

Testimony and role play

Portraits of Ármin Vámbéry, 1864–1865*

mundus vult decipi, ergo decipiatur

The oeuvre of the Hungarian (Jewish) Orientalist, Ármin (Arminius) Vámbéry, its academic legacy and impact, and the author's contribution to public life and politics are extensively covered by a vast array of academic literature and popular media.¹ His figure has become part of the collective image of 19th-century national scholarship, and the novelistic features of the scholar and public figure have repeatedly drawn attention to his person and his impressively rich oeuvre. Nonetheless, not even the latest wave of Vámbéry research has yet expanded to systematically collect, organise and critically investigate the diverse visual representations of the “great Hungarian traveller to the East.”² The methodology would have been there. Historical iconography, photographic iconography, has for decades offered possible procedures and patterns for understanding the mental-visual development of the figure of a historical personality, his changes, and the mechanisms of their impact. Despite the multitude of possible examples, no one has yet attempted to make the depictions of Ármin Vámbéry the subject of systematic research. An exceptional case is the inspiring study by the Hungarian literary historian Iván Sándor Kovács, who examined Vámbéry's personality and his various roles – his “ability for metamorphosis” – using four of his well-known portraits as a starting point. He considered them as “expressions of his roles, his forms of being at the same time.”³

The work by Sándor Iván Kovács was not continued,⁴ but recently there has been some increased interest in the significance of these portraits in the Vámbéry research in Hungary. On the website of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, a thematic page has been opened to mark the 100th anniversary of Vámbéry's death, which draws heavily on visual documents. The Hungarian and English-language compilation, *Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913), Orientalist in dervish cloths*, coordinated by the Oriental Collection and the result of the collaboration of several institutions, is both a popular biography and a summary of recent research results. The material thus made available can also be seen and can be visited as an

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¹ Sebastian CWIKLINSKI, “Ergänzungen zu einer Personalbibliografie Ármin(ius) Vámbéry,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae* 72, no. 1. (2019): 93–134, DOI: 10.1556/062.2019.72.1.6; Michael KNÜPPEL, *Ármin(ius) Vámbéry (1832–1923) – Versuchs einer Personalbibliographie*, 3. verbesserte Auf. (Nordhausen: Verlag Traugott Bautz GmbH, 2020).

² SÁRKÖZY Miklós, “Vámbéry tanulmányok: Új utak a Vámbéry-kutatásban,” in *Vámbéry (Tanulmányok)*, ed. SÁRKÖZY Miklós, 5–17 (Dunaszerdahely: Lilium Aurum, 2015). It is typical that the long-standing bibliographic work referred to in the previous note does not cover the Vámbéry imagery. On the contrary, the old Wurzbach biographical lexicon included portraits for up to six figures, see “Vámbéry,” in *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Oesterreich*. 49: Ullik – Vassimon, Hg. Constantin von Wurzbach, 239–249 (Wien: Zamarski, 1884), 249.

³ KOVÁCS SÁNDOR Iván, “Vámbéry-arcképek és szerepek: metamorfózisok és legendák,” in *Batu kán pesti rokonai. Vámbéry Ármin és tatárja, Csagatai Izsák. Kiadatlan írások és dokumentumok*, ed. KOVÁCS SÁNDOR Iván, 7–18 (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2001), 11.

⁴ There is a recent study of Vámbéry's identities, but apart from his images, see Miklós SÁRKÖZY, “At the Crossroads of Identity: Arminius Vámbéry: Oriental Traveller and Scholar,” *Journal of Intercultural Inquiry* 1, no. 1. (2015): 69–88.

online exhibition.⁵ The Oriental Collection has also created a real Vámbéry exhibition at the turn of 2019–2020. The collection was also presented as a travelling exhibition in 2021 in Dunaszerdahely (Dunajská Sreda), Vámbéry's native land, today in Slovakia. The publication of the exhibition is also of source value for the visual material revealed, although it is a guide to the biography and not a catalogue or interpretation of the material processed.⁶

In addition to the promising study by Iván Sándor Kovács and the two undertakings of the Oriental Collection, two relatively recent works can be mentioned that could represent an important stage in the preparation of a possible (and necessary) iconography of Vámbéry. Dávid Mandler's monograph on Vámbéry is also a testimony to his sensitivity to pictures. Among the portraits published in it are some newly discovered portraits not previously known, although it is not certain that all of them depict Vámbéry.⁷

From an iconographic point of view, the other publication released in 2016 deserves more attention. The archaeologist Szabolcs Felföldi has published a compilation entitled *“Life intersected with light”*, richly illustrated with many different types of pictures, with the intention of taking a new approach. The author of the biography, subtitled *Vámbéry Album*, wanted to break with the usual practice of a text describing the life of 'a famous man' only “interrupted here and there” by a photo or a picture. Here, however, he writes, it is the other way round: in this book, it is the pictures and photos that play the main role: they are used to highlight the most important elements and decisive turning points in the life of this world-famous scientist.” He also adds that he sees his work as an attempt “to see if the moments captured in the images can grasp and capture the 'essence' of the life of a scientist and a man.”⁸ What is meant by the latter is not clear. Szabolcs Felföldi has collected the pictures for the sake of biography, but without striving for completeness. He did not take into account the technique of production and the themes of the pictures, and basically arranged the Vámbéry portraits in chronological order. “In this way,” he believed, “it is indeed possible to trace the arc of an academic career and a human destiny through the portraits.”⁹

This position and way of working did not take into account the methodology and theoretical context of historical iconography. The aim continued to be biography – a biography of “the great man,” “the world-renowned traveller and scholar” – with the images remaining merely illustrative. They will undoubtedly play a greater role than in the usual biographies, but the illustrations will be ancillary elements of a biography, imagined on the basis of *textual* sources. It has not even been considered how the pictures themselves, or more generally the contemporary visual material accompanying Vámbéry's travels in Central Asia, played an active role – partly with his own active participation – in the construction and perpetuation of the Vámbéry mythology and cult. The volume fails to consider the fact that the versions of the

⁵ See <http://vambery.mtak.hu/index-en.html>. Project leader: Dr. Ágnes Kelecsényi, edition and English version: Dr. Tamás Sajó.

⁶ *Egy magyar dervis Közép-Ázsiában. A keletkutató Vámbéry Ármin / A Hungarian dervish in Central Asia. Arminius Vambéry the orientalist.* Írta / Text by KELECSÉNYI Ágnes and KOVÁCS NÁNDOR Erik. Magyarok a Selyemúton II. / Hungarians on the Silk Road II. ([Budapest: MTA–PAIEGO Alapítvány 2019]).

⁷ MANDLER Dávid, *Kelet és Nyugat mezsgyéjén: Vámbéry Ármin és a Brit Birodalom* (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő Kiadó, 2014); David MANDLER, *Arminius Vambéry and the British Empire. Between East and West* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books, 2016).

⁸ FELFÖLDI Szabolcs, „Fénnyel metszett élet” – *Vámbéry-album* (Dunaszerdahely: Vámbéry Polgári Társulás, 2016), 11. He is not listed on the cover or title page, but according to the colophon, the volume also had a “contributing co-author” in the person of Gergő Márton VÉR.

⁹ *Ibid.* 12. The data of the visual material is uneven, incomplete in several cases, and does not follow the iconographic standards.

images, their utilization, and their newest and newest publication are not neutral procedures, but rather active components in the construction of biography and popularization of celebrities and in the process of myth-transmission.¹⁰ Photographs possess not only index nature and realistic content, but also a *performative value* deriving from their system of relations and use.¹¹ Instead of analysing the cult objectively, the picture book actually helps keep it alive and passing it on.

It does not seem to be possible to transcend the established, fossilised notions without making an iconography of Vámbéry, since it is not even easy to find one's way around the illustrations, the books, book versions and periodicals published in different languages and countries, the chronology of the images and the relationships between them. Far from being a “technical” or “thematic” aspect of grouping pictures, as Szabolcs Felföldi's text suggests, the approach of photographic and pictorial history, iconography and media theory offers in its own right a conceptual framework for interpreting past events, phenomena and processes.

This study examines the portraits of Ármin Vámbéry, most of which have been published many times, which were made after and in connection with his ten-month trip to East Turkestan in 1863. He first summarises the data and medial characteristics of the portraits in the chronological order of their appearance, and then, in a second step, examines the possible photographic source and background of the portraits. The historical “picture philology” of the Vámbéry image serves as much to establish order between the depictions as it does to revise the known – or assumed to be known – data. Furthermore, it aims to unravel and demonstrate the importance of pictures in (self)constructing of a personality.

¹⁰ See Charlotte BOYCE, Páraic FINNERTY and Ann-Marie MILLIM, *Victorian Celebrity Culture and Tennyson's Circle* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Antoine LILTI, *The Invention of Celebrity, 1750–1850* (Cambridge–Malden: Polity Press, 2017) – the chapter entitled “Virtuosos” analyses the Liszt cult on a European scale, carefully constructed with images. Also see: Kovács Imre, “Liszt és a csodagyerek-mítosz,” *Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából* 43 (2019): 45–58, 46.

¹¹ Elizabeth EDWARDS, *Raw Histories. Photographs, Anthropology and Museums* (Oxford–New York: Berg, 2001); Geoffry BELKNAP, *From a Photograph: Authenticity, Science, and the Periodical Press, 1870–1890* (London–New York: Routledge, 2016), 1–13, 217–220.

Pictures in chronological order of appearance

After the journey to Turkestan, the first Vámbéry portrait was published in the Hungarian weekly magazine *Az Ország Tükre* [The Country's Mirror] in its issue of 1 July 1864. The stone drawing "Armin Vámbéry and his Tartar mullah" clearly shows the maker's signature: "Marastoni Jós 1864." As we know, Vámbéry arrived back in the Hungarian capital, Pest, at the end of May and appeared at the Academy's meeting on 30 May, which was reported in the *Pesti Napló* [Pest Journal]. "Our Eastern traveller and language explorer, Árrmin Vámbéry, has returned to Pest, and appeared for a public surprise at yesterday's meeting of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His head is still covered with the Turkish fez, his face quite orientalisised, in the Tartar-brown colour to which the burning sun of the sandy deserts of Bokhara burns a man – even if he is European."¹² After barely a stay of two weeks at home, he left for London, where he arrived on 9 June. By the time the picture was published in the pages of *Az Ország Tükre*, he had already made his London debut at a meeting of the Geographical Society. The editor of the paper added a short note to the published picture. "The original of our picture," he wrote, "was taken on the return from a journey to Tehran of

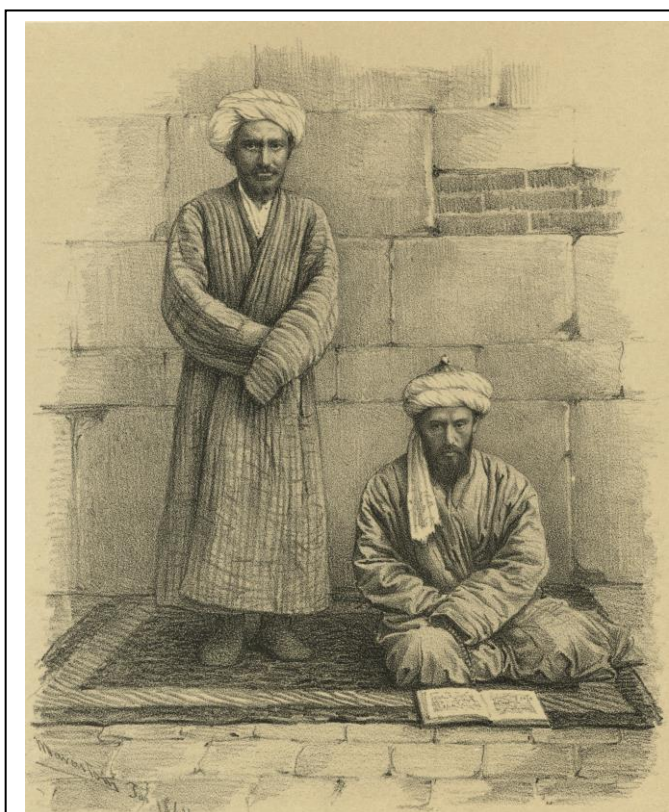


Figure 1. Árrmin Vámbéry and his Tartar mullah – sign.: Marastoni Jós. 1864, lithograph. Hungarian National Museum, Hungarian Historical Gallery, Inv. no. 8326.

