separate nation. German Jews were Germans, and their religion did not affect their nationality. As the previous chapter demonstrated, Steinthal’s work deeply impressed Goldziher’s mythological studies and shaped his Mythos published six years before Vambery’s The Origins of the Hungarians.

23 Vambery, 282.
Hungarian nation-formation, which was determined by three factors. The Persian-infused nomadic culture was superior to the European at the time, which gave the conquerors an advantage over the population of the Carpathian Basin. At the same time, thanks to the political cultural heritage of the east, Hungarians had welcomed different peoples into their ranks and merged them into one nation that founded the state in the Carpathian Basin.\textsuperscript{24} In addition, the conservative spirit of the steppe and the resistance to being absorbed preserved the Hungarians’ uniqueness.\textsuperscript{25}

In so arguing, Vambery followed the same methodology as in his \textit{Die primitive Cultur des turko-tatarischen Volkes}, which studied the “whole race” of the Turkish-Tartar peoples, among whom the Hungarians formed one collective.\textsuperscript{26} He pointed out repeatedly in his books about Central Asia that the lifestyle of the inhabitants of the Central Asian steppe changed little during the centuries since the migrations, which, given his first-hand experiences in Central Asia, allowed him to discuss the psychological and cultural attributes of the Hungarian forefathers of Turkish descent.\textsuperscript{27} Such claims denying the capacity for progress of these Asian ethnic groups would not have shamed any biased observer of the “Asian primitives.” However, due to Vambery’s “Hungarian political lenses,” his essentialist claims about Asian nomadic life rather referred to his acknowledgement that the future of these peoples was completely subject to the

\textsuperscript{24} Vambery, 441.
\textsuperscript{25} Vambery, 442.
\textsuperscript{26} Vambery, 279.
\textsuperscript{27} Vambery visited the area northeast of Persia, today shared by Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzistan and Tajikistan, in the early 1860s, before the colonial competition reached them. Dobrovits underlined that Vambery pioneered cultural anthropology by living amongst the people and using a different approach from those orientalists who knew Asia primarily from books. See, Dobrovits, 51.
British-Russian colonial rivalry and the political and economic changes that European imperialism was expected to bring to the areas where they lived. His interpretation of Hungarian history in this work (specifically the arrival of Asian tribes to the European stage) and vision of the future political transformation of contemporary Central Asia therefore paralleled and complied with his larger oeuvre, including his political writings and studies in the field of Turkish ethnology. He did not view east and west as opposites, rather as different stages of cultural transformation and social progress. His vision of change, either in the medieval Carpathian Basin or modern Central Asia under European impact, therefore, was reminiscent of Széchenyi’s description of how the eastern nation’s path to modernity would lead toward the west.

Whereas both his linguist readers, to whom the category of mixed languages made little sense, and the public that believed in the eastern origins read his work as an advocacy for self-Orientalism, in addition to the dominance of the Asian or Turkish character, *The Origins of the Hungarians* equally emphasized the mixed constituency of the Hungarians. Vambery pointed out that the Hungarian forefathers were in fact Turkish tribesmen who lived on the northwestern border of ancient Turkdom in close proximity to Ugric peoples. The first phase of comingling between Turks and Ugric groups took place during this period when they lived nearby and the mixing continued also after the Conquest. This interpretation coincided with the prevailing civic

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28 As his English publications illustrate, Vambery supported the British advancement into these territories because he believed that the steppe nomads as well as Islam could benefit from the blessings of western civilization, which, he believed Great Britain represented. In his political articles, he described Russia as the Oriental Despot entrenched in the Northern Colossus; in his memoirs, he disclosed patriotic Hungarian feelings that were “naturally” antagonistic toward the anti-liberal power. (See references to his arrival to Teheran and refusal of an invitation to Russia.)

29 See footnote 11 about Vambery’s political works.
or political concept of nationhood at the time and was not that far from Hunfalvy’s argument, namely that language acquisition allowed individuals who were not born in any given ethnic community to join the political nation.

In 1882 by making the connection between heterogeneity and eastern-ness Vambery demonstrated that he considered scholarship a political arena. By identifying eastern origins with an imperial political tradition, he fanned the political desires of the post-Compromise political elite but also invoked claims like Szekér’s, who almost a century before described the tribal alliance of Árpád and his fellow tribesmen as a fellowship of equals. He promoted a multiculturalist view over an essentialist nationalist approach. One is perplexed of the nature of his “real” intentions and opinions, since his autobiographical writings do not reveal his views about this issue. They demonstrate that Vambery was impressed by the Ottoman Empire’s society; for him it exemplified the polity of the east, a tolerant and meritocratic imperial system. In the Ottoman Empire that he knew, ethnic origins were irrelevant to social ascent, the only condition of which was the official profession of Islam.30

Critics and Debate

Vambery’s thesis was in fact very controversial, though his contemporaries criticized it not because he attributed the Hungarians’ mixed character to their eastern origins. His greatest critic was himself; in his 1895 A magyarság keletkezése és gyarapodása (The Emergence and Development of Hungariandom), he tried to resolve this contradiction by further shifting the attention to the mixed character of the Hungarian nation. In contrast, his critics focused on three distinctive topics. Budenz and others critiqued his linguistic claims. Hunfalvy and Marczali

30 Vambery, Küzdelmeim, 53.
concentrated on his historical and ethnographical arguments. In addition, the anthropologist Sándor Várnai, who primarily discussed the ethnological questions, stressed that the tone of the scholarly debate about Vambery’s theory was disrespectful and did not befit academics. More importantly, the reactions also outline a general picture of the responding scholars’ understandings of the concepts of nationhood and ethnicity, and the role of language in their evolution as well as the social and political role of public scholarly argumentation.

**Budenz’s review.** Budenz reviewed Vambery’s work in two addresses to the Academy, in 1882 and 1883. In addition to questioning the accuracy of Vambery’s linguistic examinations, he also claimed that they were illogical. Disregarding Vambery’s thesis about the Ugric-Turkish character of Hungariandom, Budenz emphasized that Vambery not only contradicted what was already a consensus in Hungarian comparative linguistics, namely the Ugric origins of the Hungarian language, but also his own claims from 1869.

In his 1869 *Turkish-Tartar Word Correspondence*, Budenz pointed out that Vambery confirmed that Hungarian belonged to the family of Ugric languages. Yet, a decade and a little later, he advocated for the Turkish origins despite the additional findings of Finno-Ugrist linguists, which were being discussed during this period. In the pages of *Linguistic News*, using very personal and ironic language, Budenz “guessed” that Vambery’s change of heart must have had to do with the Ugric dictionary, which he compiled following the publication of Vambery’s Turkish-Tartar dictionary and their personal relationship. He wrote,

> It is, therefore, and chiefly because of me and my Hungarian-Ugric dictionary. I should be blamed for Mr. Vambery’s loss of faith in the Hungarian-Ugric linguistic
affinity. … At the same time, my tendency of doubting, for which at the end of his study Mr. Vambery reprimanded me, had again arisen.\textsuperscript{31}

He explained that he studied Vambery’s word list which “proved” that basic Hungarian vocabulary was of Turkish origin closely and arrived at the conclusion that his Ugric list was still intact and valid. He claimed that Vambery’s bias motivated his new Turkish theory. Budenz went on to write, “The ethnologist Vambery ordered the linguist Vambery to get rid of this unsuitable linguistic affinity.”\textsuperscript{32} Despite the sarcasm and the reference to ethnological discussions, Budenz’s criticism focused on his own field, Ugric linguistics. In a separate collection of Hungarian-Ugric word comparison, he continued to refute Vambery’s theory.

In 1883 Budenz’s venomous closing remarks betrayed the extent to which their relationship had deteriorated since Vambery last addressed Budenz as his “dear Yusuf,” exactly two decades earlier. Budenz reminded his readers that in 1869, he had questioned Vambery’s scholarly ethics based on Vambery’s “flexible” approach to etymological correspondences between Hungarian and Turkish words. “I really regret that then, in Mr. V’s aforementioned procedure, I could not recognize the first fundamental principle of the current promising Turkish language reform,” he said. He sarcastically commented that Vambery was right to rebuke him for that. But then he added:

\begin{quote}
Nonetheless, I did not deserve that even at this point he was so kind to me to say ‘I would neither like to imitate my reviewer in the manner of criticizing me nor do I acknowledge his counter claims in their full extent. In other words, I do not wish to accuse him of fraud and ill-will as he accused me and I am not extending my counter arguments to all his points.’\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{31} Budenz, “Vámbéry Magyarok Eredete bírálat,” (Linguistic News) XVII (1882), 418.
\textsuperscript{32} Budenz, 421.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
Thus Budenz laconically confirmed that Vambery was wise to refrain from commenting. One can only imagine the atmosphere at the Academy’s meeting when Budenz read this paper and wonder if it is fortunate that the Hungarian Academy of Sciences’ records reflect only the subject of the discussions and meetings, and not the heat of the debates.34

**József Szinnyei’s Linguistic Review. Sándor Várnai’s comments on ethnology and the debate’s tone.** Though likewise cynical, József Szinnyei’s *A magyar nyelv eredete.* Észrevételek Vámbéry Ármin “A magyarok eredete” című művének nyelvészeti részére (The Origins of the Hungarian Language: Notes on the linguistic part of Armin Vambery’s “A magyarok eredete”) (The Origins of the Hungarians)) was less burdened by personal emotions.35 Szinnyei elucidated the linguistic claims for and against Ugric and Turkish origins, scrutinized Vambery’s linguistic methods, and refuted his results. In addition, Szinnyei brought two broader issues relevant to the debate to the fore: the responsibility of scholars to serve the interests of the scholarly research, rather than of populist beliefs, and the scholarly discussion of the correlation between linguistic and ethnic origins.

He opened his review by emphasizing the need to ease societal pressure on linguistic and ethnic scholars to cater to traditional images of national identity. He wrote, “Vambery declared war on the Ugric-Hungarian comparative linguistics. The daily press accepted the book, by which one should not be amazed, since the question that it discusses is one of the most popular

34 By involving the personal papers of the other participants, further research could reveal more of the debate.

ones and the author gives a very popular answer to it.”36 He added that “Fancy is the brother of vanity, which does not want to know about reality. Hence, national vanity will never consider the cold scholarly data as proof of anything, unless they comply with the data created by fancies.”37

Moreover, Szinnyei noted that Vambery’s fascinating literary style further assisted his populism: Vambery’s book was written with such skill that it perfectly convinces the lay person. The Turkish character of the Hungarian language is depicted in it in such a tangible and visual manner that the reader stands agape and is urged to consider mentally retarded those blinded scholars, who during three decades, searched every angle of the Hungarian language studied Turkish languages as well, and despite its eloquent testimony stubbornly stick to their view, namely that our language is not Turkish but Ugric.38

Szinnyei’s argument was only a prelude to a broader discussion of scholarly responsibilities meant to refute the non-scientific foundations of national identity politics that followed Vambery’s 1895 book (a year prior the Millennium Festivities). Szinnyei testified to his personal involvement in Finno-Ugric linguistics and stated that he felt that his review should “defend” the field’s honor and integrity. The longevity of such “national fancies” and the Finno-Ugrists’ frustrations with them can be gauged by the fact that six decades later, the Finno-Ugrist Miklós Zsirai felt the same need to defend his field against a widespread belief in “prehistoric curiosities.”39

Discussing the correlation between linguistic and ethnic origins, like other Hungarian linguists, Szinnyei referred to Max Müller’s lectures and confirmed Vambery’s claim that linguistic and ethnic origins should not be considered identical. At the same time, he also noted

36 Szinnyei, 1.
37 Szinnyei, 4.
38 Ibid.
39 See in Chapter 1 and 2.
that Vambery nonetheless wished to align linguistic and ethnic origins. Additionally, Szinnyei pointed out that it was a mistake to equate language change and word borrowing from other languages, as Vambery had suggested. Whereas most spoken languages developed in an open environment and borrowed from others; there were very few peoples who completely changed their language. To conclude, Szinnyei reminded his readers that comparative linguistic research had already determined that both Turkish and the proto-Ugric language, out of which Hungarian had also developed, were rooted in the ancient Ural-Altaic language and, therefore, Vambery’s thesis was unnecessary. The Hungarian-Turkish correspondences were the manifestations of this very ancient common linguistic legacy. In Szinnyei’s view, Vambery failed “even to shake the building erected on solid foundations that he wished to destroy.”

The less-than-gentlemanly language of these reviews clearly reflects the passionate clash of opinions among academics, which drew its own criticism. In a review Sándor Várnai reproached Vambery for the “bellicose tone” of his polemics as well generally condemning the scholarly community for failing to conduct their debate calmly. He believed that Vambery’s book should be perceived as a “great opus” without its offensive edge. Regardless, the main focus of his criticism was the question of whether ethnology and folk psychology could effectively prove ethnic origins.

**Hunfalvy and Marczali: a “subdebate” and historical remarks.** Hunfalvy’ and Marczali’s reviews of Vambery’s work further testify to the impact of the non-academic press on the work of academics as well as how personal sensitivities attached to scholarly debates.

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40 Szinnyei, 13.
41 Szinnyei, 67.
Hunfalvy read his “Ugor vagy török-tatár eredetű-e a magyar nemzet?” (Is the Hungarian Nation of Ugric or Turkish-Tartar Origins?) at the assembly of the first department of the Academy in January 1883. Marczali’s review “Vámbéry műve a magyar nép eredetéről” (Vambery’s Oeuvre about the Origins of the Hungarian Nation) was published a month later in Budapest Review. The “subdebate” unfolded when Hunfalvy reacted to Marczali’s review in the March issue of Budapest Review in the form of a reader letter. Though he emphasized that The Origins of the Hungarians was an academic study, Hunfalvy’s review opened with political and social arguments instead of scholarly ones. Hunfalvy called on scholars to revisit the question of national origins. He underlined that the political aspect of this question made the renewed discussion especially timely. He quoted an article in Nation from the previous year which attacked Budenz and Hunfalvy for propagating the Finno-Ugric theory of linguistic affinity:

‘for twenty years [they] have been working on our Finno-Ugric linguistic and ethnic affinity. No matter how broad their scholarly stockpile and how in depth of their research, their scholarship cannot get through into our blood (!) and Hungariandom can only doubt and involuntarily receive what they state.’

Hunfalvy was infuriated by such boorish lack of respect for academic research and what he called a “patriotic coloring of doubt,” characteristic of intellectual circles. It manifested in what a fellow Academy member called “patriotic historiography.” Hunfalvy argued that the term was coined to stigmatize his allegedly non-patriotic methods and denial of the Hun genealogy.

He refuted the accusations by claiming that, because there was no way to learn about either the ethnicity or the language of the Huns, it was equally impossible to establish ethnic relatedness to

42 Hunfalvy, “Ugor vagy török-tatár eredetű-e a magyar nemzet?” (Is the Hungarian Nation of Ugric or Turkish-Tartar Origins?) Értekezések a Nyelv- és Széptudományok köréből (Reports from the fields of Linguistic Sciences and Belles Lettres) XI. (1883-1884): 3. Emphasis in the original.
them. He called the “entrance” of the theory of the Hun-Hungarian relatedness into the blood a mental illness which could not bring any “clever result.” Most importantly, however, he revealed that his German origins had been exposing him to such attacks since the 1850s.

He went on to recall that in 1856, when he started Hungarian Linguistics, he was accused of having accepted bribes from the Austrian government to defame Hungarians through the propagation of the Finnish theory of affinity. At the time he was surprised because he was accused of accepting a bribe, but because he did not share the belief that descent was a better basis for national pride than the nation’s actual deeds. Hunfalvy added that he did not understand this thinking in connection to individuals either and believed that descent politics were ridiculous when elevated to governmental practice. He admitted to being disappointed that the letter writer’s opinion was shared by many other scholars, which, he added cynically, “he was obliged to believe was a result of a sickness of the blood.”

In Hunfalvy’s view, the refusal of Finnish affinity also characterized political life, as his quotes from the German publication of Kossuth’s writings illustrated. Kossuth argued that the Hungarian relationship to barbaric peoples made Hungarians look ridiculous. In order to refute the Finnish connection, Kossuth maintained that there was a lack of understanding between Hungarian and Finnish speakers, and that neither their physical nor their intellectual aptitudes

43 Hunfalvy, 4.
44 Hunfalvy, 5.
were comparable. In Kossuth’s view, while the Hungarians were “examples of manly beauty,” the Finns belonged to the “ugliest race.” In addition, the “shallow, shrewd, deceptive, and greedy Finns” could not be the brothers of the “brave and smart Hungarians.” Instead, all these allegations were the tricks of Habsburg historians. Hunfalvy emphasized Kossuth’s wording: for example, Kossuth wrote that Slavic and German authors “deprived” Hungarians of “freely choosing their own descent.” At the same time, Hunfalvy did not comment on what such an argument may have said about Kossuth’s Liberal politics. Hunfalvy referred to Kossuth only to demonstrate that the question of origins was a highly politicized issue. To close his introduction, before engaging in an actual academic review, Hunfalvy suggested that “Finnophobia” should have played a great part in the success of Vambery’s book as well.

Like Hunfalvy, Marczali emphasized the popularity of Vambery’s study and pointed out that the press tended to describe Finno-Ugrists as “non- Hungarians” because they opposed the theory of Turkish affinity. The liberal historian Marczali was Jewish and, like Vambery and the German scholars, he recognized that in the course of the growing intolerance toward minorities, the “non-Hungarian” identity of the scholar seemed not to bother the nationalist public as long as he supported the self-orientalist claims. His father Mór Morgenstern was the rabbi in the town of Marcal, (according to the current orthography Marczal), which inspired the family name that they assumed. In Marczali’s opinion, the popularity of Vambery’s arguments, namely that “the Turkish relationship would connect us with valiant and bellicose peoples,” marginalized the importance of his Jewish origins. Recalling Toldy’s study on Vörösmarty’s epic poetry from the previous decade, Marczali also referred to Vörösmarty’s “Zrínyi” to demonstrate that the literary canon depicted the Hungarian language and people as unrelated to any other European tongue or nation, therefore contributing to the self-orientalist discourse. The respected Eötvös similarly
believed that linguistic affinity would be translated to ethnic relatedness and thus have political repercussions. However, Marczali added, Eötvös hoped that linguists would discover Hungarian’s Indo-European connections and thus establish a deeper connection to Western European nations. In contrast, the “Germans teach the Finno-Ugric affinity: it brings us into kinship with fisher, hunter, cold nations.”46 In the public eye, Marczali explained, national origins and affinity resembled connections within families, and only few linguists could correctly interpret the abstract notion of Finno-Ugric affinity. In addition, the Germanic origins of Budenz and Hunfalvy intertwined with the “message” of their teachings. The “unpatriotic” and German advocates of the Finno-Ugric theory were opposing the “patriotic” advocates of Turkish theories, which Marczali recognized as the political importance of the issue. In his opinion, the press was considerate of scholarly arguments only to the extent that they served “the daily passions” and favored “aura popularis.” “Perhaps, we are not exaggerating when we state that the interest in Vambery’s study is mostly due to its ‘patriotic’ orientation,” he concluded.47 Nevertheless, Marczali’s article considered the popular reception of Vambery’s work to be a positive thing and praised Vambery’s literary style: “As narrator, he is without an equal.”48

Both Hunfalvy and Marczali reviewed Vambery’s book from the point of view of their own fields. Hunfalvy criticized the study’s biased approach and the failed etymological methods that Vambery used to align linguistic and ethnic origins despite the fact that he denied the correlation between the two. Hunfalvy claimed that after reading Vambery’s book, he reviewed

48 Marczali, 308.
his own earlier works and concluded that his own arguments (which he first presented in his 1864 *The Origins of the Hungarians*) had not lost their validity. Since then, he had only learned more about the topic and could advocate his thesis in a more sophisticated manner.\(^{49}\) Marczali stressed how he approached the question of Hungarian origins as a historian. In his own work, he had already called attention to the Turkish background of the conqueror Hungarians. Hence, unlike Hunfalvy and Budenz, he welcomed Vambery’s advocacy of Turkish origins. Nonetheless, he highlighted the contradiction in Vambery’s book; for example, even though Vambery denied the relevance of linguistic findings in establishing ethnic identity, he relied mostly on linguistic proof to make his point.\(^{50}\)

In retrospect, Munkácsi argued that the final balance of *The Origins of the Hungarians* was positive on several accounts. Vambery successfully advocated for the differentiation between linguistic and ethnic origins and identified how the Turkish ethnic element was dominant among the conquering Hungarians. He further inspired Finno-Ugrist researchers and linguists to concentrate on linguistic questions rather than prehistoric research.\(^{51}\) Munkácsi maintained that the severe criticism of Vambery’s linguistic analysis turned his focus toward Turkish ethnological works and created the foundations of Turkish ethnology. Vambery’s 1885 *A török faj ethnologiai és ethnographiai tekintetben* (The Turkish Race from the Ethnological and the Ethnographic Points of View), which was simultaneously published in Leipzig as *Das Türkenvolk in seinen ethnologischen und ethnographischen Beziehungen*, was his most

\(^{49}\) Hunfalvy, “Néhány észrevétel,” 39.

\(^{50}\) Marczali, 311.

\(^{51}\) Munkácsi, 252-254.
important and successful scholarly book. Despite his continuous attempts to enforce his weak etymological and comparative linguistic arguments, very soon after Vambery’s death in 1913 the Hungarian scholarly community recognized his scholarly contribution to a field, which had nothing to do with Hungarian prehistory per se.\textsuperscript{52} Scholars continue to evaluate Vambery’s oeuvre similarly today.\textsuperscript{53}

As he reminded his readers in his second autobiography \textit{Küzdelmeim}, Vambery was not unaware of the value and importance of his pioneering work in Turkish ethnology and ethnography, but he did not see the scholarly work in this field as relevant to Hungarian academic life or of public interest, unlike his Hungarian ethnological studies.\textsuperscript{54} He could not let the topic of Hungarian origins go, constantly returning to it and insisting he remain an important actor in Hungarian academic and public life.