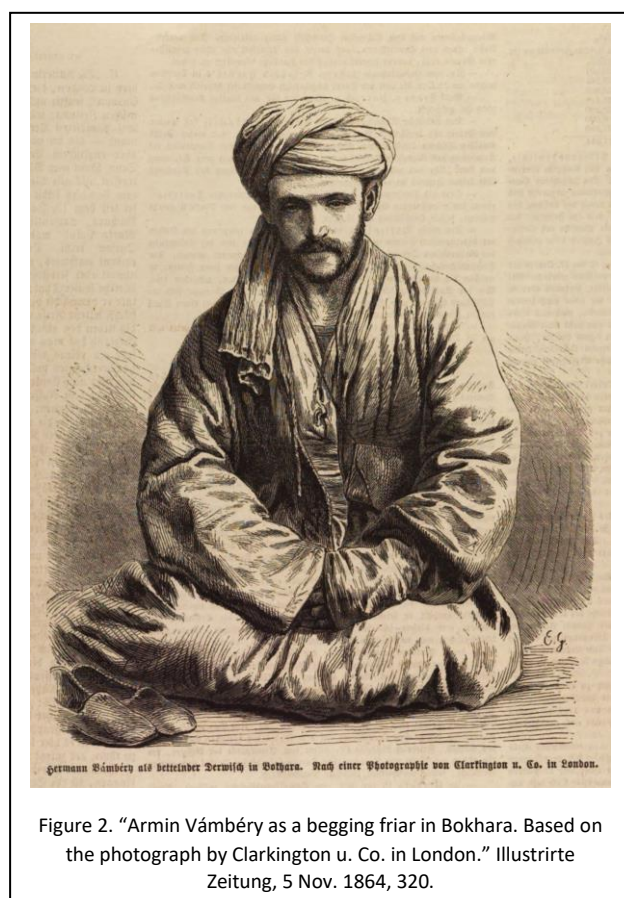
Vámbéry [sic!] with his Tartar mullah (of whom the newspapers have written so much, and who is now staying with the academic József Budenz at the Academy's expense), on the order of the British Embassy. The standing figure presents us the Tartar and the squatting one Vámberri. In such posture, with the reading aid in his hand, he had to sing the prayers of the Turks five times a day for months, with the great Koran on his little carpet spread out, while his thoughts wandered far away in Europe, or on his more distant plans." He added that, when he saw him three years ago, "a man of about 33 [correctly 30] years of age, his skull was covered with thick hair, his chin with a thick beard; now his skull is bald, and his neck and face are scarred with the scars caused by the hot sun."¹³ The text accompanying the picture has been ignored by previous research, although the caption of the picture includes the page number indicating that an explanation goes with it. In this way, the essence of the text,

¹² *Pesti Napló*, 1864. jún. 1.; *Fővárosi Lapok*, 1864. jún. 2., 529.; *Magyar Sajtó*, 1864. máj. 31., 576

¹³ SZOKOLY Viktor, "Vámbéry Árrmin. (Képpel.)," *Az Ország Tükre* 3, no. 19. (1864. júl. 1.): 219, picture: 223. – emphasis by the author, ZF. Vámbéry kísérőjéről bővebben: KOVÁCS SÁNDOR, szerk. *Batu kán pesti rokonai*, 159–216.; PÉRI Benedek, "Adalékok »Vámbéry tatárjának« életrajzához. Molla Izsák magyarországi élete a korabeli sajtó tükrében," *Keletkutatás Spring* (2021): 127–135.

i.e. that the illustration is based on a *photograph* taken in Tehran on commission of the British Embassy, has been omitted. A photograph, because in the circumstances given it could not be anything else. The scene was drawn on stone on that basis by the painter and lithographer József Marastoni (1834–1895). The graphic art collection of the Hungarian National Museum Historical Gallery keeps a print of the lithograph without a title, caption or publisher's mark, which also indicates its possible distribution.¹⁴ (Figure 1)

The portrait of Vámbéry, the second published in 1864, was published in the Leipzig illustrated weekly *Illustrierte Zeitung* of 5 November, with the following caption: “Hermann Vámbéry als bettelnder Derwisch in Bokhara. Nach einer Photographie von Clarkington u. Co. in London.”



(Figure 2) The picture is a woodcut, and is the work of a draughtsman or wood engraver with the signature “E. G.” His identity has not been identified, but the Leipzig paper employed several dozen people in the workshops of the draughtsmen and engravers.¹⁵ However, the caption reveals the origin of the photograph used for the engraving. The London studio was founded by Charles Clarkington (1826–1861), who died young, but the studio continued to operate in the heart of London at 246 & 248 Regent Street until 1870. According to their newspaper advertisements, their artistic director at the time was Alfred Crowquill (Figure 3) The name is a pseudonym for Alfred Henry Forrester (1804–1872), a well-known painter and illustrator known for his humorous drawings and satires, who annotated some of his work as such.¹⁶ The scenes to be photographed were born from his ideas. In 1863, a “new style” of watercolours, *en Vignettes*, was produced.

¹⁴ Hungarian National Museum Hungarian Historical Gallery, inv.no. 8326. The other item: Library and Information Center of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Oriental Collection, inv. no.707.887. This picture appeared in Vámbéry's 1905 autobiography with the wrong source designation (*Hazánk s a Külföld*, 1864), which later resulted in incorrect combinations, see KOVÁCS SÁNDOR, “Vámbéry-képek és szerepek...,” 12.; FELFÖLDI, „Fényes metszett élet”, 210.

¹⁵ “Hermann Vámbéry, der ungarische Entdeckungsreisende in Centralasien,” *Illustrierte Zeitung*, 5 Nov. 1864. (no. 1114), 319–320. (picture: 320). On the paper see Andreas BECK, “Crossing Borders between London and Leipzig, between Image and Text: A Case Study of the *Illustrierte Zeitung* (1843),” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 51, 3 (2018): 408–433.; “Nummer Tausend,” in Klaus WOLSCHNER, “Texte zur Geschichte und Theorie von Medien & Gesellschaft,” accessed: 2022. 09. 12, http://www.medien-gesellschaft.de/html/illustrierte_zeitung_1862.html.

¹⁶ Michael PRITCHARD, *A directory of London photographers, 1841–1908* (Watford: PhotoResearch, 1994); „Clarkington, Charles”, photoLondon, access: 2022. 09. 12, <https://www.photolondon.org.uk/#/details?id=1553>. „Obituary”, *The Photographic News*, 8 Nov. 1861, 538. Adverts: *The Players* (London), 6 Feb. 1860, 48. cont.; *The Morning Post* (London), 28 Apr. 1862, 1.; *The Times* 29 Apr. 1862, 21., 19 Jul. 1862, 19.; issues of *Daily News* (London) 1863. Among others Crowquill illustrated works by Charles Dickens, children's books, and comic strips, see Simon COOKE, “‘If Not a Genius’? Alfred Crowquill as an Illustrator and Applied Artist,” *The Victorian Web*, access: 2022. 09. 12, <https://victorianweb.org/art/illustration/crowquill/cooke.html>.

MESSRS. CLARKINGTON and COMPANY'S PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO, 246 and 248, Regent-street, London.—Messrs. CLARKINGTON and CO. beg to inform the nobility, the gentry, and their numerous patrons generally, that they have enlisted the services of ALFRED CROWQUILL to superintend the entire management of their Artistic Department. By his valuable assistance they are therefore enabled to pledge themselves to produce such Cartes de Visite, Photographs (either plain or coloured), and every description of Photographic Portraiture, that cannot fail to give universal satisfaction; and also any Home Scene required to embody a Family Group can be beautifully delineated, so as to establish a lasting Family Picture. Messrs. Clarkington and Co. also request that their kind Patrons will favour them with sittings as early in the day as possible, as the best effects are produced between the hours of nine and four.

Figure 3. The advertisement of the Clarkington & Co. photographic studio. *The Morning Post* (London), 28 Apr. 1862, 1.

The arrangement of the families in different groups – *en scènes variées* – was commissioned by Crowquill, the studio artist. The Clarkington studio did not belong to the best known ones, but it was not considered to be an insignificant photographic enterprise. In addition to general studio photography, it specialised in parliamentary portraits. Just before his death, Charles Clarkington published an album and distributed a series of individual portraits of members of the British Legislature. Clarkington was one of 105 British photographic companies to exhibit his work at the 1867 Paris World Exhibition. The National Portrait Gallery preserves 21 portraits of Charles Clarkington and his studio: photographs of politicians, MPs, dandies, actresses, artists and, in some cases, engravings made from the photographs. The Victoria and Albert Museum has a larger collection of portraits of actors.¹⁷

No information is available on the creation of the Vámbéry portrait. In his autobiography, Vámbéry mentions that after the publication of his book describing his travels, he was virtually besieged by car chasers and photographers in London.¹⁸ It is not excluded that his costume was inspired and directed by Crowquill. However, such a role-play was not far from his own intentions, as he took his “oriental costume,” his turban and his bag with him. In fact, he was not wearing his *disguise of a dervish*, having already left it in Mashhad.¹⁹ Breaking the

¹⁷ His portraits of actors were continuously published under the title *Player's Portrait Gallery by The Players* in 1860/61, see the list of those published in the issues of 9 Febr. 1861. p. 253. On his theatrical series, and the principal artistes of the Italian stage performing in London, and the concerts singers: *The Examiner* (London), 27 Oct. 1860, 6. Photographic Series of the Members of the British Legislature: *The Weekly Dispatch* (London), 16 Jun. 1861, 6.; Photographic Album Portraits of Members of the House of Commons: *The Morning Chronicle* (London), 14 Sep. 1861, 1.; Paris Universal Exhibition of 1867, *Catalogue of the British Section. Part II.* (London: Printed for Her Britannic Majesty's Commissioners, 1867), 81–87. The Victoria & Albert Museum (<https://www.vam.ac.uk/>) has 138 photographs. Works in the National Portrait Gallery: <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp87166/clarkington--co-charles-clarkington>.

¹⁸ Armenius VÁMBÉRY, *The Story of My Struggles. The Memoirs of Arminius Vambéry* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1904), 244.; VÁMBÉRY Ármin, *Küzdelmeim* (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat, 1905), 263.

¹⁹ “On account of the scantiness of my European wardrobe, I was obliged to continue my turban as well as my Oriental dress, both in Meshed and during the remainder of my journey to Teheran; but, as the reader will very well understand, I had said adieu to all disguise as a Dervish.” – Arminius Vámbéry, *Travels in Central Asia. A Journey from Teheran Accross the Turkoman*

chronology, it should also be mentioned that a version of the photograph on which the engraving was based first appeared four decades later in Vámbéry's autobiography, published in Hungarian in 1905 and the *Vasárnapi Ujság* [Sunday Paper], the newspaper promoting the book, published the same.²⁰ (Figure 4) Several differences can be observed between the photograph and the engraving. While in the engraving the right end of the shawl, wrapped in the turban, hangs over his shoulder, in the photograph it is wrapped around his shoulders. The posture of the hands and feet is also different. While in the latter the right hand and his foot are free, in the engraving both are covered by his Bokhara cloak. The posture is also somewhat different, with the head and shoulders slightly tilted to the side in the photograph. It is therefore almost certain that there are several shots of Vámbéry dressed/made dressed as a dervish, and it is unlikely that the drawer would have deviated from the original source.



Figure 4. Ármin Vámbéry in his dervish attire in 1864, a photograph taken after his arrival in London. *Vasárnapi Ujság* [Sunday Newspaper] 52, 24. (11 June 1905): 37. Digital copy.

Returning to the chronology, the Hungarian reader learnt from the 10 November 1864 issue of the *Fővárosi Lapok* [Capital City Papers] and the 11 November 1864 issue of *Az Ország Tükre* that Ármin Vámbéry's portrait was published by “the next issue of the 'Illustr. Ztg.' [Illustrirte Zeitung]” of Leipzig. So, this was a preliminary foreign news item, which continues in the latter paper: “Vámbéry is drawn as a praying dervish (*we also published this picture in July*), and the German paper in a separate article praises his daring travels. Vámbéry recently gave a reading in Leipzig about his trip to Central Asia.”²¹ The note in brackets is again a key moment, because it suggests that the Leipzig paper wanted to publish Vámbéry's illustration for *Az Ország Tükre* – they could have asked for a cliché or a print of it – but in the meantime Vámbéry arrived in Leipzig, and they received the Clarkington shot from him. It is even possible that the photograph arrived in Leipzig before he himself did. In this way, they could come up with a different, even fresher illustration. This combination confirms that the photograph was taken

Desert of the Eastern Shore of the Caspian to Khiva, Bokhara, and Samarcand (London: John Murray, 1864), 292–293. In the Hungarian edition: VÁMBÉRY Ármin, *Közép-ázsiai utazás, melyet a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia megbízásából 1863-ban Teheránból a Turkman sivatagon át, a Kaspi tenger keleti partján Khivába, Bokharába és Szamarkandba tett és leírt* (Pest: Emich Gusztáv, 1865), 266.

²⁰ VÁMBÉRY, *Küzdemeim*, 248.; “Vámbéry Ármin dervis-ruhájában. 1864-ben, Londonba érkezése után készült felvétel,” *Vasárnapi Ujság* 52, no. 24. (1905. jún. 11.): 37.; Republished in *Tolnai Világlapja* just before Vámbéry's death with the following caption: “Dressed as a dervish in 1863 (sic!),” “Vámbéry Ármin † 1932–1913,” *Tolnai Világlapja* 13, no. 39. (1913. szept. 28.): 2–3, 2. (photo by Lajos Szabó).