From the point of view of reconstructing Vambery’s experience in Hungarian letters, it is equally important to note that while he was unable to publish an English edition of his Turkish ethnology, he did publish in Great Britain \textit{The Coming Struggle for India} (1885), \textit{History of Hungary} (1887), and his first autobiographical book, \textit{The Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambery}, which appeared one year after \textit{The Origins of the Hungarians}. The timing suggests that Vambery was prepared for attacks from linguist circles and understood that England could offer some – mainly material – support for his relative academic isolation in Hungary. However, now he could count on his fame in England both as a traveler and as an expert on Central Asian

\textsuperscript{52} Munkácsi, 253.

\textsuperscript{53} Kakukk, 17.

\textsuperscript{54} Vambery, \textit{Küzdelmeim}, 221.
and Ottoman affairs. Indeed, the biography printed nine editions; the second followed the first within one month. This time the tables were turned. In sharp contrast to the period following his return from Central Asia, Vambery had now acquired a scholarly reputation in Hungary as a Turkologist and fame in England. As the studies and political papers published in England, Germany, and Hungary built one on the other, Vambery’s two “personalities”—the traveler/political expert and the scholar—became closely connected and Vambery found his autobiographies to be the most appropriate forum to demonstrate this.

**The First Autobiography: The Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambery**

In addition to shaping his public image for the English readership, Vambery’s first autobiography *The Life and Adventures of Arminius Vambery* alongside *The Origins of the Hungarians* offers interesting lessons regarding his interpretation of east and west. In *Adventures*, Vambery described the cultural and political difference between east and west only in connection to the British-Russian antagonism in Central Asia and did not reach more general conclusions or touch on either Hungarian history or his Jewish identity. David Mandler observes, *Adventures* “completely effaces” Vambery’s Jewish background despite numerous references to it in other works. For instance, in his *Central Asian Travels* Vambery referred to his Jewish origins eight times. 55 *Adventures* remained silent not only about issues concerning Vambery’s Jewish origins, but also the European Jewish question, antisemitism, and religious differences in Europe; this silence does not only contrasts with his other works of the same decade, but also with his second autobiographical book. In 1905, he shared many episodes of his Jewish

experience in Hungary and connected them with broader arguments about Jewish life in Europe and Asia and the east-west dichotomy. Alder and Dalby claimed that Vambery’s stress on Jewish topics in his second autobiography was because he wrote *Struggles* during the period when he was in contact with Herzl and negotiated his meeting with the Sultan.\(^{56}\) Nonetheless, when read next to reports on Vambery in the Hungarian Jewish paper *Equality* and his “millennial” study of Hungarian prehistory, his autobiography offers especially important lessons regarding Vambery’s general view on Jewishness and the Jewish experience as an indicator of the inferiority of western political and cultural values, and the cultural differences between east and west. In light of the second biography, the parallel between *The Origins of the Hungarians* and his first autobiography is even more apparent: they both constitute the beginning of a new epoch, in which Vambery felt more comfortable addressing political questions and less bothered by the claims of Finno-Ugrists.

**Origins and Integration**

The first battles of the Ugric-Turkish war revealed that the public’s interest in scholarly discussions about national origins adhered political importance to the ethnic origins of the scholars. At the same time, as Vambery’s, Hunfalvy’s, Budenz’s and Marczali’s examples demonstrate, involvement in the debate about the origins of the Hungarian language and people reveals an additional fascinating correlation between their minority status and conceptualizations of nationhood.\(^{57}\)

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\(^{56}\) Dalby and Alder, 367.

\(^{57}\) In connection to the comparison of the integration of the German and Jewish minority in Hungary, most studies focus on the early twentieth century and the discussions of the Numerus Clausus Law, since statistics demonstrate that the number of students representing the two minorities comprised a larger proportion of the student body than their proportion in the overall population.
In the linguist András Róna-Tas’s opinion, it was not a coincidence that Hunfalvy, who was a flag-bearer of the Hungarian democratic transformation and the “champion” of the theory of Finno-Ugric origins, became the greatest enemy of the Hun origin theory. Róna-Tas stressed that the “attitude” to the theory of Hun origins (its acceptance or dismissal) characterized the academics’ classical scholarly constitution and simultaneously indicated their devotion to the establishment of modern statehood. In his view, the middle class in the 1850s and 1860s, which included German town settlers and Jewish residents in western Hungary (like the Goldziher and Stein families), was still open to theories which were free from “historiographical illusions.”

Whereas at the beginning of his career, Vambery was introduced to an academic milieu in which the scholars’ ethnic origins counted little as long as they could identify with the Academy’s nationalist engagement—as the above articles from Marczali and Hunfalvy illustrate—from the 1880s on, the minority scholars’ personal backgrounds became associated with their scholarly claims and thus made them vulnerable to attacks. Their personal correspondences reinforce the fact that these scholars were deeply disturbed by the discrimination against their work based on their ethnic or religious background. In an 1882 letter to Tivadar Duka, an 1848 emigrant to England and later Stein’s mentor, Hunfalvy complained that when it came to book publishing, “Hungarians had to wage a war against Germans.” Such “ethnic” distinctions did not make sense either in the scope of his scholarship or in connection


59 MS 4749/66.
with his parliamentary work: Hunfalvy’s German background was completely irrelevant to his work either as a scholar or politician.

A 1902 letter from Vambery to the ornithologist and ethnographer Ottó Hermann (who was born to a Saxon family in the northern part of the country), described Vambery’s encounter with a nobleman, whom he did not name. The unnamed nobleman reproached Vambery for describing Hungariandom “as a riff-raff nation” in his recent (1895) book on the origins of the Hungarians. Vambery wrote: “my lord who, thanks to the grace of God, descended from pure blood” disapproved of the description. Vambery was quite incensed at the critic who argued that his book tried to falsely refute the pure origins of the “real” Hungarians. Vambery wrote to Hermann that their task as scholars was not only to dissolve darkness but also to refute vain biases. More importantly, however, he argued that as scholars of the history and culture of the Hungarian nation who spoke Hungarian and contributed to Hungarian letters and sciences, they were just as Hungarian as the nobility. “From now on,” noted Vambery to Hermann, “they should know that Hunfalvy, Hermann, Toldy, Vambery and others are equally pure-blooded Hungarians as the aristocrats, of whom in his De Nobilis Advenis, the good Simon of Kéza stripped off their panther-skin pelisse.”60 In Vambery’s view, minority status should neither expose scholars to criticism nor lessen their right to act as Hungarians. Vambery disregarded the religious difference between Jews and other ethnic groups and insisted that every member of any minority group was equally entitled to claim Hungarianness for him or herself.61

60 MS 282/157.
61 See Vambery’s interview with Equality from 1883 below, in which he argued the very same ideas.
As after the economic crisis of the early 1870s, the public gradually started questioning the transformative power of acculturation; the understanding that pure ethnic origins were the subject of comparative linguistics, which “ethnic” scholars studied, created additional tension. As Marczali pointed out, scholars who established Hungarian’s affinity not with the language of Central Asian warriors but northern fishermen through linguistic investigation especially touched on “national” sensitivities. At the same time, because Vambery’s Turkish theory received more attention than his advocacy for the mixed character of the conquerors’ ethnic and linguistic character, his Hungarian-ness was not in doubt. However, as it was mentioned above, by 1895, after he had reformulated his argument and further stressed the mixed character of the conquerors and their descendants, he also became a target of nationalist attacks.

Even though they argued for two different origins, Hunfalvy’s and Vambery’s theory supported the image of a multicultural nation. Whereas the Protestant Hunfalvy attacked the self-orientalist discourse, Vambery worked through it. Hunfalvy did so by arguing that language usage should not be considered an inherent ethnic trait and Vambery did so by claiming that, due to their eastern origins and traditions, the conquering Hungarians demonstrated tolerant attitudes toward diversity within the political community. Through a conservative historical approach, Vambery articulated a progressive notion of nationhood, which illuminates the interaction between his scholarly interests and his politics of integration as a minority scholar: instead of discussing modes of coexistence between Jews and Hungarians, he focused on creating a tolerant multiculturalist image of the Hungarian majority. As I will discuss in the following section, in so doing, he could support the claims of the first Hungarian Jewish historical study that was published two years after his The Origins of the Hungarians.
Sámuel Kohn: Jewish History and Eastern Origins

In 1884, three-and-a-half decades after the publication of Diósy’s 1848 pamphlet, a historical study similarly suggested that the common eastern origins of Jews and Hungarians ensured their productive coexistence in the modern period. The chief rabbi of the Dohány Synagogue, Sámuel Kohn in Zsidók története Magyarországon: részben kiadatlan kútforrások nyomán. A legrégibb időktől a mohácsi vészig (The History of the Jews in Hungary based on partly unpublished sources: From the most ancient times until the Mohacs Disaster), traced Hungarian Jewish history back to the Kabars, who had rebelled against the Khazar leadership, joined the Hungarian tribes, and participated in the Hungarian Conquest alongside Árpád and his tribesmen.\(^62\) Kohn emphasized that, as subjects of the Khazar Empire, these Kabars were Jewish and, thanks to the tolerant atmosphere of the Hungarian tribal alliance, they kept their religion even after the Conquest. They settled down in the Carpathian Basin, and their descendants, Jewish Hungarians, continued to live there. The Khazar theory of Jewish origins interpreted the history of Hungarian Jews as inseparable from the history of Hungarian Christians, reaching back to the historical era before the Conquest of the Carpathian Basin.

Whereas Diósy’s pamphlet appeared at a time when Jewish cultural identification as Hungarians was still a cause that occupied Jewish reformers, by 1884 the majority of Hungarian Jewry considered Hungarian their mother tongue and, following the appearance of the Antisemitic Party in Parliament in the early 1870s, Jewish apologists were focusing on

\(^{62}\) Sámuel Kohn, Zsidók története Magyarországon: részben kiadatlan kútforrások nyomán. A legrégibb időktől a mohácsi vészig (The History of the Jews in Hungary based on partly unpublished sources: From the most ancient times until the Mohacs Disaster) (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1884); Héber kutforrások és adatok Magyarország történetéhez (Hebrew sources and data of the history of Hungary) (Budapest: Akadémiai Közlöny, 1881).
defending the sincerity of their Jewish Hungarian identification. Nonetheless, Kohn’s book was more than an address building on an unconventional metaphor. It was a historical study and, as such, it also conversed with the extensive research on Hungarian origins—offering a more complex argument concerning Jewish citizenship in Hungary.

Kohn’s work originated with his 1881 publication of collected Jewish sources about Hungarian history, which introduced particular Hebrew documents that shed light on the earlier history of the Carpathian Basin and the nomadic Hungarian tribes prior to the Conquest. His *History of Jews in Hungary* appeared three years later and—more significantly—two years after the Tiszaeszlár blood libel, which shook the Jewish establishment to its foundations. Additional research can shed light on the ways in which the 1882-1883 Tiszaeszlár blood libel might have influenced Kohn in writing the book; regardless of the blood libel, as has been previously shown, the interrelation between ethnic origins and citizenship had been the cornerstone of the nineteenth-century discussions of modern Hungarian-ness. Among the minorities in Hungary, Jews were in a unique position because no Jewish national movement ever emerged to intimidate Hungarian hegemonic desires. Kohn’s book was to demonstrate that the lack of the prospect of Jewish nation state that would offer Hungarian Jews a political allegiance was secondary to the fact that the history of Jewish-Hungarian coexistence went back to the times before the Conquest.

A feuilleton in the most popular Hungarian Jewish periodical *Egyenlőseg* (Equality) on December 16, 1883, revealed the editors’ view that the question of Jewish origins was closely
connected to the deliberations on Jewish citizenship in Hungary. The author of the article reported on a parliamentary address by Ernő Mezei, a Jewish member of the Lower Table. Mezei asked the representatives, “the crux of whose argument was the question of ‘semitism’: ‘Where did they find any proof that the Jews living in Hungary were Semites?’” The representatives shouted their reply: “From experience!” Yet Mezei continued to argue that he had positive proof otherwise. He referred to Benjamin Disraeli’s claim that only Jews in the Mediterranean region were descendants of Palestinian Semitic Jews and quoted Ernest Renan’s refusal to consider Jews as one ethnological or racial community. The reporter stated that the representatives continued to discuss the question even after the session was over and that one told Mezei that, even though he knew that the stated view was correct, he preferred to hear these arguments from an expert.

Accordingly, the reporter directed the representative’s attention to such an expert by quoting Vambery, whose recently published *The Origins of the Hungarians* suggested the conceptual distinction between linguistic and ethnic origins and the detachment of nationhood from both. The decision to quote Vambery demonstrated that the editors of this Jewish newspaper similarly interpreted Jewish participation in Hungarian affairs as closely connected to broader questions about nationhood and the multiethnic character of the country. The reporter pointed out that a week earlier Vambery had given a talk at the “Hall of Hungarian Traders” and

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63 “Zsidó magyarok,” *(Jewish Hungarians) Egyenlőség* (Equality), December 16, 1883; available from http://jpress.org.il/Default/Scripting/ArticleWin_TAU.asp?From=Search&Key=EGY/1883/12/16/2/Ar00201.xml&CollName=EGY_1880_1889&DOCID=1234&PageLabelPrint=2&Skin=%54%41%55%45%6e&enter=%74%72%75%65&Publication=%45%47%59&Hs=%61%64%76%61%6e%63%65%64&AW=%31%33%38%32%30%31%39%33%33%32%38%36%35&sPublication=%45%47%59&taulanguage=&sScopeID=%41%6c%6c&sSorting=%53%63%61%72%65%2c%64%65%73%63&sQuery=%56%61%6d%62%u00e9%72%79&refentitytype=&refsearchinall=%66%61%6c%73%65&refqueryview=&startfrom=%31%30&viewmode=HTML; Internet; accessed September 6, 2013.
through the examination of notions of ‘nation and nationalities,’ arrived at the same conclusions as Mezei, that is the Hungarian Jews were not Semites as much as very few of the forefathers of the Hungarian nation actually ‘swam across the Volga on goatskin.’

In order to underscore that none of the contemporary European nations formed an ethnically pure community, Vambery referred to an alleged maxim by a celebrated historian (which the newspaper did not reference): “There is hardly a pineapple that had not earlier been an onion.” Because of his familiarity with Asia, Vambery also underlined that Jews in Europe differed from Jews in Asia. In his opinion, the ancestors of Polish Jews and of other European Jews were the Khazars. Therefore, the term antisemitism might be correct in Asia but “in Europe, it is based on a linguistically and ethnographically mistaken perception. Because one cannot speak any more of ethnically pure nations, those whose mothers were either German or Slovak could just as well be good Hungarian citizens.” In addition, Vambery underlined that “without distinction, either by birth, education, or sentiment, anyone was entitled to belong to the Hungarian nation.” To conclude, the feuilletonist confirmed Vambery’s words by arguing that “we, Jewish Hungarians, are after all not so foreign to this country, and have the same right to call ourselves Hungarians as any other inhabitant of this homeland.”

Kohn’s book was published in the following year, and while it reiterated the Jewish connection of the Kabars and thus brought a chapter of Hungarian history closer to the history of Jews in Hungary, it found little popular reception among Hungarian Jewry. In the pages of the Jewish press, his theory received almost no attention. Kohn’s book did not become a ground for either historical or political discussions. In contrast, following the blood libel trial, Equality, for

64 According to legend, this is how the nomadic Hungarian tribes crossed the rivers on their way to the Carpathian Basin.
instance, published one article after another about the undisputed loyalty of Hungarian Jews toward the country and the nation, as well as their investment in the Hungarian cultural and scientific life.\(^{65}\)

Two decades later, however, Kohn’s Khazar theory did find an audience among antisemites. In 1901, the well-known publicist and journalist and member of the parliament Miklós Bartha (1848-1905) published *Kazárföldön* (In the Land of Khazars) which became his most famous work; it contains short reports from the northeastern part of Hungary, with substantial Ruthenian and Orthodox Jewish populations. Bartha travelled there along with a ministerial appointee, Ede Egán to review the area before the initiation of the “hegyvidéki akció,” (mountain action) a governmental program for the economic development of the extremely poor Carpathian region.\(^{66}\) Egán allegedly used the word Khazar to designate Jews, who, in his opinion, were the cause of the impoverishment of the Ruthenian and Hungarian peasants. Khazar thus became the code word for Jew, a symbol of Jewish difference and “usurpation.” Likewise, Bartha’s reports were written from an unveiled antisemitic perspective and originally appeared serially in the periodical *Ellenzék* (Opposition), which Bartha edited. In each report, presenting a different person, situation, or event in the region, Bartha explained that the misery of the local population was due to the non-Hungarian inhabitants—that is the Jews’—parasitic presence there. Whereas Bartha’s assessment of the local situation agreed with Széchenyi’s notes about the negative influence of Jewish creditors on the Hungarian nobleman’s

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\(^{65}\) Between 1897 and 1923, Egyenlőség published about 70 articles on this topic, and “A honfoglalástól a szabolcsi zsinatig (890-1092)” (From the Conquest to the Council of Szabolcs) a review of Kohn’s book on April 27, 1884.

economic perspectives, his word choice referred to a more distant historical experience. The reference to Khazars instead of Kabars not only underscored the Jewishness of the “harmful non-Hungarian elements,” but also hinted to a relationship of power: the Jewish minority was depicted as the once mighty (Khazar) Empire, while the Hungarian majority suffered as its subdued subject – a motif that reappeared in László Németh’s Kissebségben (In Minority). In doing so, Bartha as well as the antisemitic press, described the Orthodox Jewish population of the very poor area adjacent to Galicia in a completely different way than, starting from the 1870s, German speakers related to Ostjuden. Though uninterested in Kohn’s work, Equality closely followed the antisemitic press using the word Khazar to stigmatize the Orthodox Jewish population in the countryside, especially in the northeastern and eastern border areas. The Jewish newspaper underlined that the antisemitic usage of the Khazar terminology in connection to the Ruthenian question was founded on false assessment of the situation as well as the fact that it was the nature of antisemitic discourse to fabricate false claims about Jewish fraud.

In contrast to the negative connotation that the word Khazar acquired in the antisemitic discourse, and despite the lack of interest from Jewish readers, the scholarly community was open to the ideas that Kohn articulated. Kohn’s book fit the broader Liberal historical trend that went against the essentialist arguments of national origins. From midcentury, Christian historians demonstrated that after the Conquest, Hungarians maintained their former political and social system. The Asian legacy continued to be honored after the conversion to Christianity and

67 See previous chapter.
68 See Chapter One, fn. 64.
69 See for example the editor Miksa Szabolcsi’s article “Az antiszemita termézetrajzához,” (To the natural history of the anti-Semite) Egyenlőség, (Equality) January 5, 1902.
Hungarian kings borrowed the western European political tools of anti-Jewish legislation only when paganism was completely eliminated. According to these descriptions, the west was a source of intolerance and religious bigotry that contradicted the “original logic” of the Hungarian social and political establishment. According to these descriptions, the west was a source of intolerance and religious bigotry that contradicted the “original logic” of the Hungarian social and political establishment. In the context of Hungarian historiography, Kohn’s book both relied on and further enriched the anti-western and pro-Asian sentiment. It underlined the importance of geography over genealogy and suggested that the Asian legacy was in fact a multicultural legacy that promoted the politics of tolerance.

However, the Khazar theory contradicted the conventions of modern Jewish historiography, which explains that while Hungarian Jewry was open to arguments underscoring Hungary’s multiethnic character, they found it hard to accept Kohn’s refutation of the common, Middle Eastern origins of world Jewry; Vambery also pointed this out in the aforementioned talk. The Central Asian origins offered Hungarian Jews a unique narrative of origins, which differentiated those Jewish residents who could argue that their families had been living in Hungary for generations from other Central European Jewish communities and the “newcomer” migrants from either German-speaking territories or Galicia. Unlike Vambery’s talk, Kohn’s Khazar genealogy never supported a connection to Polish, Russian, or Kharaita Jewish communities. Instead, it contributed to the Hungarian Jewish exceptionalist claims. The Khazar borderland in Central Asia nevertheless also offered a historical example of cultural coexistence.

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70 The list of historical works is long and includes among other works Árpád Kerékgyártó’s *Magyarország művelôdésének története* (The History of Hungary’s Culture) (Pest: Sándor Buda and János Krupinszky, 1859), Károly Szabó’s *A magyar vezérek kora* (The Era of the Hungarian Leaders) (Pest: Mór Ráth, 1869) as well as at the turn of the century Gyula Pauler’s *A magyar nemzet története Szent Istvánig* (The History of the Hungarian Nation until St. Steven) (Budapest: A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvkiadó-Vállalata, 1900.) The historiographical debate culminated in the question of whether the first Christian king István’s kingdom was a genuine Hungarian polity or if it constituted a break from previous political and social customs, which when confronted forced Hungary’s inclusion into Christian Europe.
comparable to the Arab-Jewish one in Muslim Spain. It is to this relationship that German Jewish scholars referred as the ideal policy in which Jews could both cultivate their own institutions and contribute to the state. In the late twentieth century, Jewish historians studied Kohn’s book only within the framework of Jewish historiography, without either examining the possibility of a dialogue between his and German Jewish historians’ work or inserting it into the Hungarian historiographical context; they have described it as apologetic.\footnote{About the Jewish historians’ criticism of Kohn’s work’s assimilationist partisan tone, see: Iván Uhrman, “Scheiber Sándor és az ún. kabar-zsidó elmélet,” (Sándor Scheiber and the so-called Kabar-Jewish theory) Hacofe 2, no. 1 (Periodical of the Budapest Jewish University); available from \url{http://www.or-zse.hu/hacofe/vol2/uhrman-scheiberdoc.pdf}; Internet; accessed October 28, 2013.}

Despite the fact that Kohn remained the only advocate of the Khazar genealogy, the publication of Arthur Koestler’s \textit{The Thirteenth Tribe} nine decades later illustrates that the theory continued to inspire the Hungarian Jewish historical imagination, though not in a scholarly manner.\footnote{Arthur Koestler, \textit{The Thirteenth Tribe: the Khazar empire and its heritage} (New York: Random House, 1976).} A recent Israeli historiographical debate illustrates that the question occupies thinkers outside of Hungary as well, and that among Soviet and Israeli historians, the Khazar question remained an important point that stirred questions about Jewish nationhood and political identity discourse.\footnote{See the discussion following the publication of Shlomo Sand’s \textit{The Invention of the Jewish People}, translated by Yael Lotan (New York: Verso, 2009). Sand does not include the discussion of Kohn’s book in his review of the history of the Khazar theory and its impact on Jewish collective identity formation.} In Hungary, the multiplication of overlapping geographical designations in twentieth-century scholarly and political discussions—Central Asia, Altai, and Turan—also signaled the various vested political interests in the study of this space. At the same time, though they view the area as a culturally mixed space of Hungarian prehistory, Hungarian

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\footnote{1}{About the Jewish historians’ criticism of Kohn’s work’s assimilationist partisan tone, see: Iván Uhrman, “Scheiber Sándor és az ún. kabar-zsidó elmélet,” (Sándor Scheiber and the so-called Kabar-Jewish theory) Hacofe 2, no. 1 (Periodical of the Budapest Jewish University); available from \url{http://www.or-zse.hu/hacofe/vol2/uhrman-scheiberdoc.pdf}; Internet; accessed October 28, 2013.}


\footnote{3}{See the discussion following the publication of Shlomo Sand’s \textit{The Invention of the Jewish People}, translated by Yael Lotan (New York: Verso, 2009). Sand does not include the discussion of Kohn’s book in his review of the history of the Khazar theory and its impact on Jewish collective identity formation.}
scholars studying linguistic affinity and Hungarian ancient history do not appear to have interest in the specific study of the Jewish cultural impact on the Hungarian tribesmen.74

**Religious History as Scholarly Field and Political Program**

Relying on Goldziher’s diary, Simon emphasizes that after his disappointments at the University, the Rabbinical Seminary, and with regard to the disinterest in his first monograph in Hungary, Goldziher took the position of secretary of the Pest Jewish Congregation, and therefore he could dedicate only a small part of his day to his research. Accordingly, Goldziher had to make compromises in his grand design for the creation of a modern Oriental field, or what Simon determined as Goldziher’s scholarly program, which followed Eötvös’s education policy: the making Hungarian scholarship complying with international standards would serve also the creation of a modern state.75 In his diary, Goldziher noted that because he had limited time, he concentrated his research on Arab philology, history, and Islam.76

However, in contrast to both Goldziher’s diary and Simon’s reconstruction of this phase in Goldziher’s career, voices praising Goldziher’s work in the Hungarian press or scholarly circles were not completely absent. The first, 1877 issue of the *Egyetemes Philológiai Közlöny* (Universal Philological News) reviewed the German publication of Goldziher’s *Mythos* and the reviewer expressed his (likely not her) sincere hope that after the more than positive reception abroad, Goldziher would live to see the original Hungarian publication of his book.77


75 Simon, 25, 33.

76 See Simon, 65. He quotes Goldziher’s *Tagebuch*, 110.

77 The Academy launched *Philological News* in 1877, three years after the Philological Society was formed and twenty years after *Linguistic News* was first published, which indicates that the Academy prioritized linguistics.
Goldziher’s *Mythos* in its original form has not been published in Hungarian since, and this review aside, the little reaction that there was to Goldziher’s book, especially in Jewish circles was rather negative. In contrast, before and also after the publication of *Mythos*, Hunfalvy published a couple of Goldziher’s articles on this topic in *Linguistic News* in order to demonstrate – among other things – the correlation between the fields of comparative mythology and comparative linguistics. He also used the topic as an excuse to argue against the historian over philology. Unlike Benes, who discusses the linguistic and philological scholarship in Germany without distinguishing between the two fields, I underline this difference because it was central to the work of the scholars whom I study. In his 1856 article, “[Tájékozás a magyar nyelvészetről],” (Information about Hungarian Linguistics), Hunfalvy emphasized the difference arguing that philology was a broader field than linguistics. In the first issue of Hunfalvy’s *Magyar Nyelvészet*, Szende Riedl differentiated between the practical and theoretical study of languages. He placed philology in the first category, arguing that it was a practical approach to language to use it for the discovery and interpretation of its “literary treasures.” He underlined that man studied language in this manner from the beginning of time. In contrast, the theoretical study of language, which became a scholarly field only in the nineteenth century, focuses on language and its grammatical, literary, and historical character. Riedl Szende, “A Nyelvészetről általában,” (About Linguistics in General) *Magyar Nyelvészet* (Hungarian Linguistics) 1 (1856): 23. In 1869, the linguist Jenő Linder discussed the importance of the study of dialects in a study that appeared in 1869 in the same booklet with Vambery’s “Török-tatár szövegvezetések” (Turkish-Tartar Word Correspondence). Linder pointed out that, whereas in linguistics language is the subject of analysis, in philology it served as a key to the past. Comparative linguistics focused on evolution and change, the development and transformation of languages. Comparative linguists viewed their work a corollary to historical investigation.

In his diary, Goldziher writes that in the Pest coffee houses, a Moravian acquaintance of the well-known scholar David Kauffmann, who was an appointed faculty member to the recently opened Rabbinical Seminary, started collecting signatures for a proposal to remove Goldziher from his secretarial position because of the claims he made in *Mythos*. In Goldziher’s opinion, Kauffmann’s jealousy about seeing in him competition was behind the “movement,” which, nonetheless, died out in eight days. Goldziher, *Napló*, 119.

Under the title *Mitosz a hébereknél és történeti fejlődése* (Myth among the Hebrews and its historical development) a reduced version was published in 2003 based on the German publication. It lacks the theoretical arguments, which in the translator’s as well as Conrad’s opinion, were refuted within a few decades. See Conrad, “Ignaz Goldziher on Ernest Renan: From Orientalist Philology to the Study of Islam,” in *The Jewish Discovery of Islam: Studies in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, ed. Martin Kramer (Tel Aviv: Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1999), 145. Moreover, Raphael Patai’s and Géza Komoróczy’s Hebrew mythological research was published in Hungarian several decades after Goldziher’s death.

In the same issue of *Philological News*, writing about Anonymus, king Béla II’s unknown notary and author of *Gesta Hungarorum*, the historian Henrik Marczali repeated the earlier understanding that while medieval authors often relied on myths to describe historical background, and their assessments cannot be considered historically reliable, they nonetheless hold a faithful mirror to their own age. Henrik Marczali, “Béla király jegyzője,” *Egyetemes Philologiat Közlöny* (Universal Philological News) 1 (1877): 357-371.
Lajos Fekete and his mythological arguments published in *Budapest Review.*

Hunfalvy, very much complying with both the historians’ claims against mythology and Goldziher’s discussion of the political role of modern mythological fiction, argued that Fekete mistook Vörösmarty’s creation *hadúr* for an ancient Hungarian expression for god. This argument formed a part of Hunfalvy’s more comprehensive attack on failed etymology in current historical works, especially in connection to Hungarian preconquest history which, in his view, supported historical arguments about the earliest history of the Hungarians that had been passed over.

Goldziher’s last article about mythology appeared in the *Universal Philological News* in 1879, and from the 1880s, he published about comparative religious studies in this periodical as well as elsewhere. Nonetheless, he did not abandon the study of mythology, which is illustrated by Aurel Stein’s notes that he took in the first semester of the 1881/82 academic year in Goldziher’s course “Introduction to the study of comparative mythology.”

In his memoirs, Munkácsi argued that Goldziher’s lectures of introduction to comparative mythology were the most memorable from all the courses in his first years of university studies. Goldziher himself recorded in his diary that he continued teaching comparative mythology and religion at the University.

Starting in 1877, Goldziher’s publications demonstrated that while he may have had to reduce the volume of his work, he did not alter either the scholarly or the social or political scope of his research. His Hungarian and most of his German publications continued to reflect on the


80 MTA, Oriental Collection, Stein Collection, 15/11 81. 0122.

81 For the references see Simon, 68.
history of the emergence of Muslim institutions and discuss the events of the contemporary Muslim world. Since it was launched in 1884, Goldziher has been critical of *Magyar Zsidó Szemle* (Hungarian Jewish Review), nonetheless published in it about Jewish education, history, and religious topics. Additionally, he even expanded the pool of his topics when he started publishing about the Transylvanian Protestant biblical study as an introduction to the history of Orientalism in Hungary.\(^82\) His “focus on Islamic scholarship” may have seemed to Goldziher a sharp change of direction in 1890, when he recorded the memory of these years in his diary. To the lay (i.e. non-Orientalist or non-Jewish scholar) observer, however, it seems that during the 1880s, Goldziher both deepened and broadened his scholarly work and established himself as an international authority on Islam, especially the development of *Hadith* (Muslim tradition) and as an advocate of Jewish Religious reform in Hungary, which advocacy he based on the universal teachings of Judaism.\(^83\)

\(^82\) In 1884, the *Universal Philological News* published his study “Teleki Mihály erdélyi kanczellár és Leusden János utrechti tanár” (Transylvanian chancellor Mihály Teleki and János Leusden, professor in Utrecht), a decade later, in 1893, he published in *Linguistic News* “Kőrösi Csoma Sándor hagyatéka” (Sándor Kőrösi Csoma’s legacy), and in 1908 he published a commemorative essay about János Uri, the Transylvanian scholar who became the librarian of Bodleian Library in Oxford. He wrote several obituaries about fellow Academy members. Among these papers, the 1907 address commemorating Count Géza Kuún can be also inserted into this strain of work. Kuún studied Semitic philology and researched Arabic chronicles for records of preconquest history of the Hungarian forefathers. Goldziher consulted him and a sort-of-friendship developed between them. Kuún helped Goldziher’s promotion to regular faculty membership in 1894. Goldziher, *Napló*, 280. In contrast to their correspondence, in his diary, Goldziher complained about the condescence of the Kuún couple and noted that he wanted to avoid even the appearance that he, “the Jew” wanted to “fraternize” with the nobleman which everyone would have thought to be a premeditated step and not the result of mutual respect and genuine friendship. Goldziher, *Napló*, 270, 286.

\(^83\) Students of Jewish orientalists’ oeuvre emphasize the correlation between the Jewish scholars’ intellectual and social experience and interest in Islam. In Goldziher’s case, already his student Bernát Heller pointed out that Goldziher could interpret *Hadith* with such insight because his Jewish experience illuminated the difference between the written and the oral *Torah*. Simon refutes this claim, pointing out that non-Jewish scholars could equally see the character of *Hadith* and relate to Goldziher’s research, as the correspondence with Nöldeke and Becker illustrate.
Studies on Islam and Muslim Community

His 1881 Islam introduced Hungarian readers to the Arabs’ religious life prior to Muhammad’s appearance, the history of Islam, and the way Europeans studied it and constructed their biases regarding Islam for the first time. Like other students of Islam, Goldziher stressed that Islam was the fruit of one man’s revolutionary ideas, however, unlike many authors before him, he did not consider Muhammad as delusional or an impostor. Also, his attention turned to the development of the Muslim religiosity and not examination of their first emergence. He explained the social and cultural conditions of the Arabian desert prior to the seventh century and stressed that Muhammad introduced substantial reforms to them. While the pagan traditions continued to shape Islam, as a result of Muhammad’s appearance, Arabs’ primary identification as nomadic tribesmen became secondary to the sense of belonging to the umma, the Muslim community. Soon after the Arab conquest in the latter part of the seventh century and the following ones, the umma expanded to non-Arabs too. Goldziher presented a broad perspective on Muslim societies in a manner that was easily approachable even for non-experts, while his book also corresponded with the many subfields he discussed in his earlier articles and Mythos. In addition, he discussed the cult of saints in Islam and in comparison to Christianity, as well as the role of legends in the development of Muslim religiosity. He examined the influence of Judaism and Christianity on early Islam as well as its manifestations in different geographical areas: the Indian subcontinent, Syria, the Arabian peninsula, and Egypt, among Turks or Bedouins. He also continued the discussion of an 1879 article, which he published in Budapest Review, “Muslim university life” in which he discussed the influence of Muslim higher education on European and western scholarship. He dedicated the last chapter to discuss the “misjudgers of Islam.” While the Academy published it, it read more as a popular history or
religious studies-publication, especially when compared to *Muslim Studies*, which was published in two volumes in German, in 1888 and 1890, and which won him international scholarly recognition.

From the perspective of international Oriental studies, *Muslim Studies* and especially the essay on Hadith in the second volume - a topic that he discussed in *Islam* as well - produced a real change in Oriental scholarship; it also further widened the gap between Goldziher’s reception abroad and in Hungary. Hadith or Muslim tradition is the collection of sayings accredited to Muhammad, and Goldziher argued that they rather expressed the opinions of the later generations who interpreted the religion-founder Muhammad’s teachings. The argument reflected Abraham Geiger’s and, through his work, Hegelian influence on Goldziher’s historical approach. More importantly, however, as Simon points out, in Hadith Goldziher shed light on one of the most important characteristics of Muslim religious life, namely the importance of the role of the religious community in the development of religion. Goldziher argued that because of the centrality of *ijmā* (consensus) in the introduction to *bidā* (novelty or new conduct) into religious conduct as well as other aspects of social intercourse, the community was more influential than institutions in Muslim history.

Simon stresses that the most respected scholars of Islam were astonished by the two volumes of *Muslim Studies*. Following the publication of the second volume, the German

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84 The students of his life emphasize that he refused to accept invitations to Prague, Cairo, or Cambridge where he not only could have worked in better conditions, but in languages that are understood also beyond Hungary. Naturally, most authors ask why Goldziher did not leave Hungary instead of asking why would he leave, since, as Simon pointed out, Goldziher’s scholarly program involved a civic program as well. In fact it is only Simon who recognizes this civic program, which explains that he views Goldziher’s career choices in a different light.

85 Simon, 114-115.
Semitic philologist Nöldeke wrote to Goldziher that there was no better student of the field of Hadith than Goldziher himself. Indeed, in his review for the WienerZeitschrift für der Kunde des Morgenlandes, Nöldeke noted that he would not dare to publicly review the study had he not assumed that all his colleagues would find the task similarly difficult. Goldziher’s research not only provided material to contemplate, but also triggered the proposal of a series of new questions in the fields of Muslim religion, law, social, and cultural history. Muslim Studies is still included in Islamic studies curriculum.

As Simon repeatedly points out, the discussion of the transformation of pre-Islamic religious practices and social order under Islam, and the development of Muslim ideas and customs reflected Goldziher’s occupation with the social transformation of multiethnic Hungary and his desire to conduct a civic life as a Jew there. More importantly, however, the emphasis on the role of the community transcends Goldziher’s Muslim works: it equally characterizes his advocacy of Jewish Reform, a topic than needs more analysis than what follows in the next section.

**Jewish Studies**

The reception of his Jewish historical lectures and his writings about the reform of religious instruction and the intellectual state of Neolog Jewry was of the opposite nature. Based on his diary, the Tiszaeszlár blood libel did not affect his work either in the field of Judaism or his criticism of Jewish education and thought in Hungary. Since he accepted the position of the Congregation’s secretary, he worked to reform Jewish education, and the blood libel did not

86 Simon, 116.

87 See his discussion of both the “Spanish Arabs” and the “Development of Hadith” and the two introductory essays in his Goldziher Ignác.

298
change his position that being a Jew meant to first and foremost be religious and well versed in Jewish literature, which complied with being a good Hungarian citizen.\textsuperscript{88} In contrast, he was critical of the Jewish congregation’s response to the resurfacing antisemitism following the blood libel trial: he believed that it was a mistake to appoint the parliament member Mór Wahrmann, who challenged Istóczy to a duel, which demonstrated to many that he fully embodied the assimilated yet politically and socially self-conscious Hungarian Jew.\textsuperscript{89} To Goldziher, Wahrmann represented the assimilating Jew who compromised his Jewish identity for acceptance to the higher strata of Hungarian society.\textsuperscript{90} In Goldziher’s view, a president with intellectual weight would have better served the Congregation, and his Hungarian publications on Jewish topics that will be discussed below, shed light on his argument and explain why he put so much emphasis on Jewish education. Indeed, if the blood libel had any influence on his “Jewish politics,” it can be traced in his critical articles that appeared in the \textit{Hungarian Jewish Review}. In his diary, he summarized his opinion of Jewish scholarship in Hungary in the following way: “Participating in the fraudulent efforts of what was commonly considered

\textsuperscript{88} In his diary, he stressed that as soon as he started to work at the Congregation, he found an interest in education. He wrote that, whereas the Congregation wanted to close its elementary schools due to financial problems, the actual curricula was never discussed. He successfully reintroduced bible and Hebrew studies as well as reformed the Talmud-Torah classes. Goldziher, \textit{Napló}, 115-6. In 1887, an education councilor position was created, and Munkácsi was working as such causing much distress to Goldziher – the diary does not disclose exactly what Munkácsi did and why it hurt Goldziher’s feelings. Goldziher, \textit{Napló}, 247-8.

\textsuperscript{89} Goldziher, \textit{Tagebuch}, 100. Istóczy founded the Antisemitic Party following the blood label trial, and in the parliament following the 1884 elections, instead of the original three, there were seventeen representatives of the Party. According to the \textit{Jewish Lexicon}, the Antisemitic party failed in the year when the Parliament discussed the reception of Judaism in 1894. See, \textit{Zsidó Lexikon} (Jewish Lexicon), 44-48; available from \url{http://mek.oszk.hu/04000/04093/html/0056.html}; Internet; accessed April 4, 2014.

\textsuperscript{90} His dislike of Wahrmann is best illustrated by the fact that he named him “the Pollak” in his diary. His antagonism toward the faculty of the Rabbinical Seminary, who were rabbis from Moravia also manifested in derogatory claims against “Moravians.” Goldziher, \textit{Napló}, 144, 191. He similarly argued that because among the Viennese orientalists there were Jews of Polish (Galician) descent, like D. H. Müller, they disliked him. Goldziher, \textit{Napló}, 144.
running under the flag of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* disgusted me.” At the same time, he excused himself for not being able to stay away from these “efforts”: “however, I clung with the innermost fibers of my soul on religious studies.”

His article “A bibliai tudomány és modern vallásos élet” (The biblical scholarship and modern religious life) in the first, 1884 issue of *Hungarian Jewish Review* argued the same principle that Goldziher had already articulated in his 1872 article about the instruction of Hebrew and in *Mythos*. He believed that the study of Jewish religious literature from ancient times aided ethically based modern religious conduct. Bible study was at the center of the desired scholarly endeavor and in modern times, the historical approach to the biblical text does not diminish its sanctity, but in fact filled the spiritual gap that the insufficiency of the traditional approach to religion left among believers. “The historical interpretation of the development of biblical ideas elevates our religious life to the level of consciousness,” he stressed. Whereas for Jews the bible was not simply a historical source, but the book that connected the whole Jewish religious community, religious leaders and laymen equally, few of the well-educated Jews who may have been versed in Greek mythology, the teachings of Schopenhauer, Hartmann or even Darwin, were not knowledgeable about the biblical text. Goldziher argued that the fault lay not entirely with the Jewish public: no publication written for the broad public in Hungarian on the bible was available for lay readers.


92 Goldziher, “A bibliai tudomány és modern vallásos élet” (The biblical scholarship and modern religious life), in *Az ősidőség* (The essence), 163.
His articles “A jesibákról” (About yeshivas) and “A haladásról” (About progress) published in 1886 in the *Hungarian Jewish Review* were direct attacks on the Neolog movement, which in Goldziher’s view did not comply with either scholarly or modern religious expectations. In Goldziher’s eyes, the Neolog movement had failed to define progress, which it supposedly represented. Progress, Goldziher argued, was “the development of eternal religious ideas, their advancement to growing heights measured by those truths that from century to century progressive thought creates.”93 He added that those who believe that changes in rituals, like the change in the cantors’ dress, or the introduction of organ to the synagogue, or the rabbi’s sermons shaped according to Lutheran pastors’ sermons constitute progress, could consider the Neolog movement a progressive movement. He, however, could not identify with such an attitude. What is important to note that at the time, Goldziher could use only two Jewish confessional categories: Neolog and Orthodox and he could not fully identify with any of the two. (Unlike in Germany or the United States, where the Reform movement was further divided into Conservative and Liberal groups, in Hungary no such development took place, at least, from Goldziher’s perspective.) Indeed, he defined himself as Geiger’s and Zunz’s follower.

Goldziher wrote these two articles under the penname Izsák Ungár, which translates to Isaac (the) Hungarian. The usage of pennames during this time was characteristic of the Hungarian press; for example, using the penname Ignaz Vambery, in a 1882 pamphlet, Vambery or someone else campaigned that the prospect of professional careers justified Jews’ conversion

93 Goldziher, “A haladásról” (About progress) in *A zsidóság* (The essence), 619.
to Protestantism. In addition to his two articles in the 1880s, in 1897, Goldziher wrote a commemorating article of Brill under the penname Izsák Keleti (Isaac Eastern) in the periodical Jövő (Future). Goldziher used a penname only in the Jewish press, and his diary entry recording his 1897 article testifies that he used the penname to distance himself from these Jewish periodicals. He wrote that he used the Izsák Keleti penname because he did not want to “prostitute,” i.e. corrupt his name by publishing in this periodical, however he felt the moral pressure to address the topic.