²¹ *Fővárosi Lapok* 1864. nov. 10. 1077.; *Az Ország Tükre* 3, no. 32. (1864. nov. 11.): 383. – emphasised by the author, ZF. As the *Fővárosi Lapok* reported, the Leipzig paper „is about to publish the portrait of Vámbéry dressed as a beggar dervish,” and confirms that Vámbéry will give a lecture in Leipzig. In fact, he reported on his trip earlier, on 29 October, at the meeting of the Leipzig Geographical Society, see Ármin Vámbéry, letter to John Murray, Leipzig, 31 Oct. 1864., National Library of Scotland, Archive of John Murray, Letters, MS 41219 (hereafter all quoted letters to John Murray are from this source). A short report on his lecture: *Nouvelles annales des voyages* 10, 4 (1864): 379–380.

after the publication of his book. The related article begins by quoting from the *Kölnische Zeitung* the sarcastic remark by the renowned cartographer and world traveller's publisher and mentor August Petermann (1822–1878) that, for the moment, two questions occupy the whole of Europe: “[French] Empress Eugenie in Schwalbach [Prussia] and the Hungarian Vámbéry in London.”²² The “hunger for pictures” that has prompted the press to cover the current European sensation with new news and *pictures* is understandable. Petermann also published a stunt section of Vámbéry's travelogue in his own geographical journal before the German edition was published but omitted his portrait.²³

This newer, second Vámbéry portrait was published in Hungary hardly less than a month later in the *Vasárnapi Ujság*, the most widely circulated Hungarian weekly newspaper, in its issue of 4 December 1864. The usual practice for takeover was (could be) to ask the Leipzig correspondent for a cliché of the picture made of lead or copper, which was then used to re-engage the picture on wood. It is likely that it was not redrawn after the published picture - as another possible procedure. In the caption they did not take over the full information published in the *Illustrierte Zeitung* but added the following caption: “Armin Vámbéry as a begging friar in Bokhara – (After a photograph).” In the Hungarian publication, therefore, the photographer was not named, and it was not stated that the photograph was taken in London.²⁴ The emphasis has thus subtly shifted to the fact that the published picture is based on a photograph taken in Bokhara. The engraving was also published without details in a new weekly newspaper for Jewish interests, the *Illustrierte Monatshefte*, launched in Vienna in April 1865.²⁵ In November, it was published by the Leipzig publisher Payne in the *Illustriertes Familien-Journal*, which was also reported in the Pest-based newspaper *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág* [Hungary and the World]. “The Familien-Journal,” they wrote, “publishes a pretty picture of Vámbéry, the son of our country who had fought his way to world fame, as a dervish. There is not a more interesting phenomenon of recent years than this illustrious man, not excluding even the much-mentioned Bismark [sic].”²⁶ Shortly afterwards, the French *L'Univers illustré* adopted the illustration in 1867. Here the caption features the name of Clarkington, but the location, London, is omitted this time too.²⁷

In the last issue of *Az Ország Tükre*, published on 21 December 1864, Gyula Dallos, English language teacher and dictionary editor at the University of Pest, wrote a review of Vámbéry, who had by then returned to Pest after his successful lectures in London. He began to arrange for the Hungarian edition of his “very saleable” travel sketch, published by John Murray in London at the end of October, before his return home. The Pest newspaper produced an even more recent portrait of Vámbéry to illustrate the article. They published a bust by József Marastoni, drawn on stone, depicting the traveller in a dark (black) corded Hungarian *atilla* attire with a bow tie and a medal on his chest. The known signature of the maestro and the

²² *Illustrierte Zeitung*, 15 Okt 1864 (no. 1111) – The front page announces the arrival of Napoleon's wife, Empress Eugenie, at the Schwalbach Baths.

²³ Á. VÁMBÉRY, „Die Turkomanen in ihren politisch-socialen Verhältnissen”, *Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes' Geographischer Anstalt* 10, no. 11. (1864): 401–408.

²⁴ “Vámbéry Armin,” *Vasárnapi Ujság* 11, no. 49. (1864. dec. 4.): 525. The Vámbéry portrait as an example of the image transfer between the two papers is mentioned by BÓDY-MÁRKUS Rozália, “A *Sonntags Zeitung*: illusztrált német nyelvű hetilap a *Vasárnapi Ujság* szomszédságában,” *Tanulmányok Budapest Múltjából* 39 (2014): 65–80, 79.; on the process of the image transfer see 79., also by BAKI Péter, *A Vasárnapi Újság és a fotográfia* (Kecskemét: Magyar Fotótörténeti Múzeum, 2005), 10.

²⁵ “Herman Vámbéry,” *Illustrierte Monatshefte für die gesammten Interessen des Judenthums* 1, April (1865): 49–52., Figure: 50. The paper's publisher was Arnold Hilberg.

²⁶ *Magyarország és a Nagyvilág* 1, no. 8. (1865. nov. 19.): 126.

²⁷ *L'Univers illustré* 10, semestre 1 (8 juin 1867): 364.



Figure 5. *Ármin Vámbéry* – sign.: Marastoni Jos. 1864, lithograph based on the photo by Ignác Schrecker, edited and printed by Engel and Mandello, 1864. Hungarian National Museum, Hungarian Historical

year 1864 are clearly visible in the picture.²⁸ This time, it is not indicated that the portrait is based on a photograph, but the source is easy to identify: It is a photograph by Ignác Schrecker (1834–1888), a photographer from Pest, which appears as number 69 in the honorary edition of the exclusive *Magyar Akadémiai Album* [Hungarian Academy Album], edited for the ceremonial opening of the palace of the Academy.²⁹ Several copies of the recording have survived in public collections in Hungary. A copy of this unique picture, lithographed on cardboard with the photographer's name, can be found in the Hungarian National Museum Historical Photo Department.³⁰ An important background fact is that the president, Baron József Eötvös, wrote a circular letter to the members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences on 23 November 1864, asking them to have their photograph taken by the photographer.³¹ The portrait of Vámbéry was one of the first to be taken, after less than a month, when it

was presented to readers as a stone-printed drawing. The photograph was also soon to be seen by quite a few people, as Ignác Schrecker exhibited 250 pictures from the album in preparation in the window of the Tigris (Tiger) hotel for four days from 31 May 1865.³²

A version of Schrecker's photography, redrawn on a stone, was not only published in *Az Ország Tükre*, but also appeared as a separate publication. Two of its versions are known. It was published in 1864 as a separate lithograph by the printing house of the magazine, the Engel and Mandello Company, and a copy is preserved in the Hungarian Historical Gallery of the

²⁸ DALLOS Gyula, "Vámbéry Ármín," *Az Ország Tükre* 3, no. 36. (1864. dec. 21.): 421–422.

²⁹ *Magyar Akadémiai Album*. Schrecker Ignác fényképész-mester (Pest: Emich Gusztáv, 1865), no. 69. On the album see BEKE László, "A MTA és a fotográfia," in PAPP GÁBOR György and ANDRÁS Edit, ed. *A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia képzőművészeti kincsei* (Budapest: MTA, 2004), 31–32., 213–216. (cat. 99., 100.); KRÄHLIG Edit ed., *Calliotheca. Kincsek a Magyar Tudományos Akadémia könyvtárából* (Budapest: MTA KIK–Kossuth Kiadó, 2017), 145–149.; BICSKEI Éva: "Sessio 3. 2. 1. Schrecker Ignác: Magyar Akadémiai Album, 1865," in *150 éves az Akadémia székháza. Épület-, intézmény- és gyűjteménytörténet* (Budapest: MTA, 2018), 119–120

³⁰ Hungarian National Museum Historical Photo Department, inv. no. 643/1960; albumin. Uses this item KOVÁCS SÁNDOR ed., *Batu kán pesti rokonai*, 11., figure 2.

³¹ Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Department of Manuscripts, inv. no. Történelem 4r 41. The whole text was published by *Magyar Sajtó*, 1864. nov. 26., 1273. Another call of Baron Eötvös issued in February 1865 was published in *Vasárnapi Ujság* 12, no. 7. (1865. febr. 12.): 82.; *Nefejejs* 7, no. 7. (1865. febr. 12.): 62.

³² *Pesti Hírnök*, 1865. jún. 1.

Hungarian National Museum.³³ (Figure 5) The portrait was also produced in a different, oval frame, without a print, publisher's mark, or year. Such a version was signed by Vámbéry with a short dedication to his orientalist friend Áron Szilády (1837–1922). This is usually the version mentioned in publications on Vámbéry, but its lithographer has been misidentified several times.³⁴

The “Persian star” on the bust was given to Vámbéry by the Persian Nasr al-Din Shah (1831–1896, reigned 1848–1896) after his return to Tehran. “[The] Shah's order was bestowed upon me”, he wrote to József Budenz on 5 February 1864. To be precise, the order or merit is the fourth degree of the Order of the Sun and the Lion.³⁵ It should be emphasised that *Az Ország Tükre*, the newspaper that followed Vámbéry with great attention,³⁶ was the second to publish this portrait in its columns – or to publish it separately – after the depiction of Vámbéry in a dervish dress, reading the Koran, indicating the journey to the East. The two are closely linked, and their relationship gives rise to a significant additional, or second meaning. The new picture marks a new status: a portrait of the *Hungarian* and of the *scientist*, a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, who wears his *oriental* order of merit, awarded in recognition of the journey he has made.

Thus, at the end of 1864, three portraits of Vámbéry appeared in various illustrated journals, and all three were clearly preceded by a photograph. His English-language travelogue, published in London in November, did not use them, but illustrated the adventures of the disguised dervish with 12 woodcuts. One of them shows Vámbéry in the famous scene of his encounter with the prince of Herat, who, despite his dervish costume, thought he was English, but it's not based on nature, it's a fictional representation of the story.³⁷ Jácint Rónay (1814–1889), a Hungarian emigrant Benedictine monk living in London at the time, who helped Vámbéry's first steps in practical matters, noted in his diary that the book was published by “John Mur[r]ay, the well-known London book-seller,” who needed “a 'Season Book', a book which must be displayed, even if unread, on the table of the 'Drawing-rooms' during the next 'Season'.” This also explained the great haste, in addition to the impatience of the public for the *lion of the season's* report on travel. Vámbéry wrote his work in German, which was translated from page to page into English by a translator for the publisher. The book was illustrated, based on oral presentation, by a skilful Prussian draughtsman drawing animals.³⁸

³³ Hungarian National Museum Hungarian History Gallery, inv. no. 5706. Access: 2022. 09. 27.

<https://gyujtemenyek.mnm.hu:443/hu/record/-/record/MNMMUSEUM1502920>. Mór Engel and Ignác Mandello worked together in Pest from 1852, the company was one of the most important Hungarian lithographic institutes.

³⁴ Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Department of Manuscripts, inv. no., Ms 10121/005, lithography, 37 × 27 cm. Published in KOVÁCS SÁNDOR ed., *Batu kán pesti rokonai*, picture 25. (the name of the lithographer is incorrect as József Morostoni); *Egy magyar dervis ... / A Hungarian dervish ...*, 19. (lithograph by Jakab Marostoni); FELFÖLDI, „Fény metszette élet”, 28., here the lithographer is also incorrectly given as Jakab Monostori, 209. The dedicated page was included in the Vámbéry exhibition of the Oriental Collection.

³⁵ Ármin Vámbéry, letter to József Budenz, Teheran, February 5, 1864. In the letter written to Budenz on March 5, he states that “I would have gladly replaced the order with a fat fee.” Both letters are published by KOVÁCS SÁNDOR ed., *Batu kán pesti rokonai*, 286–288.; FELFÖLDI, „Fény metszette élet”, 28. See also VÁMBÉRY, *Travels in Central Asia*, 295–296.

³⁶ His account – in his words: “a letter containing the news of my birth” – written to Baron Eötvös from Meshed (Mashad) at the end of his journey to Turkestan was previously published, or more precisely, the first half of it: “Egy hazánkfia a khinai tatárok közt,” *Az Ország Tükre* 3, no. 13. (1864. máj. 1.): 155–156. The whole letter was published in *Pesti Napló*, 1864. ápr. 15. In a letter sent from Tehran, dated February 9, 1864, he specifically asked the secretary general of the academy, László Szalay, to do so, see: PÁL Laura, “Két kiadatlan Vámbéry levél,” *Irodalomismeret* 11, no.1–2. (2001): 100–101.

³⁷ VÁMBÉRY, *Travels Central Asia*, 279.

³⁸ RÓNAY Jácint, *Napló-töredék. Hetven év reményei és csalódásai*. Nyomatott kéziratul 10 példányban. Harmadik kötet (Pozsony: Stampfel, Eder és társai, [1885]), 328–330. Rónay was present at Vámbéry's first performance in the company of

The next real portrait, the fourth, a newly published portrait, was published in Paris in 1865. Its publication was preceded by lengthy preparations, which must be explained to understand the background of the picture. Vámbéry first visited Paris in November 1864 for a short stay. From London, he first went to Leipzig, where he negotiated the German edition of his work – with a letter of recommendation from John Murray – with Brockhaus. In the French capital, he contacted the Hachette company about the publication here, about which he briefly reported to his English publisher. The person he referred to must have been the son of Louis Hachette (1800–1864), namely Alfred (1832–1872), as the founder had passed away shortly before, at the end of July.³⁹ In addition, he had met the leader of *Le Tour du Monde*, “the first geographical paper of France,” who, according to Vámbéry, had never heard of his trip. As he wrote, he “asks me: ‘*Est-ce que nous n’avons pas d’Ambassadeur en Asie Central?*’” This is not England, Vámbéry notes, here the general public is preoccupied with disinteresting things. In any case, regarding geographical knowledge – or ignorance – Mr. Hachette indicated that they were trying to raise awareness of travel, but that they were only at the beginning.⁴⁰ The short visit was a half-success, as Vámbéry wrote to John Murray already from Pest on 1 December. He had verbally agreed with the head of the publishing house, “a certain Mr Templier,” that he would receive 1200 francs for the publication of 1500 copies of his book. At the same time, he had to give his consent that the *Le Tour du Monde* would publish the translation in advance with no extra fee.⁴¹ Barely a week later (!), he was annoyed and wrote that the Paris publisher had not replied to three letters from him urging them to finalise the agreement in writing.⁴² He did not stay long in Pest, and on 3 January he returned to the French capital via Vienna. The Hungarian papers reported that Vámbéry was to be received by the Emperor Napoleon III. They also reported briefly on the meeting and informed readers that Vámbéry was dedicating the French edition of the travelogue to the Emperor. He himself later wrote of his encounter with the emperor, the empress, and the Prince Napoleon, and mentioned some other acquaintances, but he did not mention the circumstances of the translation and publication.⁴³ However, the final agreement may have been reached at this time, or afterwards, when Vámbéry returned to Paris in February after a brief stopover in London.⁴⁴ Despite Vámbéry's bad impressions, those in France who were interested in the Orient were also informed of his journey in good time: in the 1864 report of the French Geographical

the émigré general György Kmetty of the 1848 revolution at the meeting of the Royal Geographical Society on the 27th June 1864, about which he sent an anonymous report entitled “Armin Vámbéry in London” to *Pesti Napló*, 1865. júl. 6.; it was also taken over by *Sürgöny*, 1864. júl. 8. György Csorba drew attention to the Rónay diary in this regard but did not address the circumstances of the book publication: “»Köszöntse Vámbéryt, ha ott van«. Vámbéry Ármin, az 1848–1849-es események és a negyvennyolcas emigráció,” *Keletkutatás* Autumn (2013): 119–130, 127–128.

³⁹ “Louis Hachette et ses descendants,” access: 2023. 09. 20, <http://privat.bahnhof.se/wb169486/AffaireFamille19.html>.

⁴⁰ Ármin Vámbéry, letter to John Murray, Paris, 22 Nov. 1864.

⁴¹ Ármin Vámbéry, letter to John Murray, Pest, 1 Dec. 1864. Émile Templier (1821–1891), son-in-law of Louis Hachette, co-owned the publishing house from 1857, cf. note 39.

⁴² Ármin Vámbéry, letter to John Murray, Pest, 8 Dec. 1864. – At the same time, he asked his publisher to send the previously indicated electrotypes (the illustrations) to the Pest publisher, Emich, and, if possible, to print the map in London without a title.

⁴³ *Fővárosi Lapok*, 1864. dec. 31. 1249.; *Pesti Hirnök*, 1865. jan. 16.; “A hét története.” *Családi Kör*, 1865. jan. 18. (4. sz.), 93.; VÁMBÉRY Ármin, “Vámbéry Ármin európai működése. II. Párisban,” in VÁMBÉRY, *Közép-ázsiai utazás*. Third rev. & exp. ed. (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1892), 496–501. Before he arrived in Paris, he was received in Vienna by the Emperor and King Franz Joseph, to whom he was “lucky enough to hand over a copy of his latest travel book,” and his request to be “appointed as a teacher of oriental languages at the University of Pest,” *Idők Tanuja*, 1865. jan. 7., 19.

⁴⁴ In addition to the letters addressed to John Murray, his letters to Hungary reveal his movements between Vienna–London–Paris–London, see: KOVÁCS SÁNDOR ed., *Batu kán pesti rokonai*, 277–298. He returned to London from Paris, where he sent his last (known) letter before his return home to his friend Áron Szilády (1837–1922) in Kiskunhalas on May 17.

Society, the secretary-general gave a detailed account of his latest achievements in the field of geography, and also dealt with him separately in another journal which he himself edited.⁴⁵

A controversial figure in the French edition was the Saint-Simonist Édouard Charton (1833–1870), editor of the Hachette publishing house, about whom Vámbéry, without mentioning his name, made the sarcastic remark quoted above after their first meeting, and who edited the travel magazine. Louis Hachette launched this lavishly illustrated organ, *Le Tour du Monde* according to his vision in 1860. It was Charton's idea that text and pictures should play an equal role, and so, as the front cover advertised, the magazine was produced with the collaboration of “the most famous draughtsmen.”⁴⁶ This was also applied in the case of Vámbéry. Although Vámbéry took it badly, the publisher published the first part of his 15-chapter travelogue as five consecutive booklets of *Le Tour du Monde*, albeit with significant abridgements, before the full volume was published. The broader context of this is not irrelevant either, of which the contemporary Hungarian reader may have been aware. Prior to publication, in January 1865, “France's most prestigious travel journal, ‘Le Tour du Monde,’ edited by Charton, which would soon publish Vámbéry's ‘Central Asia Journey,’ now published longer articles on Hungary, its people and its political conditions.” A Hungarian newspaper began its review of a series of articles by “Monsieur Lancelot, one of France's most distinguished travellers and illustrators,” in which he wrote about his visit to Hungary in 1861, accompanied by many drawings and engravings, as the details of a long journey.⁴⁷

The first booklet of the Vámbéry publication left the press in early July, and shortly afterwards the independent volume was published, translated by Émile Durand Forgues (1813–1883). The skilled translator, working from the English edition, has, according to a few footnotes, taken into account the author's explanations and additions, and, as the title page indicates, has done his work according to his wishes, “*selon le voeu de l'auteur*”.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ V. A. MALTE-BRUN, “Rapport sur les travaux de la Société de Géographie et sur les progrès des sciences géographiques pendant l'année 1864,” *Bulletin de la Société de géographie* 10, 8 (décembre 1864): 427–488., Vámbéry utazásáról: 445–448.; V. A. MALTE-BRUN, “Voyage de M. Vambéry à Khiva, à Bokhara et Samarcande en 1863,” *Novelles annales des voyages* 10, no. 4. (décembre 1864): 353–360. This paper already reported on Vámbéry's arrival in Vienna from Tehran following the Viennese Wanderer (*Novelles annales des voyages* 10, no. 4 [1864]: 117) and reported on his appearance before the London Geographical Society (ibid. 244–246).

⁴⁶ Marie-Laure AURENCHÉ, “Du *Magasin pittoresque* au *Tour du monde*: l'orientalisme d'Édouard Charton (1833–1870), » in *L'Orient des revues (XIX^e et XX^e siècles)*, Daniel LANÇON éd. 53–71 (Grenoble: UGA Éditions, 2014), <http://books.openedition.org/ugaeditions/532>; Annie LAGARDE-FOUQUET, “Édouard Charton, 05 *Le Tour du Monde*,” access: 2022. 11. 10,

<https://sites.google.com/site/edouardcharton/05directeurpublicationhachette>; Dolores TOMA, “Le concept de pittoresque et une relation sur la Valachie dans *Le Tour du Monde*,” in *Vers l'Orient européen: Voyages et images. Pays roumains, Bulgarie, Grèce, Constantinople*, Lidia COTEĂ, éd. 235–250 (Bucureșt: Editura Universităţii din București, 2009).

⁴⁷ The part describing Hungary: [Dieudonné] LANCELOT, “De Paris à Bucharest, causeries géographiques, XXXI–XXXV,” *Le Tour du Monde* 11, (1865): 33–48., 49–64. See also “Egy francia lap Magyarországról I,” *Hazánk s a Külföld* 1, no. 8. (1865. febr. 19.): 119–122., part II. no. 9. (1865. febr. 26.), 134–135. – In the same issue, the paper began to publish the Hungarian translation of Vámbéry's travelogue. Dieudonné Lancelot (1823–1895) French lithographer, illustrator, access: 2022. 10. 05. https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dieudonné%3%A9_Lancelot. See the analysis of the Romanian part in TOMA, “Le concept de pittoresque...”

⁴⁸ Arminius VAMBERY, “Voyages dans l'Asie Centrale de Téhéran à Khiva, Bokhara et Samarcand,” *Le Tour du Monde*, Tome 12, (1865): 33–112.; Arminius VAMBERY, *Voyages d'un faux derviche dans l'Asie Centrale de Téhéran à Khiva, Bokhara et Samarcand par le grand désert turkoman*. Traduit de l'anglais selon le voeu de l'auteur par E. D. FORGUES (Paris: Librairie de L'Hachette et C^{ie}, 1865). The volume was published not with a dedication to the emperor, but to the orientalist and diplomat Charles Schefer (1820–1898), who held the title of the emperor's first interpreter. About him, see the Wikipedia title, access: 2022. 10. 09, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Schefer. When the journal published the travelogue, excerpts from it were also published in an abridged translation by Elie Reclus (1827–1904), the anarchist ethnologist (Chapters I–IV): Elie RECLUS, “Arminius Vambéry,” *Revue moderne* 34 (1865): 526–543., 35 (1865): 116–134. There is also another French version,

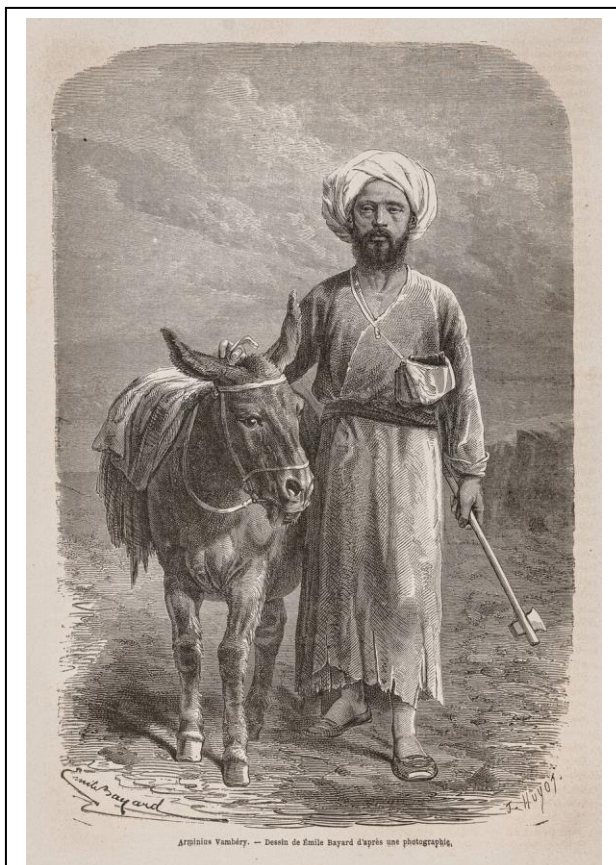


Figure 6. Arminius Vambéry. — drawing by Émile Bayard based on a photograph, *Le Tour du Monde* 12, (1865): 41. Digital copy.

The real novelty of the French version by Hachette was the wealth and quality of the illustrations. Not only were most of the engravings of the Murray edition taken over, but new illustrations were added, courtesy of Émile Bayard (1837–1891), one of the main illustrators of *Le Tour du Monde* and the Hachette publisher. These were already published in the journal, and the independent volume was completed with 34 woodcut plates, 23 of which were the work of the French artist. The main picture is the opening illustration of the book, depicting Vambéry in his simple travelling costume, with his bag at his side, a hatchet in his hand and his donkey beside him. The full name of the draughtsman is in the lower left-hand corner and the engraver, J. Huyot, is on the right. The caption in the volume is simply the author's name: Arminius Vambéry. The publication in the journal which, as mentioned, was published in July 1865, is more detailed: “Arminius Vambéry. — Drawing by Émile Bayard from a photograph.”⁴⁹ (Figure 6) No similar statement is made about the other

pictures, but it is stated that the engravings were made “after Vambéry.” The Bayard illustrations always bear the author's signature; those taken from the English edition are anonymous. This suggests that of the 34 pictures, only one, the one of Vambéry with his donkey, had a photographic basis, the others were based on narratives. This fact clearly reflects Vambéry's experience in France, that here the manner of his travels aroused interest, not the scientific yield he had hoped for. The *how* was more important than the *why*. Émile Bayard turned this into a striking graphic based on a photograph that was considered authentic. But it is also clear from the press coverage of the time that it was the danger of travelling in disguise through unknown countryside, the reputation of the dervish incognito, that made him a hero in the British Isles, even though the public, in the parlance and perception of the time, also called him an “explorer.”⁵⁰

published five years later, with different illustrations, without naming the translator: Arminius VAMBÉRY, *Mes aventures et mes voyages dans l'Asie Central de Téhéran à Khiva, Bokhara et Samarkand à travers le grand désert turcoman* (Tours: Maison Alfred Mame et Fils, 1870).