The pennames that Goldziher used, in addition, indicate his strong identification as a Hungarian and might as well demonstrate his criticism of the Jewish Liberal politics, which forged a western and Jewish identity, which, in his eyes, lacked intellectual and moral basis. What makes his choice of Izsák Ungár as a penname interesting is that when he introduced himself to the dean of the Muslim college, Al-Azhar, he used the Arabic corresponding name Ignaz al-Madschari, (Isaac the Hungarian) son of the People of the Book. Through the usage of the penname Goldziher’s holistic scholarly program that includes the broadly defined Semitic field reemerges. The penname also points toward a phenomenon that needs further research, namely that his first-hand experience of Islam and Muslim studies inspired his Jewish scholarship and the ways in which he formulated religious development and the need for Jewish Reform.

95 Goldziher, Napló, 258.
96 Goldziher, 69.
Finally, his 1887-88 lectures, which were published in the Hungarian Jewish Review and later reprinted hoped to remedy the acute absence of popular writings about Judaism in Hungarian. (Due to lack of interest, he did not deliver his last, sixth, lecture, although it did appear in print.)

Conrad translates the title of Goldziher’s lectures as “The Essence and Evolution of Judaism,” and based on his writings, in his essay “Orientalism and the Jewish Historical Gaze,” John Efron emphasizes that these lectures discussed the historical development of Judaism, noting that Goldziher “argued energetically for the reform of Judaism along the lines laid out by Abraham Geiger.” I translated the Hungarian word zsidóság in the title differently, as “Jewishness,” in order to further emphasize that for Goldziher Judaism, the religion of the Jews, was the only criteria for Jewish identity and carried universal teachings. Only two years after the lectures, when he started writing his memoir – which constitutes the first part of his diary – he complained that

Every issue of religious interest belonged to communal affairs, which, when I took office [at the Pest Jewish congregation], I found in quite a neglected state. The administration reflected quite accurately what the so called Congress Judaism in Hungary stood for: a confession without religion. Faith is the last thing that makes the Jew a Jew, one is a Jew when not begotten to Christian parents. The birth and not the education, what makes man similar to the animals - because the animal is born animal - determines one’s denomination, and not what one’s soul acquired and not the continuity of spirituality, which from generation to generation was inherited and purified. And because this continuity, to the contents of which each generation contributes more complete and strong content, went completely lost, to a certain segment of Jewry it is so easy to make the inconvenient circumstances of their birth

97 Efron, 89. Conrad, 238. Both authors discuss the correspondence between Goldziher’s and Geiger’s work, the discussion of which I will return in the following.
disappear through affiliation to Christianity, provided it closes the door of opportunity to any position.\textsuperscript{98}

This long quote reflects Goldziher’s understanding that religiosity made Jews in Hungary Jewish and his belief that without promoting a religious identity, the Congregation could not fulfill its task to keep the Jewish community prosper. Whereas he stated that the Congregation had asked him to deliver the lectures, this allowed him to break through the isolation that he felt within the Congregation’s administrative and intellectual leadership.\textsuperscript{99} His lectures were his last public action to promote his goal, and it is informative that as a motto to his 1887-8 lectures he chose a quote from Geiger’s close friend Berthold Auerbach (in my translation) “The old preconceptions about religion can be defeated only through more religion, not non-religion.”\textsuperscript{100}

Unlike other Jewish historical works like Kohn’s history, through the examination of the historical transformation of Judaism, \textit{The Essence and Development of Jewishness} does not advocate Hungarian-Jewish coexistence, but discusses the ways in which Judaism serves the modern man in general as a guide to ethical life.\textsuperscript{101} The lectures reflected that Goldziher was the


\textsuperscript{99} In fact, in the book, he uses the same word also in the meaning of Jewry and Judaism.

\textsuperscript{100} “Die alten Vorstellungen über Religion sind nur zu besiegen durch mehr religion, nicht durch Unreligion.” Auerbach, \textit{Briefe II}, 101. Quoted by Goldziher, \textit{A zsidőság} (The Essence…), 29.

\textsuperscript{101} Lajos Venetiánér published a similar comprehensive history in 1922. Lajos Venetiánér, \textit{A magyar zsidóság története: különös tekintettel gazdasági és művelődési fejlődésére aXIX században} (Budapest: Könyvértékesítő
least interested in the discussion of Jewish difference in Hungary. Instead he focused on the teachings of Judaism that should remain relevant to Jews and the universal values, which Judaism formulated and which, in his opinion, contributed to the formulation of the modern state and society, where religious differences should not play political roles. His opening address, in which he described his audience as made up of young Jewish educated professionals, whose curiosity in Jewish scholarship he welcomed, reveals the lectures’ scope: “Also in the newest age the predominance of truths and principles advanced the development of Jewry, and they expect your enthusiasm, because without it, they will be lost for the future generations.”

In his introductory lecture, Goldziher repeated his already published claims, namely that scholarship revealed that Judaism was not an ancient artifact but a living organism, which constantly evolved. This evolution consisted of the deeper exploration of old truths; the most important among them was the monotheistic idea. Religious scholarship did not only serve academic experts, but the whole community, by elevating religiosity to a conscious level. He added that not only could science demonstrate the stages of religious development, but as long as there was religious life, one could witness the evolution of human intellect, and therefore serve as the basis of historical examination. He emphasized that this important claim should become our sole righteous guiding principle first, when we turn our sight to the past of the Jewish people’s intellectual development, and second, when we think about the needs of Jewry’s formation in the present and our hopes for its development in the future.

Vállalat, 1986, 1922). During the second half of the nineteenth century several local Jewish historical works were published focusing on the legal, social, and cultural state of Jews in Hungary.

103 Goldziher, *A zsidóság* (The essence), 38.
As his stress on the interconnection between religiosity and scholarship framed his historical examination, he described its general framework by pointing out that in each historical period, different factors promoted religious development: psychological drives that shaped the intellect of the community as well as exceptional personalities. Not unlike in *Mythos*, he underlined the role of the prophets, and noted that small circle of individuals facilitated the most spectacular changes in Jewish religiosity. Finally, he established that his historical reconstruction included only those events and phenomena that deeply and in its fullness influenced the future development of Jewish intellectual and spiritual life. These were prophetism and rabbinism in ancient times, the influence of philosophy in the Middle Ages, and modern religious studies. His lectures discussed each separately.

The six lectures reviewed the historical development of religiosity and ideas if religion from the prophets until Abraham Geiger’s and Leopold Zunz’s work. In each lecture, Goldziher underlined one main element that contributed to the constant evolution of Judaism’s religious, legal, and intellectual character and emphasized the ways in which the monotheistic idea was articulated, underlining the relevance of the discussed ideas to the modern readership. In so arguing, he gave a vertical dimension to what he called Jewish community, and stressed that the previous generations equally formed a part of the common Jewish intellectual experience. His closing lecture also emphasized the horizontal dimension of the Jewish communal experience: he stressed that as the development of Jewish religiosity has always been a communal act, also in the future, Judaism should develop as a result of the cooperation between thinkers and average
believers. “Only religious scholarship that moves forward in an open religious atmosphere can advance our religious life,” he argued, referring back to his opening comments.\footnote{Ibid., 126.}

Whereas Heschel stressed Geiger’s influence on Goldziher’s \textit{Muslim Studies}, which Goldziher’s diary supports, Conrad underlined that the influence of Geiger’s work manifested also in Goldziher’s Jewish studies in general and \textit{The Essence and Evolution of Judaism} (Jewishness) in particular.\footnote{As it was discussed earlier, Goldziher noted in his diary that he had been implementing Geiger’s historical approach when examining Muslim traditions. Goldziher, \textit{Tagebuch}, 123, \textit{Napló}, 158.} In the second lecture, the discussion of rabbinism especially demonstrates Goldziher’s interest in the insertion of oral traditions into Judaism’s legal system. In a similar way as he had depicted the emergence of \textit{Hadith}, he stressed that the Talmud originated from the principle that one should not follow the law word by word but needs to “repeatedly interpret it through religious experience.”\footnote{Goldziher, \textit{A zsidőság} (The essence), 81.} The sixth lecture demonstrated that Geiger’s historical method was more than influence on Goldziher’s work. Goldziher made Geiger the subject of his study as well, which further reinforces his stress on the continuous influence of religious scholarship on religiosity and that he considered scholarship a key to the perfection of the religious experience. Considering that either in his lectures and articles, or in his diary Goldziher did not relate to Hungarian Jewish scholarship, he indirectly expressed his condemnation of Jewish scholarship in Hungary.

Whereas Conrad argues that the lectures were a “colossal failure” due to lack of interest, Goldziher’s disappointment regarding his position within the Congregation’s leadership and the fact that modern Jewish scholarship, in his opinion, could not exercise the influence among Pest
Jews that he hoped for is even more telling. “This was the last occasion that I threw pearls before swine,” he recorded in his diary with anger.\textsuperscript{107} That the passage in his diary about the lack of religious foundation of the Congregation’s work, which in his view contributed to the general phenomenon that Jews lived non-Jewish lives either by living non-religious lives or by converting to Christianity, continued indicates his continuing frustration. In six points he summarized his criticism of this phenomenon and why the Congregation was to blame for it.\textsuperscript{108} Similarly, other diary entries following this testified that until 1905, when he left his position at the Congregation, his impression of the organization’s spiritual state and work did not change over the years. Nonetheless, in addition to their first publication in \textit{Hungarian Jewish Review}, Goldziher’s lectures were reprinted several times, most recently in 2000 and, though they remain a unique historical study, ultimately, they did reach and continue reaching readers.

It is also misguided to argue, as Efron did, that Goldziher “did not take a public stand on the Jewish question.”\textsuperscript{109} Whereas Goldziher refused to discuss antisemitism or the Zionist question publicly— which was the basis of Efron’s aforementioned assumption – the lectures indicate his desire to actively shape Jewish life in Hungary from within. As was discussed earlier, Kohn’s study was received halfheartedly, nonetheless, it did enter the public consciousness, most probably because it opened an avenue to advocate for the common experience of Jews and Hungarians. Vambery, in contrast, succeeded in stirring a controversy by contradicting the arguments of comparative linguistics and denying pure genealogy to

\textsuperscript{108} Unfortunately, this part is missing from the Hungarian edition.
\textsuperscript{109} Efron, 89-90.
Hungarians, while fanning national vanity and pride in the eastern origins. The Jewish press received Vambery’s theory as a contribution to the public discussion of the Jewish question in Hungary more favorably than Kohn’s work. In comparison to Vambery’s and Kohn’s works that through Hungarian and Jewish Hungarian preconquest history argued for the Hungarian-Jewish coexistence, Goldziher’s religious history did not address the question of Jewish integration into the Hungarian state. This hiatus might explain both the relatively low interest in his lectures and the historiographical examination that views The Emergence and Evolution of Jewishness did not engage with the public discussion of the Jewish question. In the mirror of the other scholars’ writings, Goldziher’s arguments were abstract, underscored by impeccable scholarly claims. He also unambiguously supported a Jewish religious lifestyle, which, as he himself pointed out in his diary, in 1888 hindered professional careers in Hungary.

Because it was embedded in German philological and western European religious historical scholarship, when considering the Hungarian academic arena, few reflected on Goldziher’s work in the Arab and Muslim and the Jewish field. The articles commemorating him, while they list the many scholarly fields to which Goldziher contributed, such as Arab philology, ethnology, religious history name not one debate or debater that would illustrate Goldziher’s participation in any scholarly conversation. According to Budapest, his position in Hungarian academic circles, in the light of Vambery’s involvement in the Ugric-Turkish War or even the reception of Kohn’s rather radical work, appeared to be marginal in contrast to the role he played in international Oriental scholarship. Though during the next decade Goldziher

110 Bernát Heller, “Goldziher Ignác,” in A zsidóság (The essence), 7-21; Károly Sebestyén, “Goldziher Ignác, az ember” (Ignaz Goldziher, the man), in A zsidóság (The essence), 22-29.
continued his previous research, there was a noticeable further shift toward publishing monographs in German, English, and even Russian and articles in Hungarian. Nonetheless, in 1892, he became a regular Academy member and in 1894 he was granted a professorship; a decade later, he was appointed dean. Also, at the Academy he served as department chair before his resignation in 1919. His career suggests that despite the growing antisemitism and intensifying nationalism, his success in the international scholarly stage was after all acknowledged in Hungary.

The next chapter focuses on the years around the Millennium Festivities and the first decade of the twentieth century and demonstrates that the institutional integration of the two elder scholars contrasted with the ways in which they participated in Hungarian and international Oriental scholarship. The examination of the beginnings of Stein’s career further illustrates the gap between the three scholars’ professional and cultural ties to Hungarian and international academic circles and allows for a discussion of the elusive nature of their marginal position in modern Hungarian Oriental scholarship.
CHAPTER SIX
SCHOLARLY SELF-ORIENTALISM, COLONIALISM, AND JEWISH MARGINALITY IN THE MIRROR OF STEIN’S CAREER 1890-1913

Stein was allegedly baptized at birth. Through his uncle, Ignaz Hirschler, an ophthalmologist, Upper Table member and former president of the Pest Jewish Congregation he had very good connections to both the political elite and leading intellectuals like Vambery and Goldziher. This “social capital” could have helped him launch his career, however, he never acquired an appointment in Hungary. In 1897 Stein became external member of the Academy, an honor acknowledging his work as an employee of the British colonial government in India in the field of Sanskrit philology. Indeed, the years around the Millennium Festivities in 1896 marked important turning points in the lives and careers for Stein and the two elder scholars, Vambery and Goldziher. In 1894, the same year the Hungarian Parliament started discussing the law that declared Judaism a state religion, Goldziher was appointed a regular faculty member in the University. This completed his official “institutional emancipation.” In 1895, Vambery was appointed a member of the directory board of the Academy.

As Fenyves’s study pointed out, despite the trajectory of Hungarian legislation, which over the course of three decades first granted equal rights to Jews as individuals and later as a collective by making Judaism a state religion, theoretically opening every career path and remaining social enclave for Hungarian Jews, Jewish intellectuals experienced and increasingly prevalent “glass ceiling.” Growing antisemitism and the restratification of Hungarian society both made it increasingly more difficult for Jews to find state employment. However, the nature of the Oriental field and the different trajectories of its development in Hungary and abroad also had a significant effect on in the three orientalists’ careers in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth. By the turn of the century, the two elder scholars became formative figures in the Hungarian academic life and Oriental research, even
though self-Orientalism, of which both scholars were critical, continued to be favored by Hungarian scholars and politicians.

At the opening address to the Academy in 1894, its vice president, historian Károly Szász, summed up the accomplishments of the organization, placing special emphasis on linguistic research. In his view, however, the examination of foreign elements in the Hungarian language had “undeservingly” enjoyed priority. He made no mention of the broader scope of the examination of these foreign elements, namely that they served to inform research about national origins. Instead, he quoted Arany, who in his epigrams mocked both the neologistic movement and comparative linguistics. All irony aside, Szász expressed his “sincere hope” that instead of the study of the foreign elements of the mother tongue, in the near future the Academy would be able to compile the Hungarian vocabulary using a trustworthy method and “on a scholarly and national basis ascertain the system and study of the Hungarian language.” It is hard to assess what the vice president of the Academy meant by “national basis,” however, the report of the secretary Kálmán Szily that followed the opening address offers some clarification.

Szily argued that 1893 was a “good year” for the Academy because of the many good works its members had published. Among them he emphasized the work of two scholars in particular: Géza Kuún and Bernát Munkácsi. In his opinion, Kuún’s study on the “eastern sources” of Hungarian prehistory and Munkácsi’s linguistic research further illuminated the earliest history of the Hungarians. Szily’s report also sheds light on how important the study of national origins was to the work of the Academy, and, thus, suggests that scholarly research in


2 Ibid.
the field of linguistics and history was considered national in case it addressed history, language, or culture of the nation to scholarly analysis. This included Vambery’s “technique” of directing his Turkological research toward the study of Hungarian ethnogenesis, as his 1897 address to the International Orientalist Congress seemed to suggest.

The Millennium had a twofold influence on academics. In 1896, the Academy hosted the King and the crown princes at its general assembly meeting. The president of the Academy, the physicist Loránd Eötvös, who was József Eötvös’s son and inventor of the Torsion balance or Eötvös pendulum, opened the assembly by proudly declaring that Hungarian scholarship formed part of European scholarship. Eötvös continued the reasoning of his father, that the objective of Hungarian academism was connecting Hungarian scholarship with European scholarly research. Goldziher openly embraced this view, which he articulated both in his Hebrew and Arabic works. However, following the younger Eötvös’s brief address, the Balkanist and politician Béni Kállay gave the main address at the assembly, entitled “Árpádok és a magyar állam” (The Árpáds and the Hungarian State). By using the plural, Kállay meant the descendants of Árpád.

Another academic, Vilmos Pecz also wrote about the genealogy of Árpád’s family.3 In the Academy, as in politics and popular culture, there was a politically charged interest in the conquerors. Kállay’s paper focused on the impact of the Hungarian tribes’ cultural and social traditions on the foundation of the state.4 He reviewed the circumstances of the foundation of the


4 In his short study “Scientific Nationalism,” Gábor Palló argues that due to the deep influence of Comte’s positivism across the Hungarian scholarly board, like the humanities, the natural sciences and their institutional framework and content were nationalist in modern Hungary. He quotes the younger Eötvös to illustrate that he wanted “to map Hungarian mineral sources under the surface of the earth, in addition to carrying out highly precise measurements with universal significance.” Gábor Palló, “Scientific Nationalism,” in The Nationalization of Scientific Knowledge in the Habsburg Empire, 1848-1918, ed. Mitchell G. Ash, Jan Surman (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 109-110.
country and the political, cultural, and social conditions during and after the Conquest. The final lines of this paper gave away the influence of the self-orientalist discourse on Kállay’s historical views. He argued that the Hungarian nation’s future depended on whether modern-day Hungarians learned “the illustrious lessons that Árpád’s blood left to you as legacy.” Kállay considered the present Habsburg ruler a part of this legacy and closed his address with the call “God, bless the Hungarian king!” which was followed by loud cheering from the audience.\(^5\) Kállay reinforced the living connection between the conquerors and modern Hungarians and emphasized that the legacy of the former shaped the lives of the latter. At the same time, he claimed that the Habsburg king “became” a successor of the Hungarian national political tradition.

Adopting a similar approach to that of Kállay, literary historian Zsolt Beöthy’s *Magyar Irodalom Kis Tükre* (Little Mirror of Hungarian Literature) presented a Romanticist historical view and argued that the Asian legacy still influenced Hungarian politics. Beöthy’s *Mirror* was published to honor the Millennium—like many other fin-de-siècle publications on Hungarian history and literature, among them the publications that the Academy prepared for the Millennium. (The Academy represented itself in the Millennial Exhibition too.)\(^6\) Beöthy’s book, however, was published in future editions and became a foundational work in Hungarian literary history, especially among Conservative readers. In the same period he also published Széchenyi’s collected works and wrote an introduction for them, which indicates that the Széchenyi cult and the self-orientalist discourse were still connected at the end of the nineteenth century.

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\(^6\) The Exhibition was organized as part of the Millennial Festivities in 1896.
century. The Volga Rider embodied the Asian pagan horse-mounted warrior. By stressing that the spirit of the Scythian warrior, the “Volga rider” still lingered and defined the Hungarian national character at the threshold of the twentieth century, Mirror revealed an essentialist national vision.\(^7\) Beöthy’s theory exemplified the traditionalist literary interest in Oriental origins, in the sense that Beöthy presented the idea of an Asian legacy as a positive motif in Hungarian literature. He reconstructed its continuing traditions and, thus, laid down the foundations of a Conservative literary school, which influenced the literati also in the interwar period as well.

In the next year, in his “A honfoglaló magyarok műveltsége” (Culture of the Conquering Hungarians or Culture) György Volf argued along similar lines as Beöthy and Kállay that the conquerors assimilated foreign groups into the national body and thus embraced foreign cultural influences without “endangering” the nation’s future. Regardless of what other nations they lived amongst, he stressed, the Hungarians continued to preserve their national uniqueness. He completed his address with the wish: “Let our ancestors’ solemn example be blessed! Let it encourage their scions to deservingly continue and triumphantly complete their victorious work!”\(^8\) In both Kállay’s and Volf’s view, the influence of Europe in shaping Hungary was secondary, though not marginal. Their emphasis, nonetheless, was on the influence of earlier generations of Hungarians. Like Szász two years earlier, they presented a vertical perspective on cultural and scholarly development. While they argued that the legacy of the forefathers

\(^7\) Zsolt Beöthy, *A magyar irodalom kis-tükre* (The Little Mirror of Hungarian Literature) (Budapest: Atheneum, 1900).

prevailed in the formation of modern Hungarian scholarship, Eötvös stressed a horizontal view, in which Hungary was part of the larger European cultural and scientific framework.

Vice president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Gyula Kautz’s 1904 address to the general assembly illustrates that over the next decade the occupation with Hungarian-ness intensified. The importance in Hungarian scholarship of its connection to the European framework faded away completely. To open, Kautz asked the rhetorical question: “Are there, in the European sense of the word, scholarship and erudition in Hungary?” Both the reasoning behind why he asked the question and his answer to it are informative in ascertaining his view of the Academy’s and its members’ social and political role in the country. He emphasized that several of the most influential thinkers of the century, namely Széchenyi, Arany, and Deák stressed that without scholarly life, no national community could exist. He quoted Deák who argued that “politics can be thorough and right only when based on learning.” Kautz’s argumentation about why the work of the Academy was essential for the nation’s advancement was neither unique nor original, however, in light of the negative answer he gave to his own question, his following argumentation sounded even more dramatic. Not only was the Academy not producing enough original work, which could raise Hungarian scholarship to the level of Europe, but the lack of original research hindered the modernization of the nation. Like Hunfalvy half a century earlier, Kautz believed that scholarship served the advancement of the nation. Nonetheless – from the perspective of this study – his reasoning for why Hungarian academics failed to comply with his expectations was even more interesting.