⁴⁹ *Le Tour du Monde* 12, (1865): 41., full page illustration.

⁵⁰ The role of the incognito is treated for instance: “The Hungarian Dervish,” *All the Year Round* 13, no. 303. (1865. febr. 11.): 66–72.; “Travels in Central Asia. By Arminius Vambéry. London, 1864,” *The Quarterly Review* 117, no. 234. (1865): 234. 476–519, 486–487.; “A Brace Traveller,” *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 98, no. 602. (1865. dec.): 723–742, 732. About the press coverage in England see MANDLER, *Arminius Vambéry*, 55–69. Traveling in disguise was not praised in all forums. From the vitriolic article of the *Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung*, the Catholic newspaper in Pest, *Religio*, which vehemently opposes Vambéry's university ambitions, published a damning longer excerpt in Hungarian: CSELKA Nándor, “Egyházi tudósítások,” *Religio* 2nd sem., no. 27. (1865): 209–212, 211, note 4.

The “picture with the donkey” soon became Vámbéry's most popular early portrait. In Hungary, it was quickly published in the 17 September 1865 issue of *Hazánk és a Külföld* [Our Country and the Rest of the World]. The woodcut, signed “Vámbéry in a dervish costume. (After a photograph),” was published as an illustration of an episode not included in the travelogue, accompanied by another fictional depiction. “Our first very successful picture,” they added, “shows Vambéry in his full figure, dressed in a dervish outfit and with his donkey, as he roamed Central Asia. In this larger picture the portrait of the famous traveller is also quite authentic.”⁵¹ This is a way of justifying the photographic basis of the drawing, and thus the authenticity of the representation, because of the photograph.

Émile Bayard has summarised his artistic credo regarding the book and magazine illustration in a separate volume. He himself was known not only as a painter, caricaturist, and illustrator, but also worked as a photographer. He regarded photography as a useful ancillary tool, but he preferred the artistic illustration of a painter or graphic artist, because he considered it to have an expressive power equivalent to that of a text. The growing documentary role of photography led him to gradually move to the illustration of literary works, which allowed him to continue to assert his way of thinking. He made it a point to collaborate with – listen to – the authors whose works he undertook to illustrate.⁵² This is certain that it happened also in the current case, as the phrase “after Vámbéry,” which appears regularly under his pictures, indicates. Moreover, in the Italian version of the journal it was stated as follows: the drawings were made “after a sketch by Vambéry” (*da uno schizzo de Vambéry*). When the first part of the travelogue was published in Milan in 1873 as an independent volume, this seemingly surprising clarification statement was no longer made.⁵³ It is in the light of all this that the significance of the caption in one case is really understood: the drawing was made on the basis of a photograph.

Bayard's depiction of Vámbéry, published in *Le Tour du Monde*, has had an impressive career. It has also been used outside Hungary by various organs and publishers. It goes without saying that it is also to be found in the Italian edition of the journal just cited.⁵⁴ In the United States, the journal of American phrenologists attached it to its highly praised article on the Vámbéry. (The same issue also published a biography and portrait of Franz Liszt.)⁵⁵ The illustration was published in London in 1872, after a break of a few years. This time, Vámbéry summed up details from his Persian experiences for the fourth volume of the series entitled *Illustrated Travels*, illustrated by “celebrated artists.” The illustration entitled “Vámbéry in his travelling costume” was published without the signature of Bayard and Huyot's or indication of source.

⁵¹ VÁMBÉRY Ármin, “Egy német órás balvégzete Bokharában,” *Hazánk és a Külföld* 1, no. 38. (1865, szept. 17.): 599–602., figure: 600. – “Our second picture depicts the scene when Vámbéry, as a dervish, not daring to reveal his curiosity, looks in the mirror at the German words written on the wall behind him.”

⁵² Émile BAYARD, *L'illustration et les illustrateurs* (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1898), 205. More on him: LAGARDE-FOUQUET, “Édouard Charton, 05 Le Tour du Monde,” access: 2022. 10. 10, [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89mile_Bayard_\(illustrateur\)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89mile_Bayard_(illustrateur)).

⁵³ Arminio VAMBÉRY, “Viaggi nell' Asia Centrale da Téhéran a Khiva, Bokhara e Samarcanda,” *Il Giro del mondo* 4, no. 15. (1865): 238–244.; Arminio VAMBÉRY, *Viaggi di un falso dervish nell' Asia Centrale da Téhéran a Khiva, Bokhara e Samarcanda per il gran deserto Turcomanno* (Milani: E. Treves, Editore, 1873) – 21 illustrations by Bayard.

⁵⁴ *Il Giro del mondo* 4, no. 16. (1865): 241. On the Italian version of the magazine see Francesca TACCHI, “The world seen from Milan: Illustrated travel journals in the nineteenth century,” in Guido ABBATISTA ed. *Global Perspectives in Modern Italian Culture: Knowledge and Representation of the World in Italy from the Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century*, 208–228 (Abingdon–New York: Routledge, 2021).

⁵⁵ “Arminius VAMBÉRY, the Hungarian Orientalist,” *American Phrenological Journal and Life Illustrated* 48, no. 3. (1868): 93–95., picture: 92. „Abbe Franz Liszt, the Confessor-musician”, *ibid.* 88–91., portrait: 89.

The content of the picture did not correspond to the text, since Vámbéry did not travel through Persia in a dervish costume, but travelled in a different incognito, as a Turkish (Sunni) *effendi*. The subtle 'slip' may have been his own, or perhaps came from the editor, and readers probably did not even notice it, but it helped to reinforce the picture of Vámbéry as a traveller “dressed as a begging dervish”. The text is based on the author's voluminous book *Vándorlásaim és élményeim Persiában* [My wanderings and experiences in Persia], published in Hungarian by Heckenast in Pest, which does not even include a print of Bayard's drawing, but is illustrated with colour lithographs of Persian buildings and costumes. Heckenast also published the book in German with identical illustrations.⁵⁶

The Leipzig publisher Otto Spamer deceptively used the illustration of a figure in dervish dress, travelling on a donkey, almost as his own engraving in his massive volume of 70 inter-text illustrations of Central Asia. It is shown on the title page of the work, by the German geographer and ethnographer Friedrich von Hellwald (1842–1892), and a larger version is in the chapter on Turkestan, which is essentially identical with an extract from Vámbéry's travel account. The caption clearly matches the pictorial representation with the actual situation: “Herman Vámbéry auf der Reise im Lande der Turkomanen.”⁵⁷ The “picture with the donkey” was subsequently featured in the columns of the *Illustrirte Welt*, a German magazine with a large circulation, when the second German edition of Vámbéry's journey to Central Asia appeared in 1876. The popular weekly magazine of the Stuttgart publisher Eduard Hallberger (1822–1880) reached then a circulation of 382,000 copies. Although the title of the image, also published here without signatures, corresponds to the “content”, it is one step further away from the circumstances in which the illustration was created: “Arminius Vambéry in der Turkomanensteppe.”⁵⁸

Two other 19th century publications of Bayard's portrait deserve even more attention. The publisher of *Illustrated Travels* reused it in an exclusive album in 1888. The representative volume, compiled and written by

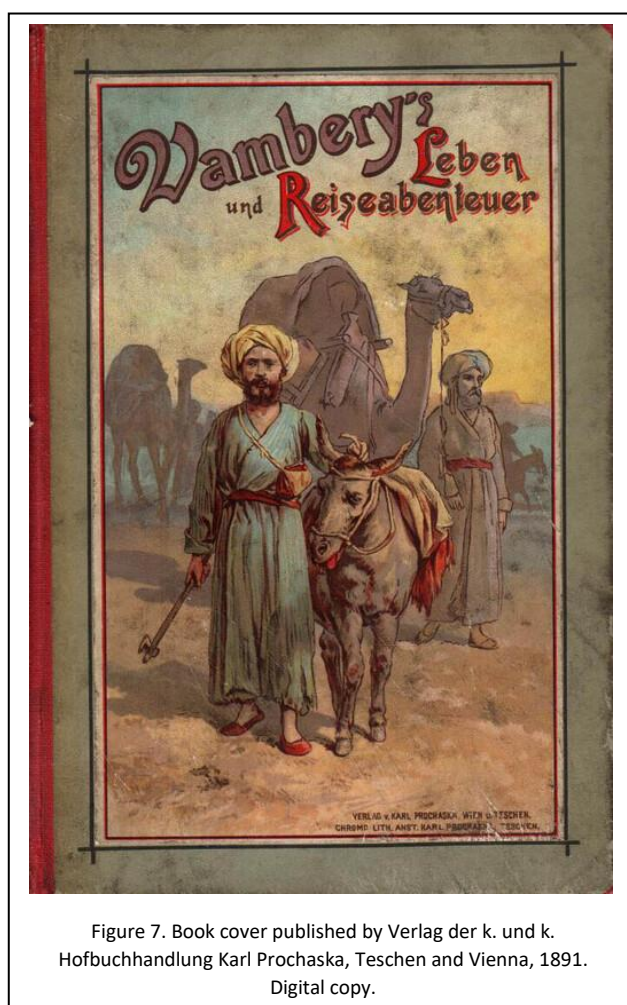


Figure 7. Book cover published by Verlag der k. und k. Hofbuchhandlung Karl Prochaska, Teschen and Vienna, 1891. Digital copy.

⁵⁶ Arminius VAMBÉRY, “A Ramble in Persia,” in *Illustrated Travels: A Record of Discovery, Geography, and Adventure*, IV, H. W. BATES ed. 243–252., 267–271 (London: Cassel Petter & Galpin, 1872), 249.; VAMBÉRY Ármin, *Vándorlásaim és élményeim Persiában* (Pest: Heckenast Gusztáv, 1867); Hermann Vámbéry, *Meine Wanderungen und Erlebnisse in Persien* (Pest: Heckenast, 1869).

⁵⁷ Friedrich von HELLWALD, *Centralasien: Landschaften und Völker in Kaschgar, Turkestan, Kaschmir und Tibet: mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Russlands Bestrebungen und seinen Kulturberuf* (Leipzig: Otto Spamer, 1875), front page, 305.

⁵⁸ *Illustrirte Welt* Heft 17 (1876): 429., explanation of the image: 439. The same picture as a clipping: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Bildarchiv Austria, Objektname: Pf 29.523: D (1), its subject: „in Turkoman costume.”

Mary Hield to promote the biographies of great men and celebrities, also includes Vámbéry. The “picture with the donkey” shows readers the determined traveller-scientist persistent in all things.⁵⁹ Here, Vámbéry and his disguised portrait fit into the pantheon of exceptional personalities favoured by the cult of celebrities in the 19th-century. His figure is elevated among the celebrities – and above the average – by a portrayal that is radically different from other famous personalities: he wears a turban, has a grown beard, stands in front of the viewer in a torn dress and an open bag. He has only a hatchet to protect himself and a donkey to escort him across the desert steppe. A few years later, a Czech publisher used Bayard's drawing and engraving in a unique way to publish a biography of Vámbéry. The first biography of the traveller-scholar was written for young people. The colour (chromolithographic) cover of the volume shows this famous Bayard illustration, reworked by the publisher's unknown draughtsman, but the picture is inverted and supplemented with additional figures. The book cover thus depicts Vámbéry in an even more fictionalised way. The portrait is thus emphatically a depiction of a story, moreover, a scene, and the setting intensifies the romantic effect of the image. The author of the biography was Berta Katscher (1860–1903), a Hungarian Jewish writer and versatile translator living in Vienna, who wrote in German and who, in addition to her popular youth writings, also worked hard to establish the Hungarian peace society. She was the mother of Róza (Rosika) Schwimmer, the Hungarian-born Jewish pacifist, feminist, women's suffragist.⁶⁰ (Figure 7)

The depictions and the photographers of Tehran

In his writings, Ármin Vámbéry did not reveal when and under what circumstances he stood in front of the camera of photographers in London, in Pest, or even in Tehran. It remains unclear where and by whom he was photographed in dervish outfit. Rumours emerged that he was photographed in some caravan in Turkestan by an unknown French wandering photographer.⁶¹ It is as if this idea was inspired by the book cover of the earlier German biography of Vámbéry. He did not reveal the secret to the public, which is why the minor references that accompany the published pictures and can be collected from the captions are indispensable. Some additional support is provided by Vámbéry's two autobiographical books, whose choice of illustrations also expresses to some extent his attitude to the photographs and portraits of himself. Moreover, the fact how he manipulated them. The quoted photograph of London, published in *Küzdelmeim* [My Struggles], which he kept with him for four decades and only then made available to the public, is an indication of this. He did not include it in the original English edition of his autobiography, but he did include the engraving

⁵⁹ “Perseverance – Arminius Vaméry,” in Mary HIELD, *Living Pages from Many Ages* (London: Cassel Petter & Galpin, [1888]), 145–148, picture page: 144.