In Kautz’s view, Hungarian scholars lagged behind their European colleagues because the country was not developed enough and did not appreciate erudition. There were several reasons for this, such as the stormy history of Hungary, during which Hungarians were constantly forced to defend the country’s sovereignty, the unfavorable material and economic conditions of the state, and, most importantly, the Hungarians’ “racial and national character.” While he did not argue that the Hungarians’ eastern character was to blame, he stressed that “our understanding of life and world view” did not favor the development or the occupation with scholarship. Kautz’s racial argument invoked the sort of self-Orientalism that explained the economic and social state of the country based on national characterization and which Hunfalvy so vehemently attacked in his previously cited address to the Academy in 1856. Almost half a century later, the vice president of the Academy turned into an official program what Hunfalvy had described as a failed excuse for not stepping into the European scholarly arena. After an opening in the Eötvös era in which Hungarian participation in international academic communities could be celebrated, the first years of the twentieth century saw the Academy’s return to earlier nationalist slogans.

This chapter uses a selection of the three scholars’ works that were published during the 1890s and the early 1900s, in order to examine their reactions to the changing attitudes toward international scholarship and how the growing gap between Oriental research in Hungary and Western Europe (including Germany and Austria) shaped their work and institutional integration. Vambery’s continuing and ambiguous engagement with self-Orientalism and Goldziher’s rejection of it have already been discussed in the previous chapters. They demonstrated the two

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10 See the discussion of Hunfalvy’s opening editorial in *Hungarian Linguistics* in Chapter Three, page 141.
scholars’ differing understandings of their fields as tools of social integration. Through the
discussion of Vambery’s 1895 monograph *The Emergence and Growth of Hungariandom* and
his 1905 autobiography, the first section of this chapter demonstrates that Vambery’s attitude
toward self-Orientalism was transformed. Therefore, arguing that Vambery was open to
addressing current political issues through his scholarship, while Goldziher addressed similar
questions in a subtle and abstract manner, without compromising the scholarly standard of his
research only partially explains the evolution of their work at the end of the century. This
argument certainly fails to explain that despite their divergent views on Hungarian politics’ role
in shaping Oriental research, Vambery and Goldziher both accepted at face value the “necessary”
influence of colonialism on European Orientalism. Goldziher’s understanding of his Muslim
studies in light of Bosnia’s annexation and Vambery’s discussion of European colonialism
summarize their views of this issue.

In light of Stein’s career, the two scholars’ correspondence with Stein especially
demonstrate that they recognized, acknowledged, and justified the role that the European
presence in the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and beyond played in the development of
Oriental scholarship. In addition, Vambery and Goldziher emphasized the political role that
Orientalism played: they saw in the western study of the east a humanist tool that helped to
highlight the common cultural heritage of humanity. Accordingly, they viewed Stein’s work as
the embodiment of “real” Oriental research of which they were both proud.

While Stein acquired international fame as one of the greatest archeologist, Oriental
scholar, and expert of the Silk Road of the twentieth century, his research, though celebrated in
Hungary, remained rather marginal to Hungarian scholarship. The two elder scholars viewed in
Stein an orientalist of international measure, which sheds light on their own sense of marginality
as academics in Hungary. The three scholars’ understanding of Orientalism as a western field of study, which subjected eastern cultures to scholarly analysis corresponded with the turn-of-the-century movement of progressive intellectuals who wished to open up Hungarian literature and arts to Western European Avant-garde.

The poet and journalist Endre Ady is considered a pioneer of the Hungarian literary Avant-guard movement. In 1909 Georg Lukács described Ady as “the conscience, the battle song, the trumpet, the flag around which everyone can form ranks.”¹¹ In his journalistic work predating the 1906 publication of his first anthology New Poems, Ady attacked the constant turn toward an idealized national past for guidance in the present age. In 1905, the first issue of the progressive periodical Figyelő published Ady’s essay under the title Sírás és panaszkodás (Crying and complaining), which later became known as the opening part of the longer essay “Egy ismeretlen Korvin-kódex margójára” (To the margins of an unknown Corvin codex).¹² It was a reaction to a proposal by an elementary school teacher to commemorate the Árpád-millennium published earlier in a paper in the southern city of Szeged.¹³ According to Anonymus’s thirteenth-century Gesta Hungarorum, the first parliamentary session of the Hungarian tribe leaders took place in the southeastern village of Pusztaszer in 897, and the schoolteacher’s proposal suggested organizing festivities to commemorate the first Hungarian


¹² The reference to the Corvin codex is connected to the visit of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II in the Habsburg Empire. In Budapest he was warmly received, students gave him a sword as a present (to encourage him in his battle against the Russian) and he returned books from the famous library of the Renaissance king Matthias Corvin, who was his predecessor, Suleiman the Magnificent took with him to Istanbul when he occupied Hungary in the sixteenth century.

ruler in this settlement in 1907. Ady crafted a savage onslaught on the proposal and what he believed lay behind it. “Are you going against Europe, again, you horse-riding Hungarians?” he asked. “You laugh at Time, why would it be otherwise than it was after Svatopluk: you will forge ahead in the holy heart of Asia.” Throughout the article, he used the plural “we” and “you” in order to distinguish between two parties: those who “took seriously the date of 1896” versus those who also “then felt, it was 896.” In other words, Ady distinguished between conservatives and progressives using their longing for the past in Asia or their impulse to look toward the future, away from the east, to characterize each group.

More importantly for the focus of this dissertation, Ady’s article did not stop at criticizing the Hungarian eastern-ness, but went on to describe the impact of Jewish contributions in Hungary as its path to western modernity. In addition to the symbolism of the geographical concepts of east and west, he used the names of different places including the small Hungarian village of Pusztaszer next to Rome, Vienna, and Babylon. In identifying Jewry with western-type modernism and as substantially different than what Christian Hungarians aspired to, Ady’s arguments did not differ much from the rationale Széchenyi had used to oppose Jewish emancipation in the early 1840s. Nonetheless, unlike the conservative politician, Ady viewed

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14 As mentioned earlier, the author of the chronicle, the unknown notary of King Béla II is known as Anonymus or Anonimusz according to the Hungarian orthography. His unknown name serves as his name.

15 The original Hungarian text: “Tehát újból Európa ellen mentek, lovas magyarok? Az Időre röhögtök, miért legyen másként, mint Svatopluk után: szent Ázsia nevében törtetni fogtok előre.” Available from http://mek.oszk.hu/00500/00583/html/ady55.htm; Internet; accessed January 10, 2013. Svatopluk was the name of the Slav ruler who controlled the northern part of the Carpathian Basin at the time of the Hungarian Conquest.

16 Mary Gluck’s article discusses the modernism that Ady represented, however, she focuses on his poetry more. His first collection of poems was published in 1906 and became an immediate sensation. The Christian Hungarian gentry Ady identified his own modern Hungarian-ness as a sort of eastern primitivism.

17 See Chapter two.
“Jewish modernity” as a positive effect on the “ferry-country” that ‘keeps moving between east and west:’

Fight your angry love battle with Aaron’s nervous people: we put our trust into this killer embrace, the Semitic yeast, the Jewish assistance. Now, it is over and our trust is also gone: Pusztaszer, you are strong, you are stronger than Jerusalem, you are stronger than Babylon, you are stronger than Rome, you are stronger than Paris. Be vain, you will be even stronger than Vienna.\(^\text{18}\)

However the distinction between Hungarian and Jewish, parochial, conservative and Asian, on the one hand and modern, western, and progressive, on the other, does not overwrite the pejorative description of “Aaron’s nervous people.” Nonetheless, Ady made a point of refusing the conservative attitude to the past as a viable roadmap for the county’s future. In a couple of years, Ady’s claims with the program for progressive intellectuals, who contributed to a new periodical, the \textit{Nyugat} (west).

Founded in 1908, \textit{West} remained a progressive voice of Hungarian literature until 1941. The title expressed Hungarian Liberal intellectuals’ attraction to the west, which they interpreted as modern, progressive, and intellectually invigorating.\(^\text{19}\) Its founders and first editors were Jewish; nonetheless, Jewish themes are almost completely missing from the work. Culturally, they self-identified through the new literary voice which — along with Christian authors — they introduced on the pages of this new periodical. Through their translations and literary reviews, they also opened a window onto an international intellectual scene. They followed Petőfi’s

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example in “The Poets of the Nineteenth Century” by taking an active role in Hungarian public discussions, acting as involved citizens and public intellectuals. The same Conservative press that engaged with self-Orientalism and contributed to the Széchenyi-cult connected the editors’ Jewish origins with their Liberal politics, and, “inspired by” Széchenyi’s interpretation of the Berzsenyi-parable of the “inner worms,” named the members of the West “parasites.”

Such finger pointing was not considered outrageous in contemporary Budapest. The “likewise” Jewish Adolf Ágai, who was the chief editor of the aforementioned satirical paper Tom Thumb, shared a coffee house table with the contributors of his paper as well as those who contributed to West. They named their table group Kagál: the Hebrew term (kahal) for audience or congregation with Russian accent. They were embracing the label used by the head of the Antisemitic Party Győző Istóczy to describe the “Jewish international conspiracy.” Jacob Katz underscored that early nineteenth-century Hungarian Liberalism’s openness can be gauged by the Jewish contribution to modern Hungarian culture, art, and sciences. In contrast, as Mary Gluck pointed out, at the end of the century, Ágai and other Jewish literati were conscious of and feared that despite their insistence on acting as Hungarian intellectuals, in the eyes of both Jewish authors and their antisemitic critics they embodied an “invisible Jewish Budapest.”

In Gluck’s view, the phenomenon exemplified the “Liberal ideology of Jewish emancipation,” that contrasts the parallel process of Jewish assimilation in Germany, which David Sorkin argued was due to Germany’s failure to completely integrate Jewish intellectuals into German culture, ultimately

20 See footnote 59.

producing a German Jewish subculture. *West* demonstrates that, unlike in Germany, no “visible” Hungarian Jewish subculture emerged as a result of the assimilation process.²²

The Liberal Jewish literati’s effort to demonstrate that despite their attraction to western cultural patterns they considered themselves heirs of the Hungarian literary tradition, is especially apparent in the *West’s* introductory editorial “People of the East,” which critically analyzed the symbolical language of self-Orientalism. The first editor of the *West*, who used the pen name Ignotus, opened with a description of the Budapest guest performance of a Finnish theatre troupe.²³ He compared the performance to Vörösmarty’s “bad French dramas,” which resembled, “a faded cup of tea, prepared in the West.” Ignotus’s parallel between the play that the Finnish group performed and less successful Hungarian theater pieces sent a message about the irrational public antagonism toward the Hungarian affinity for the Finno-Ugric linguistic family.

No matter what support the Ural-Altai relationship bears, our bacon-filled world is related to that smelling of fish only according to the paper-form. Our Austrian present that germinated from our Ugric-ness is a cultural sphere of a completely different nature than this Lapp-Samoyedic one, which became Scandinavian.²⁴

Ignotus’s linguistic mastery compressed the cultural biases of turn-of-the-century Budapest into the new journal’s manifesto, with which he set a new direction of development for the People of the East. He urged them to reconsider the significance of the eastern character in consideration of the role Hungarians played in the world. He declared that the People of the East were to walk,

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²² Ibid., 4. The last chapter discusses this topic in further detail.


²⁴ The original Hungarian text: “Az ural-altaji rokonság legyen bár még oly megtámogatott: a mi szalonnás világunk csak papiroson rokon azzal a halzsírszágúval. Viszont a mi ugorból sarjad osztrák maiágunk más természetű kultúrvilág, mint ez a skandinávvá fejlett lapp-samojéd.”
like the Sun, from the east toward the west and accept one thing that the west has to offer: tolerance. The conquest of the homeland once constituted an obligation, but by the twentieth century it had become an obligation to be conquerors of knowledge and beauty always and everywhere. Ignatius’s parallels between past and future and east and west are similar to those drawn by Széchenyi over six decades earlier.

West’s editors and contributors sought to address self-Orientalism and Széchenyi’s legacy, however, they failed. The publication of the Conservative literary periodical, Napkelet (East) in 1923 illustrates both West’s impact on Hungarian literary circles and that it failed to appeal to Conservative readers. The publication of East also marked the consolidation of General Miklós Horthy’s conservative regime that gained power following the years of confusion after World War I, the democratic revolution led by Count Mihály Károlyi, and the communist revolution led by Béla Kun. This chapter closes with the discussion of one of the West’s associates, the novelist and playwright Dezső Szomory, whose 1926 Horeb Tanár Úr (Mr. Professor Horeb) in many respects corresponds with Ady’s view on the Jewish intellectuals’ role in the modernization of Hungary’s scholarly and artistic life. As was discussed in the Introduction, Szomory, who was himself Jewish, used Goldziher’s and Vambery’s persona to shape his two protagonists: two Jewish orientalists who chose different paths of integration into Hungarian academic life and society. One chose to comply with the nationalism rampant among the political and intellectual elite, the other viewed the Oriental field as a common enterprise of the international scholarly community. Szomory’s book describes the Jewish Hungarian

25 As Vambery died in 1913, and Stein became a British citizen in 1904, spending most of his time in India and on his expeditions, Goldziher was the only one among the three who witnessed these years. He left his positions at the University and the Academy shortly before his death, in 1919, driven out in reaction to the growing antisemitism within academic circles.
intellectuals’ experience of marginality in modern Hungary, while, an allusion to Stein’s figure is absent from the book. In contrast to *Mr. Professor Horeb*, this chapter demonstrates that Stein’s absence from the Hungarian academic circles did not mean that he was disconnected from them. Because of his central role in the development of modern Oriental scholarship, like the two elder scholars, his career further accentuates the correlation between Orientalism, self-orientalism, and Jewish integration in Hungary.

**Vambery’s Reversal of Self-Orientalism: Origins and Universal Values in Oriental Scholarship 1895-1905**

*The Emergence and Growth of Hungariandom*

In his 1893 address to the Academy “A magyar nemzet keletkezése” (The Emergence of the Hungarian Nation), Vambery shared his latest findings with his fellow academics for the first time after the first storms of the Ugric-Turkish war settled down. Building on his earlier claims about the mixing of different Turkish and Ugric tribes that resulted in the emergence of Hungarians, he emphasized the difference between the evolution and origins of a people in general. The allegory of many small streams unifying into a wide, strongly flowing river elucidated his argument. Likewise, many independent ethnic elements united to create one people. The ethnologist’s attention, Vambery argued, was drawn to the different stages of the making of a people instead of searching for the many springs from which it originated.\(^{26}\) He strongly opposed not only the popular belief in noble Hungarian Asian origins, but also the *Stammbaum* theory’s message of pure origins. Although it was considered antiquated, the *Stammbaum* theory still influenced comparative linguists’ vision of how different, though

\(^{26}\) Vambery, “A magyar nemzet keletkezése” (The Emergence of the Hungarian Nation) *Akadémiai Értesítő* (Academic Newsletter) 5 (1894): 323.
related, languages developed from one ancient source. For modern readers the river allegory, which depicted the multiple sources of languages or linguistic communities forming a nation, is familiar from Martin Bernal’s *Black Athena*. Vambery’s message was similar and equally aimed at shaking up the academic and general public opinion at the time. Vambery pointed out the positive side of academic debate since “black ink and not red blood was spilled over the discussion of this scientific question.” In his book in the following year, he replaced the river allegory with the comparison to a stone that rolls along a mountain streamlet; by the time it reaches the valley, many other geological elements are attached to it. He stressed that nations emerged similarly: over time, various different elements became attached to a homogeneous core and added too that “mixed races were both physically and mentally superior to pure races.” He went to further extremes, arguing for the positive legacy of eastern multiculturalism while using the language of self-Orientalism during the Millennial Festivities, which to other scholars allowed the opportunity to emphasize the living legacy of the ethnically pure forefathers.

*The Emergence and Growth of Hungariandom* was constructed on three interconnecting arguments. Firstly, although nationhood as a concept had existed since human communities formed around a common language, shared customs, and genealogical connections, it only

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27 Not only did Schleicher revise his own construction, but two of his students also developed their own theories. In his 1870 dissertation, Schmidt discussed his wave theory which aimed at bridging what he saw as a gap in his teacher’s theory, namely the geographical distance and the mixing between neighbor languages. He was interested in explaining how the communication between languages had formed and thus how they impacted each other’s development. Hugo Schuchardt was the father of the so-called arch theory in which he emphasized that the Roman languages he studied were never unified tongues; they were connected horizontally and thus could not be placed on the different branches of a genealogical tree. András Róna-Tas, *A nyelvrokonság* (The linguistic affinity (Budapest: Gondolat, 1978). Benes asserts that from the late 1870s the Leipzig neogrammarian movement redirected the research agenda of comparative linguistics. See: Benes, 235.


29 Vambery, “A magyar nemzet keletkezése” (The Emergence of the Hungarian Nation): 323.

30 Ibid., 382.
became a political principle in the eighteenth century. In his view, modern nations were “political concepts” and denoted “imagined communities.” The correspondence with Benedict Anderson’s word choice and the resemblance to the arguments of twentieth-century modernist or constructivist theoreticians of nations and nationalism should not be surprising. This phrasing indicates that he was very interested in conducting a dialogue with other contemporary thinkers. Whereas the Millennium Festivities inspired many intellectuals to discuss the history, art, literature, etc. of the thousand-year old state, Vambery’s study pioneered a critical approach to the formation of the modern nation. Marczali’s A nemzetiség történetbölcséleti szempontból, (Nationality from the Historiographical Point of View), published in 1905, demonstrates Vambery’s impact on the Hungarian discourse on nationhood and its historical development. Intellectuals recognized that such theoretical questions had practical relevance to turn-of-the-century Hungary. The sociologist Oszkár Jászi’s writings are the best-known illustrations of this turn-of-the-century realization that the ethnic question would become the most crucial problem for both Hungary and the Monarchy. It is probably not a coincidence that Jászi was Rusztem Vambery’s friend and a regular visitor at the Vambery home.

Vambery’s second argument emphasized that there was no such thing as an ethnically pure nation. He wrote, “We consider the contemporary Hungarian people a mixed people. This

31 Ibid., 348.
33 Henrik Marczali, A nemzetiség történetbölcséleti szempontból (Nationality from the Historiographical Point of View) (Budapest: Franklin, 1905). The book was the transcription of Marczali’s lectures at the Popular University. The rise of the debate on the definition of race is closely connected.
34 Whereas his The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy is quoted the most, his studies from the early 1900s illustrate the growing fear and interest with which intellectuals turned to this topic.
verdict must sound harsh to those who, wronged by our chroniclers’ glossy colored pictures, wish to see a homogeneous people in the founders of our homeland.”\textsuperscript{35} This assertion contradicted modern thinking; many people considered “unclear genetic background shameful,” as he pointed out.\textsuperscript{36} He underlined that the notion of ethnic purity was a fiction, since due to the mixing of many groups, including Jews, by the twelfth century the so-called “ancient type” of Hungarians did not exist anymore. He wrote, “It has nothing to do with either the ink used to commemorate some families’ genealogy, or the blood that runs in their epigones’ veins.”\textsuperscript{37} To emphasize the scope of his book, namely the reconstruction of the Hungarian nation’s evolution, he stressed that “Only science and unbiased scientific inquiry can put an end to the peoples’ childish and ridiculous vanity.”\textsuperscript{38}

In his third argument, Vambery emphasized how the Asian cultural legacy defined the Hungarian nation’s capacity to form a country and maintain its unique cultural, social, and political outlook. In making this argument he did not merely repeat his earlier claim, but also referred to his earlier works on Central Asia, which described the culture of the steppe dwellers, including their Islamic religious customs. He emphasized that only connoisseurs of Asia could comprehend the Asian spirit of the Hungarians, which, nonetheless, was not influenced by the “current spiritual decline of Asia. … The Asian element in the Hungarian [people] has nothing to do with current Asia, humiliated by despots and impoverished by religious fanaticism.” He identified the Hungarians’ Asian legacy in seven primary characteristics: seriousness, cleverness,
sense of elegance, aristocratic pride, love of freedom, patriotism, and national pride. He believed these were all salient and everlasting characteristics of the Hungarian nation which catered to the traditional nationalist characterology.\textsuperscript{39}

In this work, Vambery also expanded the chronological breadth of his research, producing a historical overview from the age of migrations until his own time. In doing so, he overtly communicated his actual political views. In connection to the migrations and the Conquest, he further developed his earlier idea, arguing that the Ugric-Turkish elements arrived in Pannonia before Árpád and his tribesmen reached the Carpathian Basin. Árpád’s Hungarians were purely Turkish, and they successfully expanded their control to include the local population through their cultural openness and capacity to assimilate the different ethnic groups—especially since they were ethnically related to some of them. Because of his close familiarity with the history of the Turkoman warriors, Vambery could refute chroniclers who had described Árpád’s army as a great crowd.\textsuperscript{\textcircled{v}} Instead, he insisted that they were a small group of fighters, whose bravery should be judged by the fact that they were outnumbered by their enemies. In Vambery’s eyes, this bravery demonstrated a “national charm” and a “geostrategic interest.” Hence, he reasoned similarly to the Liberals that, “the Hungarian hegemony in Eastern Europe was indispensable.” Whereas he disapproved of forced Hungarianization and, in contrast to Kállay emphasized the heterogeneous character of the nation, Vambery firmly believed that the country’s unity was the key to the area’s development.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 381-383.
\textsuperscript{40} Vambery, \textit{Emergence}, 391. The fear that the nationalities would dismantle not only the dual Monarchy but also the Hungarian Kingdom was of great intellectual interest in the study of nationhood. Jászi argued that because the nationalities were not given enough cultural rights, their quest to self-determination inevitably led to their political demands for statehood, which World War I finally delivered.
Reactions to *The Emergence and Growth of Hungariandom*

Like the reactions to his 1882 work, in 1895, most reviews were positive, praising Vambery’s style, pointing out the topic’s popularity, and discussing the arguments in favor of Turkish origins. All of this demonstrated that as in 1882, the critics (with the exception of Marczali), failed to register the study’s political message and thus disregarded one of the strongest claims Vambery presented, namely the stress on the multiculturalism of the conquerors. In 1895, Vambery further emphasized the continuous evolution and transformation of the nation. Even less enthusiastic reviews, such as the lay *Budapest Hírlap*, (Budapest News), which expressed skepticism about the objective truth in Vambery’s arguments, still acknowledged the popular interest in the study. “Regardless,” the newspaper stressed, “the fires that burned in the hearts of the scholar and the patriot were akin” – they both wished to look into the distant past and learn about the cradle of the nation.\(^{41}\) For the reviewer, the patriotic tone of Vambery’s work seemed to compensate for its scholarly shortcomings.