⁶⁰ Bertha KATSCHER, *Hermann Vámbéry's Leben und Reiseabenteuer. Der Jugend erzählt* (Teschen und Wien: Verlag der k. und k. Hofbuchhandlung Karl Prochaska, 1891). About the author and her husband, Lipót (Leopold) Katscher see SZINNYEI József, *Magyar írók élete és munkássága. Vol. V.* (Budapest: Hornyánszky, 1897), 1225. – Following their marriage, they lived in London for several years. Her obituary: “Katscher Berta halála”, *Pesti Napló*, 1903. szept. 19., 10.; *Egyenlőség* 1903. szept. 20., 10.; UJVÁRI Péter ed., *Magyar Zsidó Lexikon* (Budapest: A Magyar Zsidó Lexikon kiadása, 1929), 456. A new evaluation of her personality and creative career is given by Suzanne BLUMESBERGER, “Berta Katscher. Einblicke in ihr Leben und Schreiben,” in *Transdifferenz und Transkulturalität. Migration und Alterität in den Literaturen und Kulturen Österreich-Ungarns*, Alexandra MILLNER and Katalin TELLER, eds. 211–225 (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2018).

⁶¹ FARKAS ZSUZSA, “A fényképre támaszkodó grafika. Adatok a fényképek alapján készült fametszetek köréből,” *Ars Hungarica* 40, 2 (2014): 207–222, 215. – sources are not provided, as she writes „... considered by”. A blog post by Tamás Sajó also refers to the rumour, access: 2022. 10. 15, <http://wangfolyo.blogspot.com/2009/11/temetolatogatas.html>

of him with his Tartar companion. He did not include the photograph which served as the basis of the illustration, which he presumably no longer had, unlike a portrait in Tehran in European dress – see below – which was first published at this time and which, as we now know, has been preserved in his bequest.⁶² At the same time, he may have been influenced in his choice of pictures by the points of view of his publishers and by his colleagues and friends, such as Mihály Balla (1862–1955), who translated his autobiography from English and helped to publish it, and whose papers include some of Vámbéry's photographs from his old age.⁶³

In an undated letter of 1864, Vámbéry asked John Murray: “I'll beg you to let publish my portrait after a photograph my friends let make at Teheran.”⁶⁴ It is not clear from the letter what kind of publication this was. The photograph taken in Tehran was in the possession of the publisher, or rather Murray, as a later message from Vámbéry makes it clear. Along with his letter dated in Pest on 6 November 1866, he also sent a photograph to Murray, with the following note: “I have the honour to be in the [family] album in my ragged dervish attire and now I will show myself in a quite different grab.”⁶⁵ We know of only two photographs of him in civilian (Hungarian) dress that date from the period between the trip to Central Asia and the writing of the letter. Most probably, he sent to London the Schrecker photograph made for the academic album, in which the only memory of Tehran was the shah's medal. He may have forwarded a portrait by the photographer Samu Lengyel of Balatonfüred, taken in 1865. The studio portrait shows him wearing the Order of the Sun and the Lion, also in a bow tie and a braided open corded *atilla* attire.⁶⁶ There is also a full-length portrait by Ludwig Angerer in Vienna, presenting him wearing a tailcoat and a watch chain – as a European scientist – and half of his top hat is still visible on the table beside him. However, the date of its origin is uncertain.⁶⁷ But which of his pictures in a dervish outfit might have been in the Murray family photo album? No answer. There is no indication of this in the letters, and the publisher's voluminous archives do not contain the private family papers in the narrower sense, and therefore unfortunately not the album(s) either.⁶⁸ However, one fact is confirmed by this source material: photographs of Vámbéry were taken already in Tehran. And that was when he finished his journey and put his disguise back on for the photo shoot. Why? The possible answer can be formulated by taking several detours.

During his experiences in Tehran, Vámbéry warmly recalled the English envoy, Charles Alison who, among other things, provided him with letters of recommendation. In the pages of *Travels in Central Asia*, he mentioned that “[t]he distinguished representative of the Queen,

⁶² Vámbéry, *The Story of My Struggles*, II: frontispiece (photograph taken in Teheran), 392 (with his companion). On the bequest, but not mentioning the photographs see Miklós SÁRKÓZI, “Newly discovered Vámbéry documents from the USA: A Preliminary Report,” *Archivum Ottomanicum* 31, 1 (2014): 61–78.

⁶³ National Széchényi Library, Manuscript Department, Fol. Germ. 1573. In the preface, Vámbéry thanked Balla, “who was my loyal colleague, researched a lot of information about my past, and was tireless in getting my book to the press.” It refers to Mihály Balla's real role as “press secretary”: KOVÁCS SÁNDOR, “Vámbéry-arcképek és szerepek...,” 13.

⁶⁴ Ármin Vámbéry, letter to John Murray, 1864. The same part is quoted in Lory ALDER and Richard DALBY, *The Dervish of Windsor Castle: The Life of Arminius Vambéry* (London: Bachman & Turner Ltd., 1979), 227.

⁶⁵ Ármin Vámbéry, letter to John Murray, Pest, 6 Nov. 1866. Also quoted by ALDER and DALBY, *The Dervish of Windsor Castle*, 245.

⁶⁶ Photograph taken by Samu Lengyel, Balatonfüred, Hungary, 1865, albumen, 5,7 × 9,2 cm, there is a dedication to an unknown person on the recto: “With friendship by Vámbéry.”, Petőfi Literary Museum, Budapest, F.7736. Published in FELFÖLDI, „Fénnyel metszett élet”, 62.

⁶⁷ Photo by Ludwig Angerer, Vienna, about 1865, albumen, 6 × 10 cm, Hungarian National Museum Historical Photo Department, inv. no. 585/1956 fk. Published in ALDER and DALBY, *The Dervish of Windsor Castle*, 216.; *Batu kán pesti rokonai*, 121.; MANDLER, *Armenius Vambéry*, xx.; MÁNDLER, *Kelet és Nyugat mezsgyéjén*, no p. – both authors date the picture for 1865–1870; FELFÖLDI, „Fénnyel metszett élet”, 64.

⁶⁸ Mila Daskalova, Special Collections Assistant, e-mail, 1 Nov. 2022.

Mr. Alison, as well as the two secretaries, Messrs. Thompson and Watson, really rejoiced at the happy and successful termination of my journey.”⁶⁹ Later, in his autobiography, he wrote: “[A]nd now, on my return, hale and hearty, but with the indisputable marks of excessive sufferings upon me, every one's sympathy went out to me. All strove to show me attention and to please me in some way or other. The various Legations invited me to festive dinners. The English Envoy, Sir Charles Alison, asked me to write an account of my travels, and gave me official recommendations to Lord Palmerston, Lord Strangford, Sir Justin Sheil, Sir H. Rawlinson, and other political and scientific notabilities in London, which were of great service to me, and largely influenced my further career.”⁷⁰

This report did indeed reach Palmerston, as Vámbéry recalled in his London celebrations. “My memoirs, which I had written in Tehran on the situation in Central Asia at the request of the British ambassador, actually reached Lord Palmerston, the then Prime Minister.”⁷¹ He did not publish the text of this in *Küzdélmeim*, just wrote another one as a supplement that was available to him. However, according to the caption quoted on the *Az Ország Tükre*, the envoy not only asked for a written account from Vámbéry, who returned with “visible signs” of an adventurous and dangerous journey, but also a photograph, which he apparently attached to the report. Vámbéry's memorandum was immediately forwarded by the envoy to Foreign Minister Russell, who forwarded it to the Prime Minister.⁷² It is not known whether the photograph survives among the archival documents which have already come to light. There is no doubt that he himself made no mention of the latter in his writings, but the claim of the Hungarian newspaper is very plausible. It is clear from Vámbéry's words that, in the midst of rumours and fake news, everyone wanted to see things clearly. Who is he really? Did he really travel the desert road to Turkestan? Did he return unharmed, or are the rumours true that he died? The obvious thing to do was to provide photographic proof, to prove to the British Foreign Office that the daring traveller really existed. This fact has been overlooked in the research on Vámbéry, so the question remains as to the fate of the photograph taken in Tehran visual proof, a supplement to the report written at the request of the English envoy.

Even if Vámbéry never mentioned his own photographs, he did refer in his writings to two French photographers working in Tehran. Not to Italians, other Europeans, or Iranians. The main source, from which his references have been transferred to other texts, is his volume following and supplementing his travels in Central Asia, entitled *Vándorlásaim és élményeim Persiában*, published in Hungarian and German in 1867. The first, larger part of the book is a travelogue of Southern Persia as a prelude to his trip to Turkestan, and the second part is dedicated to his return from Turkestan and his stay in Tehran, which lasted over two months. His remarks have not been appreciated by scholars of the history of photography in Iran, although his report, in particular, about one of the two French photographers has been a source of valuable contributions. In his book, he wrote that he was the first European to see the sanctuary where the ashes of Fatima, sister of the eighth Imam Ali al-Rida (Ali al-Reza), “crumble” in Kum (Qom), “the holy city of the Persian ladies.” In this respect he mentioned that although “Mr Carlian, the current court photographer and professor of chemistry in Tehran had photographed” the hall of the Holy Sepulchre, he could not go further. “[I] can say

⁶⁹ VÁMBÉRY, *Travels in Central Asia*, 294.

⁷⁰ VÁMBÉRY, *The Story of My Struggles*, 214–215. Charles Alison (not yet *Sir*) was ambassador in Teheran in 1860–1870.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 260. Napoleon III also knew about the memoir, and inquired about its details, *ibid.* 292.

⁷² ALDER and DALBY, *The Dervish of Windsor Castle*, 196–199, 228. Vámbéry's later secret British foreign relations treated by MANDLER, *Arminius Vambéry*, 2, 99, 127.; SÁRKÖZY, “At the Crossroads.”

with certainty,” he added, “that during his visit, the doors of the inner courtyard were closed.” It was thanks to Vambéry's incognito that he was able to enter the sanctuary dressed as a Stambulian effendi as he travelled around Persia.⁷³

He wrote no more about the “court photographer,” which is of some significance, as we shall see below. He used his name somewhat inaccurately – not alone among his contemporaries – the correct name being François (or Frances) Carlhian (1818–1870), who arrived in Tehran in 1858 at the same time as French military advisers to the Persian army. An ardent supporter of photography, the “Westernised” Nasser al-Din commissioned him to teach Iranians photographic techniques. He was contracted on behalf of the shah by the Prime Minister, Amin el-Doule while in Europe. Initially, Carlhian made talbotypes, occasionally cyanotypes, and he established the collodion wet process in Tehran. The shah and one of his servants, Aqa Reza (1843–1889), were his first students, and the sovereign appointed him as the first court photographer in 1863. Carlhian did not have such a title, *Akkasbashi* but “merely” contributed his expertise to the introduction of photography to the Persian court. In 1859, the Royal Photographic Studio was established in the Golestan Palace and two years later, photography classes were started at the Polytechnic College of Tehran (Dar al-Fonun) under the guidance of the French photographer. Carlhian worked there until his death. The photographing of the Holy Sepulchre mentioned by Vambéry took place in 1859, when the shah made a one-and-a-half-year journey to the provinces of Kum (Qom), Soltaniye, Hamadan, Kurdistan and Azerbaijan. During this trip, the first photographs were taken in Khorhe during an archaeological excavation of ancient ruins initiated by the shah's order. During the trip, the student Aqa Reza also took stereoscopic photographs, a skill he learned from Carlhian.⁷⁴

In the second part of his book, where he describes Vambéry's return from Central Asia, he mentions another photographer. “Among the Europeans,” he writes, “whom I met in Teheran, I must mention Mr. Bloqueville [correctly Blocqueville], the most expensive of all photographers, who took part in an expedition against the Turkomans in the service of the shah but was captured there and had to pay an enormous sum of 10,000 ducats. Mr. Bloqueville, a French nobleman from head to toe, and besides an honest and gallant lad, to satisfy his thirst for adventure, made a detour towards the belle Perse [beautiful Persia]. The physician profession, almost the only occupation of Europeans in the Orient, seemed to him a very profane one. And at last, he found photography to be an even less exploited art in these

⁷³ VÁMBÉRY, *Vándorlásaim és élményeim...*, 196. – For Fāṭima bint Mūsā, her shrine see the Wikipedia, access: 2023. 09. 19. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatima_bint_Musa. Vambéry's description of the Iranian Shiite pilgrimage sites is praised by SÁRKÖZY Miklós, “Megjegyzések Vambéry Árminnak a Perszeopoliszban és az iráni síita zarándokhelyeken tett látogatásairól,” *Földrajzi Múzeumi Tanulmányok* 16 (2007): 25–36, 31–32.