Since Hunfalvy and Budenz died in 1890 and 1891, respectively, Munkácsi was quite isolated in his criticism of the Turkish theory. In two articles in *Ethnographia*, of which he was editor, he attacked Vambery’s book, claiming that it lacked any scientific virtue and that it made incorrect claims about national origins, which comparative linguistics had refuted long ago.\(^{42}\) Munkácsi argued that Vambery’s book was indeed harmful, because it offered the public a very attractive story that had nothing to do with the scholarly search for the truth. While Munkácsi had no doubt that public opinion was firm, he expected the scholarly community to act


differently. He also blamed Marczali’s 1883 favorable review of Vambery’s book for contributing “to opinions that favor biases and vanity in the national public consciousness and hinders the acknowledgement and acceptance of the scholarly results of a scholarship of national interest that fulfills its job with diligence.”

Munkácsi quoted the newspaper A Hét, (The Week), which referred to Marczali as an advocate of the theory of Turkish origins, a theory which was close to “the public’s heart.”

Munkácsi also cited *Magyar Szalon* (Hungarian Salon) and *Erdélyi Muzeum* (Transylvanian Museum) to support his accusations of Marczali’s as misusing his scholarly responsibility by spreading false and popular claims about national origins.

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44 Munkácsi, Ibid., 91.

45 In the 1895 May-June issue of *Ethnographia*, Lehel Hunföldi published a very long article titled “Ethnológiánk áprilisi hajtásai” (The April sprouts of our ethnology) that included a “prosaic poem in five parts, Vámbériász.” The name of the author is a penname that alludes to the conquerors. It would translate to English as Lehel (of) Hunland. Lehel was one of the leaders of the Hungarian warriors who, after the Conquest, attacked and plundered German and Italian cities until the tenth century. The last name indicates the Hun-genealogy, and the title of the poem rhymes with the name of the author of the seventeenth-century epic poem *Szígeti veszedelem*, Miklós Zrínyi. The Baroque epic poem commemorates the author’s great grandfather’s battle against the Ottoman forces. Hunföldi’s reference to *Zrínyiász* (another reference to Zrínyi’s poem) mocks Vambery’s work on several levels. On the one hand, it intended to demonstrate that Vambery’s work was not motivated by scholarly goals, and similarly to Zrínyi, who introduced Greek and Roman gods and mythological figures into the events of the sixteenth-century war, Vambery also “invented” details to support his arguments. More importantly, the article demonstrated that Vambery plagiarized. According to the author, Vambery transplanted the work of two scholars, László Réthy and Géza Nagy, who from 1888 advocated the Hun-Avar-Hungarian continuity and the Hungarians’ capacity to assimilate other ethnic groups. Hunföldi quoted Réthy’s letters addressed to Vambery complaining that Vambery failed to reference his work. Similarly to its form, the language of the critique was very sarcastic and condemnatory, and therefore, several scholars condemned the article. For example, the reviewer of *Erdélyi Múzeum* (Transylvanian Museum) pointed out that such tone did not fit academics, and considering Vambery’s merits, he did not deserve to be treated like this. In addition, the reviewer pointed out that the sarcasm was unnecessary, since the Finno-Ugric theory of origins was the official “dogma,” hence it did not need such vehement defense. See, *Erdélyi Múzeum* (Transylvanian Museum), December 7, 1895, 409. On September 7, 1895, in a private letter, count Géza Kuún wrote to Goldziher that he also thought, and therefore one can presume that Goldziher did as well, that the tone of the article was outside the acceptable realm. HAS, Oriental Collection, Goldziher correspondence, box no. 23. An interesting addition to the history of “Vámbériász” is that a few years later, in 1898, the famous novelist Kálmán Mikszáth started publishing his satirical new novel *Új* (New) *Zrínyiász* in the *Országos Hírlap* (Country News). In the novel, Zrínyi, the elder, with several of his associates appeared in late-nineteenth century Hungary. By recounting their rather absurd adventures, Mikszáth held up a mirror to contemporary Hungary, its obsession with national history and nationalism.
Vambery’s posthumously published book *At the Cradle of Hungariandom: The Beginnings and Development of the Hungarian-Turkish Relationship* indicates that in 1895, he felt that his message did not fully reach the public. In this study he renounced self-Orientalism and “dared” to argue that the Hungarian chronicles and legends about Árpád and the conquerors were solely myths. He subjected the names of legendary Hungarian leaders to etymological examination in order to demonstrate they had meaning in Turkish. Thus he underscored the conqueror Hungarians’ Turkish origins, but, more importantly, demonstrated that these were not names but ranks or professions, despite the fact that over three decades earlier, in 1882, Szinnyei had refuted this argument. At the beginning of the twentieth century, this etymological investigation of the Turkish names of the Hungarian conquerors supported Vambery’s emphasis on the importance of the process of nation formation over national origins when studying Hungarian prehistory. In so arguing, he further distanced himself from both linguists and ethnologists studying national origins.

What is even more interesting is the way in which two years prior to the publication of *At the Cradle of Hungariandom*, the Jewish periodical *Equality* forecasted the reception of this book. In 1912, *Equality* reported that Vambery’s book would surely be misinterpreted. The newspaper based this assessment on reactions to a published interview with Vambery that previewed his work. As it was discussed earlier, the Jewish newspaper often consulted Vambery on various issues, such as the Khazars, Jewish life in Asia, and the Zionist movement (1906). However, in 1912 when discussing this future book, the paper also described the attacks on

46 In the early 1880s, Vambery often gave interviews to *Equality*. He confirmed that believers of Judaism were among the Kabars who joined the conqueror Hungarian tribal alliance, and therefore the Jews in Hungary who were their descendants were not Semites. Vambery also emphasized that the conqueror Hungarians were not of one ethnic origin. At the beginning of the century, Vambery pointed out that he did not embrace the Zionists’ goals, since he believed in the viability of the territorial solution.
Vambery’s Jewish origins. *Equality* stressed that Vambery was attacked as a Jew, because he dared to claim that the name Árpád was in fact a general term for a public office or a military rank. *Equality*’s journalist pointed out that Marczali made a similar argument, and was attacked for being Jewish rather than for these arguments. Similarly, the non-Jewish Gyula Sebestyén, a student of Hungarian legends, was not attacked for making the same claim. The journalist wrote, “The newest rule is that the Hungarian mythology is the obligatory belief for the Jew. It may well be that also after the Hungarians gave up the claims that Árpád actually existed, Jews would still be expected to honor him as their leader.”

The author’s observations record the dominance of the Conservative turn in Hungarian public opinion over Hungarian heritage. By the eve of the First World War, the debate on origins became increasingly infused with antisemitism. In this political atmosphere, Vambery’s Jewish origins became an avenue of attack against his scholarly work, as it was the case with Hunfalvy’s and Budenz’s German origins in connection to the Finno-Ugric theory in the late 1879s and early 1880s. However, while the Finno-Ugorists negated self-Orientalism, Vambery’s work aimed at reversing the logic of the self-orientalist debate in a similar way, just as Ignotus hoped to give a new content to the maxim “People of the East” in the first issue of the periodical *West*.

**My Struggles: the 1905 Autobiography**

Vambery’s *Küzdelmeim* is an important text for the student of Vambery’s life not only because he summarized his vitae and scholarly and political work in one volume but also because unlike the political conformism of his Hungarian scholarship, his autobiography revealed his vulnerabilities and sensitivities as a Jewish intellectual and European orientalist. In

47. “Glosszák a hétről” (Glosses of the week), *Egyenlőség* Sept 10, 1912, 8.
the latter part of the book, Vambery shared the conclusions he drew from his experiences. He divided his claims into the three categories: “religion,” “society,” and “nation.” constructing an interesting triangle of correlations between the east-west dichotomy, his European identity, and his Jewish experience. He noted the similarities of the Jewish experience in the east and west and maintained that men, regardless of their origins, were the same all over the world. His arguments were made in a very personal voice; indeed, each argument was based on his personal impressions as a young tutor, travelling scholar, the Lion of the Season in London, guest of several royalties, like the Queen of England, Napoleon III, Sultan Abdul Hamid, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, or Hungarian patriot.

Vambery’s description of his Central Asian travels summarized his mixed impressions of Central Asian and Turkish societies, which he knew before the Great Game reached its peak. He constantly compared his Asian encounters with European customs and mores. The world of the Central Asian steppe came off as the more humane society; nonetheless, in Vambery’s world Great Britain’s mobile and fair society represented the ideal polity. In examining both, he repeatedly evaluated the role of religion, from the point of view of a “follower of Voltaire and David Strauss.” He believed the only justification for maintaining religious institutions was that they could be effective tools of government. He viewed religion as a negative social force, a source of social intolerance, boorish introversion, and falsity. Yet, in his eyes it did not play a crucial role in either social progress or decline: “Our civic progress made us great not through Christianity but despite it.” Learning and enlightened research made Europe triumphant. Similarly, he believed that Asia did not deteriorate to its current state because of Islam but due to
its despots’ politics. He was astounded to learn of the Persians’ indifference toward and ignorance regarding anything European and of the Ottoman Sultans’ antagonism to parliamentary systems, which to Vambery represented the peak of human progress.

In addition, he emphasized the logical and sound formation of Islam as a religion only to take account of the negative aspects of the Asian nomads’ religiosity. He repeatedly pointed out that the Central Asian steppe was a hotbed of fanaticism and cruelty. The religiosity of the masses was a profitable industry for those who traded in religious artifacts. To Vambery, this phenomenon was familiar from Europe. He also observed that in Persia, women were more prone to bigotry than men. Having spent many evenings amongst Muslim men, he concluded that in a society where the sexes were strictly separated socially, men were especially obscene and discussed topics that a European could not stand without blushing.

Vambery’s Jewish background was central to his final account, which condemned European and Asian religiosity equally. He pointed out that in the Islamic society, origins were irrelevant, while conversion to Islam—or, in his case, the appearance of it—was necessary for successful integration into society. Vambery described the good will of the Persian officer who, in retrospect, seemed to be completely aware of his false dervish disguise (he was travelling as Rashid effendi, dervish from Istanbul), but still supplied Vambery with travelling papers. Vambery maintained that no European civil servant would demonstrate such tolerance to any non-Christian. Indeed, his aforementioned letters to his friend the pastor Áron Szilády in the mid-1860s revealed his frustration with both his Jewish origins and his chosen Protestantism.

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50 See Chapter Three, fn. 88.
Vambery’s autobiography reveals a much more complicated attitude toward European scholarship, Muslims, and religious difference than the literature about the European Jewish interest in the modern study of Islam suggests. The most influential biographers Alder and Dalby, emphasize Vambery’s attraction to his dervish incognito, which they believe became almost second nature to him. However, they do not argue for a connection between his Jewish experience and positive attitude toward the Islamic societies that he visited. Following Bernard Lewis’s pioneering essay on “pro-Islamic” Jewish scholars, Jacob Landau and David Mandel present Vambery as an example of the Jewish scholar and a participant in the European study of Asia and Islam with a benevolent attitude toward Islam.\(^{51}\) While such argumentation emphasizes the role of the scholars’ religious identification as Jews and the theological roots of the attraction toward the study of Islam, Vambery was an atheist and academic traveler. Vambery’s own Jewish background and experience in Europe had little to do with theological questions. His career does not illustrate any Jewish Orthodox recognition of kindred-ness in Islamic religious study, as Lewis suggested. When his Persian hosts mocked Vambery (disguised as a Sunni dervish) for failing to correctly answer theological questions, they shouted “Segi Sunni,” in the same tone, Vambery noted, as the antisemitic jeers of “Hep! Hep!” back in his hometown.\(^{52}\) Even if the religious disputation in the medrese reminded him of the heder of his childhood, the parallel of religious hatred left an even deeper impression on Vambery. Nor does he exhibit any special sympathy for the peoples of the Asian steppe and the Ottoman Empire due to his own Jewish experience of discrimination and isolation from Christians in Europe.

\(^{51}\) As it was indicated before, the students of Goldziher’s work are of the opposite opinion. See, Introduction.

\(^{52}\) Vambery, Struggles, 168., Küzdelmeim, 178.
More importantly, however, he extended the parallel between the practical teachings of his poor Jewish childhood and the challenges of the dervish journey. As previously mentioned, Vambery interpreted his Jewishness as indivisible from economic issues and thus a hindrance to social ascent in Hungary. Although he admitted he was not the only European orientalist who travelled extensively, Burckhard, Burton, Snouck-Hurgronje, and other scholars, were not prepared to suffer the deprivation, hunger, and filth that he experienced as a false dervish in Asia, because they had not experience destitution when they were children. Just as Vambery had underlined the power of poverty as opposed to Jewish religious institutions in shaping his life as a teen, as a scholar he emphasized the economic situation over religiosity as fundamental to the Central Asian Muslims’ character. He declared that poverty was in fact the worst enemy of these people, writing, “From these peoples, all the types of overwhelming great poverty and misery killed off all the sentiments of humanity and religion.” As with his own Jewishness, he looked past the religious divide and focused on the impact of economic factors in forming the social practices of Central Asian peoples. He viewed them as poor, isolated nomads who should be led to modernity by England and not Russia.

Vambery’s Jewish origins and travels made him perceptive enough to argue that “according to my experience, whether a man wears Asian frieze clothing or is dressed in fine western clothes, he remains the same, though I could expect more sympathy from the former.” However, he was disappointed to realize that in Hungary, which he considered the border between western and the eastern worlds, he could not be the person he chose to be (instead he remained always the poor Jew he was born as).

Jewish origins were more important to others than his work as a scholar and patriot. (Though, he allowed that the lack of interest in his Turkological work was also due to the nature of Oriental scholarship in Germany and Hungary. England and Russia were eager for his works solely because of their political involvement in the region.) More than the content of his research, his conversion to Protestantism played a bigger role in his career, particularly in becoming an applicant for the position of Turkish lecturer, which had been vacant for over ten years. In his view, because it defined the Jews as the Other, antisemitism contradicted modernity, which he defined as the era of progress based on economic competition and social equality. Jews in Hungary and elsewhere in Europe shared the rest of the populations’ customs, culture, language, and politics. However, Vambery felt that in Hungary, unlike in England, Jews were denied the feeling of patriotism. From the point of view of Jewish equality, Hungary was the eastern and England the western extreme. As in Széchenyi’s writings, Vambery juxtaposed Hungary with England as two opposites: Hungary represented underdevelopment while England stood for advance. Instead of economic progress, however, Vambery referred to his Jewish experience as one indicator of Hungary’s path toward modernity. He felt that in semi-feudal Hungary, where his Hungarian patriotism was regarded with skepticism, he was destined to remain an intellectual outsider. He was pushed to become a cosmopolitan precisely because his patriotism at home was viewed as inauthentic.\textsuperscript{55}

\textbf{Goldziher and Orientalism in Turn-of-the-Century Hungary: Western Scholarship on the East, Western Colonial Presence in the East, and the East’s Influence on the West}

As discussed earlier, Goldziher’s views of religion in general, and Judaism’s role in shaping Jewish identity specifically, completely opposed Vambery’s. However, their

\textsuperscript{55} Vambery, \textit{Küzdelmeim}, 507.
understanding of Orientalism’s political role and its capacity to contribute to the whole of humanity (though not necessarily to the domination of west over the east as Said suggested) coincided. Goldziher’s commemorative address “Renan mint orientalista” (Renan as Orientalist) from 1893, the report of the 1897 Orientalist Congress, and his diary illustrate his views.

Goldziher read his paper “Renan as Orientalist” to the general assembly of the Academy on November 27, 1893. Renan was an external member of the Academy, and Goldziher was asked to give the address. It is hard to assess how the audience received the address, which when published in print, was 136 pages long. In his diary, Goldziher noted that the newspapers reported on his talk and wrote that it was a “storming success.” He considered it the “best of his studies discussing general topics.” Indeed, this study, like several of Goldziher other writings, works on several level. While it focuses on Renan’s schools and development as a Semitic philologist, it also outlines the evolution of the Oriental field in the past century, its goals and the questions it addressed, while at the same time, summarizing Renan’s work in a critical and occasionally polemical manner. Goldziher allowed himself to rely on his own research and put it

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56 In addition, through his long and amicable relationship with Count Kuún, Goldziher became a sort-of-contributor to Kuún’s Arab philological work that produced his Keleti kútfők (Eastern sources) that the vice president of the Academy praised in 1893 and was finally published 1897. As it was mentioned before, through the study of mainly Arabic sources, Kuún researched the Hungarians’ preconquest history. Whereas he was also an advocate of the Hungarians’ Turkish origins, his philological work was generally respected. He consulted with Goldziher about the Arabic texts that he studied and their cooperation connected Semitic philology to the study of Hungarian origins in another way than the traditional theory of Hebrew-Hungarian affinity used to. In contrast to their correspondence, in his diary, Goldziher cynically recorded that despite their common interest and his academic credentials, Mrs. Kuún was condescending with him, the Jew. In 1905, Kuún died and Goldziher noted that he refused to give the commemorating address on behalf of the Academy because he did not want to make the impression that he wanted to socially advance. See, Napló, 269, 270, 286.

in conversation with Renan’s findings. After all, the general discussion of the scholarly field had a message itself: Goldziher paid his respects to the French scholar by lauding him as a great influence on the field. Accordingly, instead of examining all the parts of Goldziher’s commemorative paper, which deserves its own in-depth analysis for its insights into the history of the modern Oriental field, here the focus will be on Goldziher’s view of the role of contemporary Oriental scholarship within the humanities more broadly speaking.

Goldziher argued that the

highest aim of the orientalist’s scholarly work is based on philological study; they learn about the influence of the eastern spirit on humanity’s intellectual development and with the help of eastern sources they fill in the gaps in historical knowledge … refute biases using the rich material that eastern literature provides, and learn about the internal history of the cultural phenomena and movements that appeared among easterners and illuminate their impact on world history.58

Hence, in his view, Orientalism occupied a dominant seat among philological and historical studies: modern western scientific methods allowed the study of the east as an organic part of the western thinker’ world, not only because of the universal validity of the methods employed, but also because of the influence of the eastern thought on western culture. Through his work in the fields of Semitic philology including Hebrew studies, in other words the study of Hebrew as an auxiliary to biblical studies and criticism, eastern (Arabic) philosophy, and Semitic paleography, Renan promoted this aim, making him a leading authority of the field.59 In the course of the paper, Goldziher examined all the above listed elements that he considered part of Renan’s work in the Oriental field. In addition, he critically discussed Renan’s methodology and findings as well.

58 Goldziher, “Renan as orientalist,” 22.

59 Through the discussion of Renan’s work as relevant to the general scopes of Orientalism, Goldziher criticized Renan’s generalization about the Semitic monotheistic spirit, noted his debate with Jamal Ed-Din
Goldziher’s report on the 1897 Orientalist Congress argued similarly about the role of Orientalism on the erudition of humanity in contrast to the focus of the Sunday News’ report, which was quoted in the Introduction. Instead of emphasizing the Hungarian role on the western study of the east, Goldziher, while he could not resist offering a short historical review of the Oriental scholarship in Western Europe, stressed the number of easterners participating in the Congress. In his view, the Paris Congress differed from previous Orientalist congresses because of the high number of non-Europeans present. In his opinion, it was due to the fact that the Congress was organized in Paris and the power of the French colonial empire. In contrast to Hunfalvy, who in 1874 stressed the common interest and equality of the participants at the Congress regardless of where they came from—whether easterners or westerners—Goldziher noted that the “emissaries and the representatives of the eastern world” lent a “sort of colour locale to the discussions.”

In addition, Goldziher stressed that in contrast to the Chinese, Ottoman, Morocca, Algerian, Tunisian, and other Middle Eastern representatives, the Japanese delegation not only acquired the methodology of western scholarship, but also indicated with their members’ western dresses that they “gave up their eastern uniqueness.” They also spoke all the western universal languages.

Goldziher’s aim, however, was not to praise the Japanese for mimicking the west, but to demonstrate that the western scholarly methodology allowed the Japanese scholars to accentuate their national spiritual heritage. He stressed that even though among the easterners the Japanese made the greatest effort to introduce western social and cultural patterns, at the same time they advocated for the interests of their nation with equal diligence. In Goldziher’s view, western

60 Goldziher, “Report,” 10. For the discussion of Hunfalvy’s 1874 report, see Chapter 4, fn. 2.
Oriental scholarship made it possible for one of the Japanese representatives, the philosopher Tetsusire Inuye to argue that the origins of Japanese philosophy did not reach back to either China or India but was a product of the Japanese intellect and contributed to the further development of the national identity.\textsuperscript{61} Goldziher’s notes on the roles the eastern delegates played in the discussions and that the organizers of the Congress considered to be informative to the broader, non-expert audience of the program similarly served to support his advocacy for the universal values of Oriental scholarship and its educational role around the globe, among experts and non-experts alike.

Finally, his diary entries testify to a change in his opinion of the western presence and colonial desires in the east. In the 1870s, when he was first offered a job in the Hungarian Eastern Academy, he refused to accept. During his 1873-74 visit to the Middle East, he considered the French influence to be a negative one in Egypt. As a mature scholar, he believed that the colonial presence in Bosnia obliged the Hungarian government to take responsibility not only for the education of the colonized, but of the colonizer as well. On July 4, 1895, Goldziher noted in his diary that

\begin{quote}
  it has been my obsession for years that our University here should systematically offer lectures on ‘Muslim institutions’ if not for other reasons than because 506,000 Muslim subjects live in the Monarchy, and every learned subject of the Hungarian king should be familiar with the institutions and cultural history of this crowd.\textsuperscript{62}
\end{quote}

He was furious when the ministry of education refused his proposal to introduce Muslim legal studies to the university curriculum. Nine years later, in 1914, Goldziher did start teaching Islamic law at the Department of Law, but was ultimately to be equally disappointed: in the

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{61} He could have referenced the Japanese philosopher and nationalist Inoue Enryō (1858-1919).
\textsuperscript{62} Goldziher, \textit{Napló}, 236.
\end{quote}

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lecture hall of three hundred seats, only thirty students came to attend his course. At this time, however, he did not comment on the lack of interest as he had two decades earlier when he had to cancel his lecture about modern Jewish religious studies.\footnote{Ibid., 332.}

In connection to his scholarly work in the service of the Hungarian imperial program, his uncompromising attitude toward scholarship is even more apparent. In 1908, he was asked to compile an Arabic literary history for the Bosnian Muslim subjects of the Monarchy. In 1916, he agreed to join the Eastern Cultural Center where he delivered lectures as he had at the Eastern Economic Academy.\footnote{Ibid., 370.} Nonetheless, in his diary he complained that unlike in Germany, the Center’s work had not been prepared ahead of time and it was organized in an improvised and unprofessional manner. A year later, in 1917, he participated in the foundation of the Constantinople Hungarian Institute of Sciences. “It is all about the East here,” he noted in his diary.\footnote{Ibid., 346.} The eastern consciousness had indeed transformed since Hungary entered the war as Turkey’s ally, which is illustrated, among other things, by the foundation of the Turanian Society in the early 1910s.

Amidst the War and the further politicization of Hungarian eastern scholarship all that interested Goldziher was where his studies on Islamic topics would be published. In his diary, there is not one word about the political significance of his association with the institutions that carried and embodied the Hungarian imperial program before and during World War I. Similarly, two interviews that he gave at the beginning and the end of World War I reflect that in his eyes the impact of politics on Orientalism was limited to its capacity to hinder the

\footnote{Ibid., 332.} \footnote{Ibid., 370.} \footnote{Ibid., 346.}
international exchange of information. In 1914, in connection with the question about the “A háború és a tudósok szolidaritása” (The war and the solidarity between scholars), he reacted by stressing that the War “painfully” interrupted international cooperation between scholars and thus also the international effort towards the enrichment of encyclopedic study in every scholarly field. Whereas he stressed that politics should not interfere in the connections between scholars, Goldziher acknowledged that the present animosity between German and English academics did not comply with this “ideal.” He hoped that after the War, as in 1871 after the Prussian-French War, relations between scholars would eventually return to their previous, peaceful state. He emphasized that “scholarship should be considered a neutral field, the inviolability of which should be conserved for the time when the waves of animosity quiet down and the normal framework of international relations is reinstated.”

In 1918, in an interview to an American paper he expressed his disappointment that Turkey did not become a US mandate. He told the journalist that

According to the news I received from Germany, Oriental studies there have to come an end and the well-known Oriental Academy in Berlin is closed. But I sincerely believe this gap will be filled by American men of science who are aware of their responsibility to save the science of the Orient, if its nations are doomed to decay.

In Goldziher’s view, the “American intervention” could have ensured that Oriental studies could continue to prosper in Turkey in the future.

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66 Válasz “A háború és a tudósok szolidaritása” körkérdésre (Answer to the question “The war and the solidarity between scholars”), in A zsidóság (The essence…), 614. Originally published in Magyar Figyelő (1914): 250-254. At the same time, Goldziher refused to share his opinion about the Jewish question that Jászi’s newspaper, the progressive Huszadik Század opened to public dispute and over forty intellectuals commented.

67 “US Lost Chance in Constantinople, Says Orientalist. Acceptance of Mandate Would Have Resulted in Library Which Could Have Brought Out Literary Treasures” The article is among the Goldziher letters kept in the Oriental Collection of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The article was cut of the newspaper and there is no reference where or when exactly it was published.
In contrast to Goldziher, Vambery’s 1906 *A nyugat kultúrája keleten* (The west’s culture in the east), which was published in the same year in English as well, demonstrates that Vambery was ready and interested in openly discussing the responsibilities of the western colonial powers in the east, though in the context of the British-Russian competition in Central Asia. In so doing, he offered a criticism of the western civilizing mission in the east and argued that western knowledge about the Muslim east was the key to the successful colonization of Central Asia. Vambery also stressed that only a responsible colonial regime, which was well versed in the cultural, religious, and political traditions of a territory’s Muslim populations should be established in the east; otherwise, the west should refrain from intervening.

**Aurel Stein: Hungarian, Orientalist, and Colonial Officer**

According to his biographers, especially when compared with the two elder scholars’ circumstances, Mark Aurel Stein grew up in ideal conditions to become a leading intellectual in Hungary. His father and maternal uncle, the aforementioned Ignaz Hirschler, were veterans of 1848-49. They led well-established lives in the future capital, and were well connected to the intellectual and political elite. Stein was a late child: his brother and sister were nineteen and twenty one years his senior and, according to his biographers, instead of his parents, it was his brother and uncle who active raised him. Though the literature argues that he was baptized soon after his birth, no documentation of the baptism has been demonstrated, and the available

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68 Armin Vambery, *A nyugat kultúrája keleten* (The west’s culture in the east)

69 There are several biographies and other monographs about Stein. The best known English ones are Jeannette Mirsky, *Sir Aurel Stein, Archaeological Explorer* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); Susan Whitfield, *Aurel Stein on the Silk Road* (London: British Museum, 2004). They detail Stein’s expeditions and, while they offer a detailed discussion of Stein’s family background, they focus on his adult and professional life in India and England. In contrast to them, Peter Hopkirk’s *Foreign Devils on the Silk Road: the search for the lost cities and treasures of Chinese Central Asia* (London: J. Murray, 2006) describes Stein as contributor of the European colonial intrusion to Central Asia.
documents prove the opposite. Hirschler’s beliefs about proper Jewish conduct in Hungary and disapproval of conversion to Christianity for the sake of professional advancement also points to the conclusion that Stein grew up as a Jew in a secular environment. Regardless, his education matched his social position and after interrupting his elementary education in Dresden, he returned to Hungary, and finally graduated from the Protestant High School. Through Hirschler, he got acquainted with Vambery and Goldziher, however, with the help of state scholarships, he continued to his university studies abroad. In 1879, he enrolled in classes in Vienna, but after two semesters of Indology studies, he transferred to Leipzig to study Indian paleography with “the pope of Sanskrit studies” Georg Bühler. Since Bühler left for an expedition, after only one semester, Stein enrolled in Tübingen and finished his doctorate.

70 In the Protestant Archives in Hungary, no baptismal records for Aurel Stein were found. In his high school records he is registered Jewish by religion. I could not find his records at the Budapest Kálvin tér (square) Calvinist church either, where I found Vambery’s. Following the suggestion of the archivists at the Protestant Archive, I checked the birth registries at the Lutheran church at Deák tér with similar lack of success. On the other hand, Stein is registered in the Jewish congregation’s birth register. His German name, Aurel, (the register is in German) is under number 950 in the year of 1862, and he had two Hebrew names: Mordechai Eliezer (מרדכי אליעזר). His middle name Mark is not recorded in this registry. According to Ágnes Kelecsényi, the archivist who arranged the Stein collection at the Oriental Collection of the Academy, Stein was baptized after his birth and Christened as Márk Aurél. If this is what really happened, his Latin (M. A.) and Hebrew ('mem' ‘alef’) initials corresponded, which was customary among Jews at the time. Similarly, Goldziher received the Hebrew name Yitzhak and the Hungarian Ignaz. (See, Ágnes Kelecsényi, “A Stein-gyűjtemény” (The Stein Collection) in Örökségünk, élő múltunk. Gyűjtemények a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Könyvtárában (Our legacy, living past. Collections in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) ed. Mrs. Géza Fekete (Budapest, MTA, 2001), 290. I thank Katalin Fenyves that she contacted the Protestant Archive and asked about Stein’s baptismal documents.

71 In his autobiography, Hirschler argued that “Already in my early years I considered religious conversion as wasting oneself. Leaving the banner of one’s own party merely to share the advantages of the majority seems all wrong, malice, and cruelty.” The original: “Denn ich betrachtete schon in früher Jugend den Wechsel der Confession als ein Abfallen von sich selbst. Wer bloss um an den Emlumenten der majorität teilzunehmen, die Fahne seiner eigenen Partei verlässt, scheint alle Unbill, Bosheit und Grausamkeit.” Ignaz Hirschler, Autobiographisches Fragment (Budapest: ?, 1891), 21.

72 According to Kelecsényi, The twelve-year-old Stein did not like staying in the Kreuzschule and finally Hirschler gave in and let Stein return to Pest.

“Nominalflexion im Zend” under his advisor, the Veda expert Rudolf von Roth’s guidance in 1883.\textsuperscript{74} He was a year older than Goldziher when he became a doctor of philosophy. Stein continued with a postdoctoral scholarship in Oxford and before accepting an appointment in India, he returned to Hungary for his mandatory military service in 1886, which he spent at the Ludovica Academy that trained Hungarian officers for the common army of the Monarchy. With the help of the 1848 veteran and London exile Tivadar Duka, who was himself a retired colonial officer and whom Stein knew through Vambery, he acquired an appointment as principal of the Oriental College, Lahore and registrar of Punjab University in 1887.

Despite the good connections Stein inherited from his uncle, being trained as an army officer, which could have opened additional doors, and not least, that he had an excellent academic record, Stein did not find an appointment in Hungary. Nonetheless, throughout his life he remained in close contact with Hungarian scholars, and from the first interwar years, he supported the Academy materially as well. Kelecsényi stresses that Stein had always carried with himself Arany’s collected poems and read the Hungarian newspapers when he could. His attachment to Hungary and his desire to be recognized as a Hungarian scholar was reciprocated by the two elder scholars’ appreciation for his work. They not only acknowledged the international significance of his work but were his main supporters in his efforts to become a scholar in Hungary.

In the first decade and a half of his career Stein in India, he still sought to be recognized as a Hungarian scholar of Sanskrit philology. In November 1887, after arriving in the north Indian Lahore close to Kashmir, Stein was probably already planning his research for the

\textsuperscript{74} One of the best summaries of his career, which unlike most note the title of his dissertation as well as map how Stein’s interest in the Indian, Iranian, and Buddhist cultures manifested in his later research is available from http://www.irancaonline.org/articles/stein-marc-aurel; Internet; accessed April 18, 2014.
summer. Students of his work point out that in the late 1880s and early 1890s Stein was planning to continue in the footsteps of his professor Bühler, who in 1875 was in Kashmir searching for the original text of a Kashmiri royal chronicle *Rajatarangini*. Bühler knew that there was a copy, which he called “Codex Archetypus,” and which William Moorcroft had copied in 1820, though with several mistakes. While in India, Bühler was shown this manuscript in the house of Pandit Kesarvam, its owner.

Moorcroft’s name could have been familiar to Stein from another context. The Transylvanian traveler scholar Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (1784-1842), left Transylvania in the early 1820s for Central Asia to search for the origins of the Hungarians; he met Moorcroft who at the time was an employee of the East India Company travelling northward from India to the source of the Indus and further to today’s Afghanistan and Uzbekistan. Moorcroft suggested to Csoma that he should compile his Tibetan dictionary, which constituted a great step forward in the western study of Tibetology. Csoma was considered a national hero in Hungary even though, he never reached his original scholarly objective and, therefore, he did not contribute to the study of Hungarian origins. His scholarly achievements outside of Hungary nonetheless, supported his fame, and his “Hungarian scholarship” was celebrated based on his achievements outside of Hungary, in a field unrelated to Hungarian studies, and, therefore, solely based on the fact that he was a Transylvanian Hungarian scholar. As it will be discussed next, Csoma’s career became exemplary for Stein, as it served Vambery four decades earlier, when he stood in front of the Academy convincing them to support his travel to Central Asia.⁷⁵

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⁷⁵ For Vambery’s reference to Csoma and farewell speech to the Academy, see Chapter Three, 133, 139.
Inspired thus by his former professor and the fame of his fellow Hungarian traveler, Stein decided to acquire the original text, the work of a Kashmiri Brahman, Kalhana. It consisted of eight books and eight thousand lines and illuminated the history of Kashmir in the first millennia, until 1148 A.D. Experts emphasize that the value of the text was especially high since it provided a history of Kashmir in the European sense. Stein collected several manuscripts, compared the different scripts and versions of the text, including what Bühler named “Codex Archetypus” (a seventeenth-century copy of the text), catalogued them, and in 1892, published the Sanskrit edition, which both the local notables appreciated and the leading European Indologists praised. The English translation was published in 1900. In Territory of Desire: Representing the Valley of Kashmir, Ananya Jahanara Kabir argues that for Stein, the summers spent in Kashmir, away from Lahore, allowed to make the orientalist dream of collecting manuscripts to come true, but his work on the history of Kashmir and his parallel collecting of folk tales that were published as Hatim’s Tales and Songs in 1917, also impacted “nationalist perceptions of the Valley.”

The two elder scholars in Hungary viewed Stein’s work as the noblest and fullest form of Oriental research: through western philological methods, with outstanding diligence and insight, and through close cooperation with local intellectuals and authorities, Stein not only taught his readers about ancient Kashmiri history, but also helped the locals both to understand western scholarly methods and see their own heritage through western eyes. As Vambery presented his Turkological studies as auxiliary to the study of Hungarian origins, he did not have the same experience as Goldziher and Stein, whose fields of study had little connection to Hungarian

76 Wojtilla, Ibid.
77 Ananya Jahanara Kabir, Territory of Desire: Representing the Valley of Kashmir (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 83.
studies, and therefore felt the constant need to advocate for the importance of their research to the learning of the whole of humanity. Therefore, Goldziher could accurately envision the difficulties Stein would face in acquiring an appointment in Hungary. Based on their correspondence, Kelecsényi demonstrates that Goldziher was especially active in helping Stein to become an acknowledged Hungarian scholar by both teaching and advising him as well as “promoting” him.

Goldziher praised Stein’s work in his report of the 10th International Orientalist Congress, which took place in Geneva in 1894. He underlined that the Kashmiri maharajah (ruler) supported his fellow Hungarian’s work, which did not stop at cataloguing, but also critically examined the collected Kashmiri manuscripts. In the same year, together with Vambery, Goldziher wrote Stein’s recommendation to the Academy. The two elder scholars emphasized that Stein was Hungarian and that no other Hungarian scholar studied his fields, therefore he would broaden the scope of Hungarian scholarship.78 Since by then Stein was no longer a Hungarian citizen, he became an external member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1895.

Part of a letter from Stein to the Academy – probably thanking them for his acceptance as an external member -- was published in the 1896-97 issue of Academic News. In his letter, Stein cited his busy schedule and work load to explain why he could not visit his “homeland and the Academy” during the past year. In order to be able to finish the translation of the Kashmiri manuscript, during the break at the University, he moved from Lahore to Kashmir and having

settled down on the hilltop of Mohand Marg at 11000 feet altitude, he worked 11-12 hours daily. What is more interesting is that while he emphasized the importance of his work in connection to the study of Kashmiri history, geography, and philology, he equally stressed the Transylvanian scholar Sándor Kőrösi Csoma’s legacy.

Sitting at my desk, I can look down to the valley of the Sind River and often think of poor Sándor Kőrösi Csoma, who in 1822-23 walked the road in the valley between Kashmir and Ladakh. The place where he decided to study the Tibetan language is of three days’ eastward journey by foot from here.79

Later, Stein corresponded with his mentor Tivadar Duka about the collection of Csoma’s papers.80 Duka authored Csoma’s biography and at the beginning of the 1900s, Stein actively helped to recover Csoma’s papers from India. As Imre Galambos noted, Csoma’s cult especially flourished in the first decades of the twentieth century and was fuelled by nationalist sentiment. At the turn of the century, Hungarians considered Csoma a Hungarian hero -- his public image had little correspondence with his scholarly merits.81 By emphasizing Csoma’s example Stein not only presented himself as heir to the Transylvanian scholar’s legacy and as such member of the Hungarian scholarly community. He also inserted himself into the long history of Hungarian travelers, who searched for the national cradle and the descendants of those Hungarians who did not continue with the conquerors to the Carpathian Basin and remained in the Central Asian steppe.82 This tradition, as already mentioned, started in the thirteenth century, and continued also in the nineteenth century. Vambery equally referred to it four decades before Stein. In

82 As the nomadic Hungarians migrated westward from the Khazar borderlands, part of the tribes remained there and even turned southward to the direction of the Caucasus.
addition, by contributing to the Csoma cult, Stein could shape his own Hungarian image despite the fact that in contrast to Csoma’s or Vambéry’s, his research did not even originated with the idea to search for the origins of the Hungarians.

While external members were not required to give an inaugural paper at the Academy, Stein delivered one in 1897. Like his letter from the previous year, the opening lines of his paper similarly testify to his desire to demonstrate his connections to Hungarian academism. He noted that his field provided very few occasions to discuss topics that were related to Hungary or in the Academy’s interest, which, according to the bylaws of the Academy, was the condition to become a member on the first place. In contrast to Goldziher and Vambéry, who in their recommendation emphasized that there was no Sanskritist among the Academy members, Stein excused himself for not deserving to have a seat among the world-famous scholars who were members of the Academy. Indeed, in Hungary, compared to Turkology or Semitic philology Indology was an even less visible a field. The only Indologist Aurel Mayr (1846-1915), at the University worked in the department of Indo-European languages that was founded in 1873. Mayr was an expert on ancient Indian law. According to the website of the University’s Indology department, his work continues to influence the field until today.83 It is unclear whether it was ever offered to Stein and if he would have accepted a Privatdozent position in Indology as Goldziher did twenty years earlier when Hatala was appointed Hebrew chair.

His inaugural talk at the Academy, A fehér hunok és rokon törzsek indiai szereplése (The White Huns’ and related tribes’ appearance in India) demonstrated Stein’s broad knowledge of Sanskrit, Byzantine, and Chinese chronicles from the first millennium. Based on various

83 Available from http://ind.elte.hu/tanszekunktortenete.html; Internet; accessed on April 18, 2014.
chronicles, Stein offered an overview of the Kashmir area’s history in this period. The choice of this topic also allowed him to connect his research to the Hungarian study of national origins. He argued that the Indian, Greek, and Chinese sources all mentioned the White Huns by the same name, which strongly suggests that they themselves used this designation as their name. This also indicated that the White Huns were related to the European Huns, who “Armin Vambery demonstrated … belonged to the Turkish-Tartar branch of the Turanian family of peoples.” In addition to crediting Vambery’s work, however, he did not make any other connection to the research of Hungarian origins. Neither did he discuss general topics like the creation of nationhood or ethnic and linguistic identification that, like in Goldziher’s work, even if in an indirect and abstract way, corresponded with Hungarian scholars’ interest.

In 1904 when Stein sent the Academy a copy of his Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan, the popular travelogue of his first expedition, Goldziher not only thanked him and expressed his interest in especially those parts of the book that discussed Islam-related topics, but also praised Stein’s achievement. “In addition to the consensus of the whole learned world you do not need my confirmation that in the past decades your traveler study about the history of humanity is the most classic work both when judging the standard of its research questions and its results.” Goldziher noted that unlike Hirschler, (Stein’s uncle and a personal acquaintance of his and about whom he wrote very positively in his diary) he was sure that Stein would become a leading scholar. He wished that Stein’s parents and uncle could have seen his books published. Three years later, in a letter to Stein, Goldziher praised him by citing an article from the Zeitschrift der Deutsches Morgenlandisches Gesellschaft: „M. A. Stein hat … eine neue Wissenschaft

84 Aurel Stein, A fehér hunok és rokon törzsek indiai szereplése (The White Huns and related tribes’ appearance in India) (Budapest: Franklin, 1897), 21.
gegründet.” (M. A. Stein founded a new scholarly field.) In Goldziehr’s view, Stein, who shed new light on new findings deserved such an acknowledgement.\textsuperscript{85} Vambery appreciated Stein highly, as well. In 1907 he wrote to him that he would not have imagined when he first met Stein, then only a high school student, that he would become one of the most illustrious researchers of Asia. In 1908, he noted that all Stein achieved was due to his own talent and diligence.\textsuperscript{86} While Vambery also travelled extensively, and Goldziher spent time in the Middle East, their activities in the Oriental field were not nearly as comprehensive as Stein’s, which also explain why the two elder scholars respected their protégée so much.

It is unclear how the three scholars interpreted their failure to acquire an appointment for Stein in Hungary or in Europe. It is hard to assess if they viewed it a failure or accepted the nature of things: in Hungary there was little interest in Stein’s fields of research and little funding as well, while in Germany, the job market suffered because of a surplus of Sanskritists. However, Stein could not have had better circumstances to pursue his research than in India, and it was an ideal place to prepare for his expeditions, both from the intellectual and the material point of view. Had he stayed in Hungary, his studies would have been restricted to philological research. Instead, his work as a colonial officer and orientalist covered various disciplines and his encounter with the east was a truly multifaceted experience: he worked as an archeologist and a mapmaker, catalogued objects recovered from the dirt, collected and compared manuscripts, and travelled extensively. He was celebrated both as an author of travelogues and scholarly works. After becoming a British citizen in 1904, he was appointed Superintendent of Archeology in the North West Frontier Provinces of India, which allowed him to continue his expeditions.

\textsuperscript{85} HAS Fols. 485-490.
\textsuperscript{86} HAS 10/Fols. 51-60
even after his official retirement from government service in 1917. He was awarded several prestigious prizes and honors, including earning knighthood in 1912.