⁷⁴ Iraj AFSHAR, “Some Remarks on the Early History of Photography in Persia,” in C. Edmund BOSWORTH and Carole HILLENBRAND, eds. *Qajar Iran: Political, Social and Cultural Change*, 261–282 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1983), 261, 263.; Chahryar ADLE, “Khorheh. The Down of Iranian Scientific Archaeological Excavation,” *Tavoos Iranian Art Quarterly* 2 (2000): 4–19, 11.; Carmen Pérez GONZÁLEZ, *Local Portraiture Through Lens of the 19th Century Iranian Photographers* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2012), 28–29.; Maria Francesca BONETTI and Alberto PRANDI, *La Persia Qajar: Fotografi italiani in Iran 1848–1864* (Rome: Peliti Associati, 2010), 180–181, Cat. 1–11.; Mohammad Reza TAHMASBPOUR, “Photography in Iran: A Chronology,” *History of Photography* 37, 1 (2013): 7–13.; Mohammad Reza TAHMASBPOUR, transl. Reza SHEIKH, “Photography During the Qajar Era, 1842–1925,” in *The Indigenous Lens? Early Photography in the Near and Middle East*, Marcus RITTER and Staci G. SCHEIWILLER, ed. 57–76 (Berlin–Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 59–60.; Alireza NABIPOUR and Reza SHEIKH, “The Photography Albums of the Royal Golestan Palace: A Window into the Social History of Iran during the Qajar Era,” in RITTER and SCHEIWILLER, *The Indigenous Lens?...*, 291–323.; Mohammad Reza TAHMASBPOUR and Carmen Pérez GONZÁLEZ, “Pioneer Iranian Stereo Photographers at the Persian Court, 1858–1905,” *International Journal on Stereo & Immersive Media* 2, no. 1. (2018): 46–65.; Annabelle LACOUR, “Des objectifs royaux? Souverains et photographes de cour en Asie au XIXe siècle,” *Photographica* 3 (2021): 72–96, 76–81.

lands. The king immediately engaged him, and he joined the Khorasan army in the capacity of painter of battle pieces. How the king could have delighted in anticipation at the thought that the heroic acts of his triumphant army were now to be recorded, each member of which would be portrayed before him as a very Rustem.”

The planned photographically captured expedition failed after the Turkoman raiders attacked the Persian army at Merv and captured most of them. The Frenchman was not spared his fate, and until he was freed for a huge ransom, he was kept as a “Turkoman slave with a heavy iron chain around his neck” for nearly a year and a half.

“He suffered a great deal,” wrote Vámbéry, “and when he saw me, his comrade, again, he cried for joy. He knew perfectly well what life in Central Asia was like, and he was the best able to understand the hardships I had gone through.”⁷⁵

Blocqueville himself wrote about his captivity in 1860-1861. His account appeared first in the bulletin of the Geographical Society and then in the 1866 issue of *Le Tour du Monde*. Not only did he describe the Persian army, their march, the settlements, and captivity he saw on the way, but he also made ethnographic notes on the Merv area. For this reason, he is considered among the French explorers of the 19th century as having had sufficient time to describe the customs of the Turkomans, especially the social status of women, and Muslim music culture. The published engravings were prepared on the basis of photographs and sketches. Only one of the photographs may have been his own work, the others are probably from others.⁷⁶

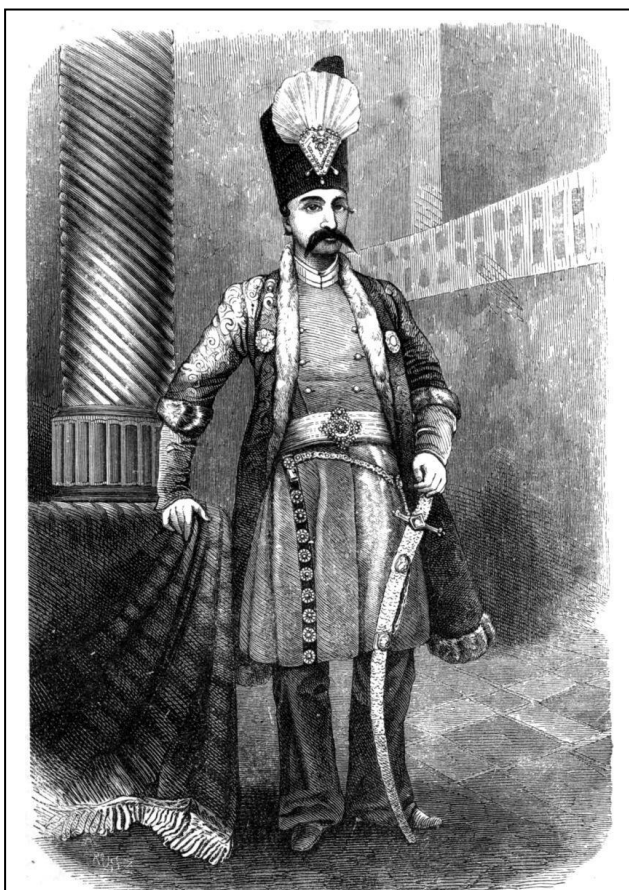


Figure 8. Nasser al-Din Shah, woodcut by Károly Ruzs based on the photograph by Henri de Couliboeuf de Blocqueville. Frontispiece to *Vándorlásaim és élményeim Persiában* (Pest: Heckenast, 1867.

⁷⁵ Vámbéry, *Vándorlásaim és élményeim...*, 395–396. Vámbéry included this paragraph to the second and enlarged edition of his *Közép-ázsiai utazás* (Pest: Athenaeum, 1873), 360–361. On pages 81 and 117, he writes about Blocqueville's captivity in more detail than in the first edition. He also referred to his captivity and ransom in his letters addressed to the Hungarian Academy, thereby highlighting the danger of the region he travelled through. He mentions elsewhere that “the Emperor Napoleon III., had to pay 12,000 ducats ransom for Monsieur de Bloqueville [sic],” see *The Story of my Struggles*, 464.

⁷⁶ Henri de Couliboeuf de BLOCQUEVILLE, “Notices sur les Nomades du Turkestan,” *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* 5, no. 9. (Septembre 1865): 509–527.; Henri de Couliboeuf de BLOCQUEVILLE, “Note sur une partie du Turkestan Méridional,” *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie* 5, no. 10. (Octobre 1865): 424–432.; Henri de Couliboeuf de BLOCQUEVILLE, “Quatorze mois de captivité chez les Turcomans (frontières du Turkestan et de la Perse),” *Le Tour du Monde* 13, semestre 1 (1866): 225–272. The cover of the German edition of the latter shows the woodcut depicting a Turkoman slave shackled around the neck published in Vámbéry's *Travels in Central Asia*, see *Gefangener bei den Turkomanen 1860–1861 im Grenzgebiet von Turkestan und Persien* (Nürnberg: Nomad-Press, 1980). Figures in Blocqueville's publications is analysed by BONETTI and PRANDI, *La Persia Qajar*, 181–182, 184.; Maria Francesca BONETTI and Alberto PRANDI, “Italian Photographers in Iran 1848–64,” *History of Photography* 37, no. 1. (2013): 14–31, 25. See also Numa BROU, “Couliboeuf de Blocqueville (Henri de),” in BROU NUMA, *Dictionnaire illustré des explorateurs et grands voyageurs français du XIX siècle*, vol 2: *Asie* (Paris: CTHS, 1992), 110–112.

In his autobiography, the first to be published in English, Vámbéry included the story of the captive French military officer-photographer. The subtle difference between the English text and the original Hungarian is that it does not include the half-sentence: “when he saw me, his comrade, again, he cried for joy.”⁷⁷ The closer relationship between them is thus only evoked in the Hungarian text. The volume *Vándorlásaim és élményeim Persiában* also indirectly suggests that Vámbéry presumably not only met Blocqueville, “the most precious of all photographers” on his return to Tehran, but also may have received photograph or photographs of him. The book's title picture, a full-length woodcut portrait depicting the young shah, is captioned “Nasr-ed-din Shah, King of Persia. (After a ptoho).” The engraver's signature is clearly visible in the lower left corner of the image: RUSZ. The engraving is therefore the work of the Hungarian Károly Ruzs, the engraver from Pest who made a name for himself mainly with his demanding portraits.⁷⁸ (Figure 8) The photograph who captured the shah, which he worked from, was identical to the one now most probably attributed to Blocqueville, of which two copies are known. One is in the so-called *The Wilkinson Album* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. (Figure 9) Although this salt paper positive is not signed, photographic historians have attributed it to him based on indirect facts. This attribution is strongly supported by the other surviving copy, also unmarked, which is preserved in the private family archives in Palermo of the diplomat Marcello Cerruti (1808–1896), head of the Italian mission to Persia in 1862.⁷⁹ Vámbéry may



Figure 9. Portrait of Nasser al-Din Shah, photograph by Henri de Couliboeuf de Blocqueville, salt paper positive from a paper negative, 1858–1860. Metropolitan Museum, The Wilkinson Album (Gift of Charles K. and Irma B. Wilkinson, 1977).

⁷⁷ Arminius VAMBÉRY, *His Life and Adventures. Written by Himself* (London: T Fisher Unwin, 1884), 316.

⁷⁸ VÁMBÉRY, *Vándorlásaim és élményeim...*, front page. Károly Ruzs (?–1898) was mainly known for his well-executed engraved portraits and his “English style” drawings.

⁷⁹ *The Wilkins Album*, salted paper print from a paper negative, 1858–1860, 33,9 × 24,2 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Gift of Charles K. and Irma B. Wilkinson, 1977); *Montabone Album*, salted paper print from a paper negative, about 1862, 33,9 cm × 24,2 cm, Archivio Famiglia Cerruti, Palermo (Album, c.1v). As far as authorship is concerned see Donna STEIN, “Early Photography in Iran,” *History of Photography* 7, 4 (1983): 257–292, 259, 261, Figure 4, 291, note 11.; Donna STEIN, “Three Photographic Traditions in Nineteenth-Century Iran,” *Muqarnas* 6 (1989): 112–130, 114, Figure 4, 115–116. (as unknown photographer, about 1852–1855); Ali BEHDAD, “Royal Portrait Photography in Iran: Constructions of Masculinity, Representations of Power,” *Acta Orientalis* 43 (2013): 32–45, 32 (Figure), 33, 35 (contributes to Luigi Pesce). The latest identification based on the materials of the 1862 Italian military mission: BONETTI and PRANDI, *La Persia Quajar*, 183 (20a and 20b items); BONETTI and PRANDI, “Italian Photographers in Iran,” 24, Figure 11. – It can be noted that Vámbéry “mixed in with the Persian spectators” witnessed how the 25-person Italian mission from Constantinople to Tehran, headed by the ambassador, was welcomed in Tabriz, see VÁMBÉRY, *Vándorlásaim és élményeim...*, 125–126. The photographer Luigi Montabone (?–1877) from Turin also arrived with them. He presented his Persian photographs of buildings and historical

have received from the photographer a further print of this portrait of the shah, on the basis of which Károly Ruzs worked. The Hungarian wood engraver took the liberty of placing the sovereign in an ornate setting, holding his right hand on a console, while in the foreground he is leaning on a chair. The engraving follows the photograph in every aspect: the posture – except for the way the sovereign holds his left leg – the costume, the curved Iranian ornamental sword, the depiction of the diamond ornaments are all perfectly identical to the photograph. This lithograph, made and published in Budapest, is not known in the very rich iconography of the shah, although thanks to the German version of the volume, it is theoretically more widely accessible. Painted portraits of the shah have been faithfully reproduced from the underlying photograph in Tehran.⁸⁰ This is another indication that the photograph was probably one of those that Nasser al-Din Shah himself chose to distribute as his official portrait, making it an object of exchange and a gift to guests and visitors to the court. In this way, Vámbéry himself could have received the photograph from the shah, but nowhere did he mention this. After their meeting, he wrote only about the order of merit, and in his autobiography, compiled much later for an English publisher, he sarcastically noted that the shah had also given him a shawl worth at least 50 guildens, but that he never received it because of corrupt officials.⁸¹

Researchers are divided on the arrival of Henri de Couliboeuf de Blocqueville in Tehran. Some put his arrival in 1857 on the basis of a French archival document, others say he arrived with the French military mission a year later.⁸² A recent examination of the photographs contained *The Wilkinson Album* suggests that he was present and photographed during the 1859–1860 journey mentioned above. One of the photographs attributed to him in the collection was taken in Kum (Qom).⁸³ It is probable that it was his impressions of this period that led Nasr al-Din to appoint him as the photographer for the punitive expedition against the Turkomans. It is difficult to distinguish between Carlhian's and Blocqueville's photographs, even more so because their collaboration is undeniable, despite the scattered or partial data. Based on the technical quality of the surviving photographs, Carlhian was clearly a professional photographer, who from 1861 taught photography as a subject as part of his chemistry course at the Polytechnic College of Tehran (the Dar al-Fonun). Blocqueville can be considered a more casual photographer, and it is not known how long he remained in Teheran. According to Vámbéry's information, he was still there in early 1864, but his later fate is unknown, apart from his publications in France.