The two elder scholars could witness as, similarly to the Csoma phenomenon, the Hungarian press picked up Stein’s achievements as a British explorer and “translated them” into the successes of Stein, the Hungarian scholar. The 1903 summary of Stein’s first expedition to Central Asia in the *Sunday News* illustrates the process of “translation.” The author of the article was the geographer Jenő Cholnoky, who following World War I, together with the prime minister and geographer Pál Teleki connected the idea of territorial revision with Turanism further politicizing Oriental scholarship. In the 1903 Cholnoky emphasized that it was proven that the study of Central Asia, though important to the study of Hungarian prehistory, could not bring any solid proof to the origins of the Hungarians, since “the people entering [the Carpathian Basin] which was called Hungarian, originally was not ethnically homogeneous. Additionally, their immigration did not take place at once but gradually.”\(^8^7\) The quote testifies to the impact of Vambery’s book. In addition, Cholnoky stressed that regardless, the importance of Stein’s archeological findings was comparable to the ruins found in Mesopotamia. Stein’s excavations provided historical lessons about the history of the area, which influenced the Hungarian conquerors’ fate later in the Carpathian Basin too. According to Cholnoky, after Csoma, Vambery, and the participants of the Széchenyi-expedition, due to Stein, “the knowledge of Asia advanced one more step due to another Hungarian scholar.”\(^8^8\) From 1912, the *West* also reported

\(^8^7\) Jenő Cholnoky, “Dr. Stein Aurél belső-ázsiai utazása,” (Dr. Aurel Stein’s Central Asian travel) *Vasárnapí Újság* (Sunday News) 50, no. 21 (May 1903): 334-5.

\(^8^8\) Ibid., 335. From 1877-1880, one of István Széchenyi’s sons Béla Széchenyi, the map maker Gustav Kreitner, the geologist Lajos Lóczy, and the linguist Gábor Szentkatolnai Bálint participated in an expedition. They travelled on a route from Sanghai to Burma. During their travels, they saw the Dunghuang caves, and their report inspired Stein to travel to Tunguhuang. I am not discussing Steins expedition in detail, his work in Dunghuang was part of his second expedition. His work there was foundational to the international research on Medieval China as
on Stein’s expeditions by publishing five of his letters from Central Asia. In 1922, *West*
published a celebratory article on his sixtieth birthday.  

However, the two elder scholars did not live to see Stein become a sort of academic
celebrity in Hungary, starting in the early interwar years. In addition to his many prizes,
awards, and the fact that he was a member in various British academic associations, Stein
became a member of several Hungarian scholarly associations as well: for example, the
Archeological Association in 1925, the Sándor Kőrösi Csoma Association, the Turanian Society,
and the Budapest Philological Society in 1926. Today Hungarian academics, especially in the
Academy, celebrate him as a Hungarian scholar of international fame.

**Professor Horeb, the Marginal Man**

The careers of Vámbery, Goldziher, and Stein demonstrate that the social and political
role of an orientalist in nineteenth-century Hungary was quite different than in Germany or
Western Europe the same way as Jewish integration in Hungary took a different path than in
other European countries. In Hungary the political significance of Oriental research was also
close associated with the study of national origins. This shaped the broader Oriental field and the
orientalists’ careers both on the national and the international level. The three Jewish scholars
defined their attitudes to self-Orientalism early on, which is especially apparent in their scholarly
work. The two elder scholars’ fascination with Stein’s success could be due to the fact that their
young colleague did not have to face the same politicized academic milieu within which they had

well the basis for the Chinese authorities animosity toward him. For more detail see [http://dunhuang.mtak.hu/](http://dunhuang.mtak.hu/); Internet; accessed April 20, 2014.


90 Vambery died in 1913 and Goldziher died in 1921.
worked. What made Goldziher a central figure in international Arabic philology and Vambery – though to a lesser extent – in Turkology, marginalized their work as scholars in Hungary within the small Oriental field. They viewed themselves as producers of knowledge central to German and English academic research but less relevant to Hungarian scholarship. Their attraction to the international scholarship and refusal to oblige with essentialist notions of nationhood had had its consequences. They experienced marginalization from the part of the academic and political establishment. Even though both were members of various scholarly associations, including the Academy and the faculty of the University of Budapest, and even though they achieved high positions in them, they believed that their Jewish identity had hindered their institutional role and participation in Hungary. Goldziher was the only one among the three who experienced the antisemitic wave following the White Terror. His resignation in 1921 could send the message that he accepted that because of his Jewish identity, his research no longer deserved the attention it had received earlier.

Published five years after Goldziher’s death, Szomory’s Mr. Professor Horeb describes the sense of marginality as a central experience of Jewish intellectuals at the turn of the century. It stresses their understanding of the Hungarian Jewish identity as a hybrid, culturally heterogeneous identity, which is especially shaped by European cultural traditions. Whereas Godziher’s (Professor Homer Horeb) and Vambery’s (Horeb’s student Varjassy) inspired the characters of the protagonists, the story could have been about other Hungarian Jewish scholars and intellectuals, among them Szomory. Szomory’s original name was Weisz, but as he noted,
one could not become a Hungarian writer with such a name and after much thinking, he decided to assume the dramatic name Szomory. He never converted to Christianity.

Szomory escaped from his mandatory military service by going to Paris. Despite an emerging French literary career, he never stopped considering himself a Hungarian writer. When his imperial pardon was ensured, he returned to Hungary, where he became associated with West. The literary historian Pál Réz argued that the foundations of Mr. Professor Horeb were laid during the seventeen years that Szomory spent in Paris. There, comments Réz “he could see Renan and Taine.” An earlier work about scholars, the novel A tudósok (The Scientists: Stories from the Modern Hungarian Social Life) that the Budapest magazine Élet (Life) published in parts from January 1, 1894, was an important “preparation” toward Mr. Professor Horeb. (In Réz's view, with regard to the whole of the Szomory oeuvre, it is even more important.) Probably Szomory’s Parisian mentor Alphonse Daudet’s 1888 L’Immortale inspired The Scientists. For both Daudet and Szomory the satirical description of academics expressed their own social criticism: that of France and Hungary respectively. Szomory planned that The Scientists would be the first part of a trilogy titled The Starving Humanity, which he never wrote. Nevertheless, as Réz points out, in The Scientist the approach and the language of the more matured Szomory, the author of Mr. Professor Horeb, are already tangible.

The Parisian years not only formed Szomory’s perspective, but also allowed him to study the discipline of his future heroes – who in fact appeared in his earlier short stories as well. In 1940, excluded from every “Gentile” press, on the pages of the Jewish literary yearbook Ararat,

91 Szomorú in Hungarian means sad, and the y at the end as if he was of noble origins from the imaginary place Szomor.

Szomory himself wrote about his preliminary research for his drama *Queen of Sheba*, which he wrote in Paris, though he returned to it also in Budapest, before writing *Professor Horeb*.

Continuing to blur the confines of real life and literature, Szomory claimed in his bitter-sarcastic tone that he had studied the scholarly literature to such a depth that with the exception of the Turkologist (and Vambery-disciple) Ignác Kunos and other orientalists and Egyptologists, he was the most knowledgeable of any lay person in Budapest about the history of South-Arabia.

He listed the *Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Renan’s work on ancient Egypt, studies by David Müller and Edward Glaser as his main sources. He also added Goldziher and Horeb: “I read professor Goldziher’s study on ancient Arabia, and I read Professor Homer Horeb’s great argument with professor Varjassy on this issue. I was mainly reading this – after I wrote it beforehand.”

Daudet’s and Paris’s influence on Szomory is also connected to his 1917 first and only public discussion of his own Jewish identity on the pages of *West*. He reacted to a reader’s letter in connection with his review of the Hungarian translation of Daudet’s *Sapho*. In his review, in addition to praising both the Hungarian translation and the original, Szomory revealed that he was thrown out of the Piarist High School, because of his interest in the sensual content of this book. He argued that his Greek teacher neither understood his “attraction” to Sapho’s poetry nor suffered him because he was Jewish. This angered a certain Dr. Hümér Hültl, who was similarly

93 The reference can be to W. Robertson Smith’s 1899 *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, which was reviewed by Goldziher and later published with Goldziher’s notes or “Arábia régi történetéről,” *Budapesti Szemle* (Budapest Review) LXVI (1891): 65-104.

94 Dezső Szomory, “A sábai birodalom,” (The Shaba Empire) in *Horeb Tanár Úr* (Mr. Professor Horeb) (Budapest: Mült és Jövő Kiadó, 2006), 245-246.

a student of the former Greek teacher and wished to “defend his karma against Szomory.” In his letter to West, Hültl laconically stated that at the Piarists, there was no antisemitism or beatings as Szomory suggested, in contrast, “this Szomory-boy, the genius and quickly writing author” was still writing “Sappho’s name wrong, with one “p”,” which suggested that Szomory not only falsely accused their teacher, but was also ignorant of Greek literature.96

Szomory responded in West. He revealed his rage over being forced into a Catholic school and, thus, being exposed to the clericalism and antisemitism of the teachers. He noted that Hültl could not understand the hatred directed against the Jewish students – indeed, other Jewish authors mentioned similar atrocities in the Christian schools – since he was not a Jew. Szomory bristled at Hültl’s condescension, by not only denying of the validity of Szomory’s recollection of his experience in high school, but also suggesting that Szomory’s knowledge or familiarity with Greek language and literature were inferior. To demonstrate that his association with the high school Greek teacher and Daudet’s book were not related to his difficulties with Greek orthography, Szomory argued that he used the author’s original spelling. He asked:

If for Daudet, that woman was good enough with one “p” (who the hell would need two)? If for Rousseau, Marmontel, Voltaire, La Harpe, Lamartine, and Leconte de Lisle, who had some knowledge of Greek and sense of phonetics, only Sapho was that lady from Lesbos, why would some other woman be her for me?

He added a short demonstration of the Latin orthography of Greek names demonstrating that in contrast to Hültl’s suggestion, he did know Greek and Latin beyond the high school level. However, this was just “the warm up” before Szomory launched his final “attack”: he argued that

he had researched the most important works of the neologists and the most important authors of Hungarian literature and he could not find

the ancient rule according to which we would be more sensitive than the French about how to write the Greek poetess’s name? … Where is that Hungarian language that would need triple Latin letters that contain ancient Greek sound vibrations in order to articulate an honest “f”? If we write several Latin and Greek words according to our orthography, … why are we so inflexible with this Greek lady, whose mostly unknown odes and a French novel gave immortality? Why are we so non-artsy?

Szomory’s final rhetorical questions not only underlined that he was both philologically prepared to “defend” his spelling, but also confirmed West’s mission of modernizing the literary scene in Hungary, and Szomory contributed to this effort. Most importantly, these questions reflected that Szomory’s Hungarian-ness was not inferior to that of Catholic intellectuals like Hültl, because it relied on a thorough knowledge of both classical and modern French literature. Mr. Professor Horeb is similarly occupied with the possibilities of a European cultural experience in Hungary and the interconnected question of the possibilities of a composite Jewish-Hungarian identity.

The most telling of Szomory’s occupation with these issues is the story of “his” encounter with Professor Horeb in the opening chapter of the second part of the novel. He recounts his meeting with Horeb on Margaret Island, on the Danube in between the two sides of the city, Buda and Pest in first person singular. Horeb sits on a bench and gazes at the Danube, and Szomory, passing by, recognizes him. He sits next to him, interrupting Horeb who is lost in thought, like the biblical King Solomon in the story that Horeb recounts to Szomory in the novel. Horeb’s story opens with the picture of the wise biblical king gazing at the walls of his palace washed in the reddish light of the setting sun. As his eyes dive into the magnificent colors of the

97 Ibid.
palace and the garden contrasting the paleness of the Judean desert in the backdrop, he forgets about the construction expenses, which were worrying him. His eyes wander and carry his worries away until he hears a male magpie boasting in front of a female on the tree above him. The courting male bird tells his date that with one kick he could ruin King Solomon’s newly built palace. Hearing this, Solomon – who is known to understand the language of all animals on earth–angrily summons the magpie and questions it, frightening it with his royal anger. The magpie begs Solomon to understand that he only wanted to make an impression on the female bird. He did not really mean to harm in the royal palace. Solomon, husband of many wives and a man with much experience with women, lets the bird go on the condition that it stops boasting. When the magpie returns to the tree, the female bird asks what the King wanted, and the magpie answers that the King asked not to hurt his palace. “How cheeky!” Szomory summarizes the story still sitting next to Horeb, who leaves angrily, showing his reprehension to the birds on the sycamore tree above his bench, and thus underlining the moral of the story: unlike the biblical king, he disapproves of boasting, even if it is done with the goal of love.98

The setting in the Margaret Island is as symbolic as the reference to the wise Jewish king in the story. Horeb sitting on a bench under the trees recalls also the Hungarian poet János Arany. Arany (as Goldziher and Stein), often visited the Island, which was connected by the Margaret bridge to the two banks of Pest and Buda in the late 1870s. Arany’s 1877 poem “A tölgyek alatt” (Under the Oak Trees) is a personal reckoning of an elderly man who finds refuge

98 It is an interesting twist of fate that the story about Solomon and the magpie that Horeb tells Szomory sitting on the Margaret Island bench originates in the Aesopean fable The Eagle and the Hawk. Its moral examines the permissibility of boasting if one seeks to gain somebody else’s favor. It infiltrated both the Hebrew and the Islamic folk literature, which came to light through Michah Joseph Berdichevsky’s work, and it became part of Modern Hebrew literature as well. Micah Joseph Berdichevsky, יומן נשפים (Memakor Israel), (Tel Aviv: Davir, 1938), 127.
from the noise of the city on the green Margaret Island. Under the oak trees, says Arany, he could still dream and remember and wait for the end of a long life, which involved active participation in the creation of modern Hungarian literature and advocacy of the country’s political independence. Arany’s poem is part of the Hungarian national literary canon; his sitting figure on a bench on the Island is a mental picture that Hungarian readers are familiar with. In the course of the twentieth-century, a number of Hungarian literati expressed their attachment to the city through describing themselves watching the Danube, with a gaze resembling that of Arany and Horeb. For Szomory, Arany was a literary predecessor and thus a distant colleague. And as the literary historian Aladár Komlós underlined, other Hungarian Jewish writers considered Arany their master, introducing them to the most beautiful Hungarian literary language and poetry. For Jewish and non-Jewish men of belles letters equally Arany represented the desired literary Hungarian-ness, which has never turned exclusionary against Jews. As mentioned earlier, Arany was Goldziher’s favorite epic poet and Stein carried an Arany volume with him at all times, which demonstrates that similarly to the literati, they embraced Arany’s poetry.

By “making” Goldziher aka Horeb tell the story of the biblical king on a bench on Margaret Island, Szomory demonstrated the ways in which the fictional professor lived at the same time across two different cultures and two literary traditions that, nonetheless, were

99 The last entry in Goldziher’s diary records that after he resigned from his positions, he and his wife, who just went through a surgery, retreated to the Margaret Island to rest. “I do not want to record more of the problems of the past half a year,” he noted. “I fear the future and have anxieties.” His last experience on the Margaret Island certainly differed of that of Arany or Horeb’s. Goldziher, Napló, 376.

100 Aladár Komlós, Magyar-zsidó szellemtörténet a reformkortól a holocaustig (Hungarian-Jewish Intellectual History from the Reform Era until the Holocaust) (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő Kiadó, 1997).
founded on common values. 101 This hybridity is what – in my reading – Szomory depicted and celebrated, and similar to what the three orientalists discovered in their oriental studies. His description of Goldziher sitting on that particular bench is the literary embodiment of the intellectual’s appreciation of the many intellectual and cultural traditions that one could become the inheritor of. This appreciation of the multiple traditions and their “convivencia” or rather convergence, is coupled with the understanding that culture can be learned. Being a member of a culture, in Szomory’s reading as well as for the three scholars, should not be a question of birth place or origins. Ultimately it is a criticism of the Hungarian-ness that was allegedly unapproachable for Jews.

**Marginality**

It is through this point that the story of the three orientalists connects to the broader discussion of Jewish marginality. The theoretical debate on social marginality reaches back to Georg Simmel’s “The Stranger” that inspired Simmel’s American student, Robert Park’s 1926 theory of the Marginal Man. 102 In Park’s understanding, the contemporary figure of the Jewish immigrant to the United States resembled what Simmel described in “The Stranger,” the Jewish merchant in Europe traveling from one place to another. Due to his spatial flexibility, he embodied the objective observer of different customs, practices, and cultures. Simmel underlined that social independence, in other words lack of the complete control of the traditional Jewish community over the Jewish individual, allowed cultural insight and acquisition of knowledge without social engagement.

101 Naming him Homer Horeb already sent the message that he lived the Judeo-Greek cultural experience.

The notion of Jewish marginality however, emerged independently from Park’s thesis as well. Prior to the publication of Park’s study, the Norwegian Thorsten Veblen argued that at the foundations of the Jewish intellectual contribution to modern western culture lay the Jewish minority status in Europe. Not very differently from Park, Veblen believed that marginalized social status enhanced cultural and intellectual sensitivity among minority groups, and in particular among European Jewry. Whereas Simmel’s and Park’s examinations were rather analytic, Veblen’s claims had a strong anti-Zionist edge. In sharp opposition to Gershom Scholem, who several years and bitter experiences later argued that the advancement of Jewish scholarship was dependent on the creation of an independent Jewish political framework, Veblen stated that Jewish intellectual creativity strived in Europe because of the lack of the Jewish state and its impact on scholarship.

Regarding Goldziher, his only non-Orientalist biographer, the historian Peter Haber uses the Parkian notion of the Marginal Man in order to describe Goldziher’s position in nineteenth-century Hungary as a Jew. Haber argues that Goldziher’s marginality manifested in his intermediate position as wedged between assimilation and dissimilation. He argues that Goldziher had a choice between complying with the conditions of Jewish integration that the majority society established and maintaining a Jewish cultural difference. Mostly relying on Goldziher’s diary, Haber demonstrates that despite the fact that he would gain many advantages from conversion to Christianity and it would have been a boon to his academic institutional ascent, Goldziher refused both conversion and emigration from Hungary. In Haber’s eyes,

104 Haber, Zwischen..., 234.
Goldziher became the quintessential Hungarian Jew who identified with a non-confessional, rather civic, notion of nationality and a religious definition of Jewish-ness. His modern self-identification could be molded of both Hungarian and Jewish cultural components, which do not interact or shape one the other.

Haber’s above cited arguments rely on the premise that Hungarian cultural institutions in the nineteenth century were mature, static, and homogeneous entities, or at least, for the sake of the social and historical examination, they should be considered as such. Being and living as a Jew meant a qualitatively different life than being a Christian in Hungary. The two cultures, Hungarian Jewish and Christian Hungarian existed side by side, which would not be worthy of consideration in the historical or social analysis.

By introducing the concept of co-constitutivity, Steven Aschheim challenges such a monolithic depiction of the nineteenth-century cultural conditions of German Jews. In *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*, concerning the question of German-Jewish symbiosis (which Gershom Scholem had so vehemently denied), Aschheim argues that nineteenth-century German culture should not be examined as a fully matured system that accepted Jews only as passive followers. Instead, the work of the Jewish artists, intellectuals, scholars equally shaped it as well, and German culture in the 1930s was by no means identical with German culture a decade, two decades, or a century before, also due to the Jewish contribution. Aschheim offers a more nuanced approach than Haber’s quasi-corridor metaphor, which describes Jewish assimilation in

105 Steven E. Aschheim, “Reflections on Insiders and Outsiders: A General Introduction,” in *Insiders and Outsiders: Dilemmas of East European Jewry* ed. Richard I. Cohen et al. (Oxford: The Littman Library, 2010), 1-14. Ascheim’s earlier work is equally relevant to this study. His *Brothers and Strangers* that studied the effect of western orientalist discourse on the perception and administration of eastern European Jewish immigration to Germany at the turn of the century.

Central Europe as a road leading out of the ghetto into majority society, which could never be completely crossed. He encourages the reader to conceptualize culture as a heterogeneous entity, which keeps elements of different cultural backgrounds in close proximity and transforms them into components of one whole. Like Goldziher’s and Vamery’s approach to the impact of Islam’s imperial program, Aschheim suggests that the origins of these elements are less important than their role in shaping the cultural entity. He believes that Jewish assimilation should be studied considering the constant transformation of majority culture, and acknowledging the contribution of the minority members to it.

Aschheim’s approach thus suggests studying German society not as a multicultural society but as a society that kept recreating German culture through the continuous inclusion of non-German cultural elements and by “liberalizing” the “guilt” of the creators of German culture. As an alternative to the multicultural approach, Aschheim describes Germany as a monocultural society whose culture was open to influences of different cultures. In his view, this eclectic nature of German-ness was intolerable for many and completely unacceptable for the Nazi leadership. Thus the history of the Nazi attitude toward German and ultimately European Jews in general, can be read as the history of the growing intolerance toward a pluralist and multidimensional national culture.

This dissertation demonstrated the asynchrony between the Jewish scholars’ social and cultural experience in modern Hungary. Vamery, Goldziher, and Stein did not solely adhere to the dominant Hungarian cultural canon but contributed to a Hungarian cultural sphere that Conservative nationalists criticized. Among the three scholars, only Goldziher wished to maintain Jewish religiosity, as Haber suggested. Their refusal to accept self-Orientalism as a cultural and political attitude toward national and foreign values, institutions, and ideas, is
symbolic of their integration into Hungarian academia and society at large. Although their
participation in Hungarian scholarship and culture was not tied to their contact with traditional
Jewish cultural or religious institutions. Nevertheless their work facilitated the development of a
hybrid European-Hungarian-Jewish identity that relied on multiple cultural influences.
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369


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Katalin Franciska Rac earned her doctorate in history in 2014. She pursued her undergraduate studies in Israel and she received two Master of Arts degrees in Budapest: at the Central European University she studied at the Nationalism Studies Program and at the Corvinus University of Budapest she graduated in international studies.