Two of Vámbéry's photographs in Tehran in a dervish attire, which became known by means of engravings, ought to be attributed to these two French photographers. It is not yet possible

monuments at the World Exhibition in Paris, see BONETTI and PRANDI, "Italian Photographers in Iran," 26–31.; Mohammad Reza TAHMASBPOUR, "Photography in Iran...", 8–9.; Mahshid MODARES, "Montabone's 1862 photos from Iran have left a legacy," Book review, access: 2022. 11. 11,

https://www.academia.edu/27075427/Montabones_1862_photos_from_Iran_have_left_a_legacy.

⁸⁰ There are two in Elahe HELBIG, "Édification d'un pouvoir, composition d'une histoire. L'héritage photographique de l'époque qajare," in *L'Empire des roses. Chefs-d'oeuvre de l'art persan du XIX siècle*, Musée Louvre Lens, Gwenaëlle FELLINGER and Hana CHIDIAC, éd. 390–413 (Gent: Snoeck, 2018), 404 (Cat. 411, oil, private collection), 405 (Cat. 412, coloured ink drawing, Louvre).

⁸¹ VÁMBÉRY, *Travels in Central Asia*, 295–296.; VÁMBÉRY, *His Life and Adventures*, 310–311. The Blocqueville photograph as "official portrait" is mentioned by BONETTI and PRANDI, *La Persia Qajar*, 181, cat. 10.

⁸² AFSHAR, "Some Remarks...", 263, 278.; ADLE, "Khorreh...", 18, in footnote 13 he strongly asserts that Blocqueville and Carlhian did not arrive at the Persian court together. The other authors usually refer to them and Yahya Zoka's photo history of Iran, published only in Persian.

⁸³ BONETTI and PRANDI, *La Persia Qajar*, 183–185, the engraving made by the photograph in Kum: 183, cat. 22. On Blocqueville's connection to another French photographer, Marcel Gustave Laverdet (1855–1875) see 194, cat. V.

to say with absolute certainty which of them was behind the camera when they wanted to capture the figure of the begging dervish as evidence and at the same time *to re-enact the role – to act it out* – by photographing the traveller who had returned to their circle. In this “citational act,”⁸⁴ not all the details were taken care of, or, on the contrary, the figure of the dervish crossing the desert *with his donkey* was deliberately brought to life. In fact, Vámbéry had already got rid of his faithful companion before leaving for Samarkand and continued his journey by carriage. He later got another one, but he was forced to sell “the poor brute [animal], being quite worn out with his journey” after his arrival in Herat. And to Tehran, “having any companion except my friend the Mollah,” they both went on horseback. “We were both mounted on good horses, my own property” – as it is written in the pages of *Travels in Central Asia*.⁸⁵ The picture of the Vámbéry with his mullah shows him in a very similar – or even identical – felt clothing to the one in the Clarkington photograph. The clothing in the picture with the donkey, however, is not identical, which presumably could have meant two photographic occasions. Immediately after the trip to Turkestan, Vámbéry's reference to the two photographers does not carry equal weight. He referred to Carlhian only indirectly, and wrote much more about Blocqueville, and not only because of his captivity. One can hardly infer from his text anything other than that he was more closely acquainted with him. The portrait of the shah was (probably) also given to him. It was he who truly understood the difficulties and trials of his journey. It is therefore reasonable to assume – if not to state with certainty – that the picture or pictures of the dervish in disguise were taken by him, “on the order of the British Embassy in Tehran.”

However, a different portrait was also produced in Tehran. As briefly mentioned above, in his autobiography, *The Story of My Struggles*, published in 1904, Vámbéry published his portrait in European costume which, according to the caption, was taken after his return to Tehran in 1863. The mismatch of dates can be attributed to the devil of the printing press. In the Hungarian edition, the photograph has been correctly published with the following note: “Vámbéry's portrait. / Taken in Tehran, in January 1864, / a few days after his arrival from Central Asia. / Photograph by M. Carlian, photographer to the royal court of Persia.”⁸⁶ The appearance of the portrait of Vámbéry, seated, in a corded waistcoat, wearing a Turkish fez on his head and with his hands in his trouser pockets, was a real novelty in relation to the Turkestan trip, and four decades later the image has become as widespread as contemporary engravings of the travelling dervish.

The caption above in the Hungarian volume is Vámbéry's second reference to the French photographer. It was not referred to in other places. It has recently been discovered that the original copy of the European costume photograph survived in the estate of Vámbéry's grandson, Robert Vambéry (1907–1998), preserved by John Fuegi, Professor of Comparative Studies at the University of Maryland. The Library and Information Center of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences received a digital copy of the photograph from him, accompanied by other documents. To mark the 100th anniversary of the death of Ármin Vámbéry, the bilingual website and exhibition, produced by the Oriental Collection, was presented for the first time in September 2013. The source value of the picture is greatly enhanced by the fact that Vámbéry's *subsequent* inscription is written underneath: “Made in Tehran on 28 January 1864

⁸⁴ EDWARDS, *Raw Histories*, 157.

⁸⁵ VÁMBÉRY, *Travels in Central Asia*, 194, 274, 293. (quotations).

⁸⁶ VÁMBÉRY, *The Story of My Struggles*, II: front piece; VÁMBÉRY, *Küzdelmeim*, 224. – emphasis in the original.



Figure 10. Portrait of Ármin Vámbéry. Tehran, [28 Jan 1864] photograph signed by Henri de Couliboeuf de Blocqueville, albumin. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département des Cartes et plans, Les collections de la Société de Géographie, Portrait n° 1577.

by Mr. Carlian.’ It was only ten days since I had put on my European clothes, my lean broken body was wretched from the miserable dervish life, but at least the signs of the weary journey to Khorasan were very much in evidence.”⁸⁷

Despite this unique caption, there is some doubt about the identity of the photographer. This is partly because Vámbéry made only a very partial or passing mention of Carlhian immediately after his stay in Tehran, and even more so because a signed version of the photograph in European dress has survived, signed by the other French photographer, “H. de Blocqueville.” (Figure 10) The albumen positive in the collection of the Geographical Society of Paris is preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, together with two later Vámbéry portraits. Its origin is known to have been a gift given to the Society between 1881 and 1885.⁸⁸ Knowing the above quoted texts, it cannot be ruled out that, despite Vámbéry’s

subsequent note, this portrait is also the work of Blocqueville, who was sympathetic to him. It is possible that he used his own camera – if he had a new one, which he received or acquired after his captivity – or that he sat as a model in Carlhian’s studio, but that Blocqueville used the camera. Of course, it is also possible that the latter simply made another print of his partner’s recording and signed it. The dimensions and technical parameters of the recording in the estate are unknown, so it cannot be compared with the copy in Paris. The mentioned

⁸⁷ Copy donated by John Fuegi. The original is deposited at the Clara and Robert Vambéry papers, University of Maryland Libraries, Archival Collection. Its first publication: *Vámbéry Ármin (1832–1913), kelet-kutató dervisruhában*, vambery.mtak.hu/img/03-016.jpg; *Egy magyar dervis ... / A Hungarian dervish ...*, 19. The name of the photographer is wrongly specified as Carllione in Felföldi, „Fény metszette élet”, 61.

⁸⁸ Albumen, 14.3 × 11 cm, glued to 19.5 × 12 cm cardboard, Bibliothèque nationale de France, département des Cartes et plans, Les collections de la Société de Géographie, Portrait n° 1577. There are also two other Vámbéry portraits here: the Hungarian photographer Simonyi’s portrait of Vámbéry with his signature dated as “Pest 21 ap: 1873.” (P. n°: 2542) and that of the London Stereoscopic Company, date affixed to the verso, “Budapest 18/12. 82.”, which was sent by Vámbéry to the Geographical Society with a recommendation dated. All three are available in Gallica’s digital platform. Information about the Blocqueville portrait is from Olivier Loiseaux, curator of the collection, e-mail, September 16, 2022.

“entanglement” between Carlhian and Blocqueville is also effectively illustrated by this case, apart from the fact that there is still no clear answer as to who photographed the epiphany of Rashid effendi returning from Inner Asia in Tehran.

After the portrait in the corded dress was finished and Vámbéry had shaken off the dust of his journey to Central Asia, Nasser al-Din Shah asked to see him. He called him and chatted with him about his “strange journey” to Turkestan. At the end of the audience, the shah asked him for a written account, after he had been decorated for his admiration of what he had heard. If not at other times, Vámbéry could have presented the sovereign, who had a special interest in photography, with a photograph of *some kind* when he submitted the document. As the first to be trained, and indeed the first major Quajar amateur photographer, he not only loved photography, but also understood the importance of capturing the moment. The court photographers had to document all the important events, the court's dignitaries, the harem, the palace, the old buildings, and anything that caught his interest during his travels. He also liked to excel at it himself. Vámbéry could either portray himself in the Turkish fez, but as a European, or “in the dress of a Dervish, with an immense turban on his head.” Among the 1,040 albums and more than 42,500 photographs in the Golestan Palace's unrivalled photographic archives, perhaps the memory of this encounter is also hidden.⁸⁹

Why didn't Vámbéry's portrait in European dress become more widely known sooner? Why did he not publish it when he got back to Europe? He preserved the picture for decades, just like the photograph in dervish costume he made six months later at Clarkington in London. He did, however, he has launched a version of the latter. As a testimony to his journey, he seems to have attached greater importance to the photographs executed subsequently in London alongside the ones made on the spot upon his return to Tehran, also taken wearing a dervish costume.

This is not surprising at all. Both in the Persian capital and in London, it was convenient to use this method to prove traveller status. In particular, to portray the traveller who had survived an adventurous journey and had undergone hardships represented as a dervish or a reference to it was an obvious and a more attractive solution for the contemporary public and the press than promoting the figure of the explorer who was reintegrating himself to Europe. “In Birmingham, I was asked – he remembered – to bring my costume bought in Central Asia, to give the manufacturers an insight into the colour, material, and fashion of the national costume.” This may have happened in 1866 when, at the invitation of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, he gave a lecture on the English trade in Central Asia, emphasising “Its Evils and Its Remedies.” He concluded his remarks with exhilarating details of his adventurous journey.⁹⁰ Another studio photograph of him in England, dressed as a dervish, dates from around this time, which could only be seen “by chance” outside his narrow circle of acquaintances, courtesy of the popular Hungarian weekly *Tolnai Világlapja* [Tolnai's World Paper]. It was first attached to a portrait article of Vámbéry in 1905, with the rather misleading

⁸⁹ The quote: VÁMBÉRY, *Travels in Central Asia*, 293. Cf. Ali BEHDAD, „The Power-ful Art of Quajar Photography: Orientalism and (Self)-Orientalizing in Nineteenth-Century Iran”, *Iranian Studies* 34, no. 1–4. (2001): 141–151, 145. On the Iranian photo archive see: NABIPOUR and SHEIKH, „The Photography Albums...”. According to Reza Sheikh, they did not see Vámbéry's portrait in the material they processed. The question was forwarded to the researchers in Teheran, e-mail, Oct. 12, and 28, 2023.

⁹⁰ VÁMBÉRY, *The Story of My Struggles*, 276. See also “The English Trade in Central Asia: Its Evils and Its Remedies,” *Birmingham Gazette* 20 Mar 1866, 3.



Figure 11. The last portrait of Ármín Vámbéry before his death, in his study, with his costumed portrait taken in London (on the wall), and the Clarkington photograph inserted in the top left corner of the picture. *Tolnai Világlapja* 13, no. 39. (28 Sept 1913): 2. (Photograph by Lajos Szabó). Digital copy.

title: “Vámbéry as a begging dervish. (After a one-time photograph).”⁹¹ It later reappeared in the issue of the same picture magazine published at the time of his death. The framed picture hung on the wall of the study, behind the old man sitting in his armchair. (Figure 11) Decades later, it too was found as part of the Robert Vambéry/John Fuegi bequest, and was included in an exhibition marking the 100th anniversary of Vámbéry's death. No clues have yet been found to the circumstances of the making of this photograph, and further research is needed.⁹² As Vámbéry did not disclose this in *Küzdelmeim*, – although at the same time the *Tolnai Világlapja* still published – a certain degree of retention implies some special relationship or memory of the image. Perhaps more of London and the affinity with the English than the “mysterious Orient” evoked by his exotic dervish costume that the cavalcade of objects in the photo at first suggests. Vámbéry was, in his own way, aware – in today's terms – of the agency of images: his changes of state and identity were consciously shaped, supported and reinforced by images. Already in 1864–1865, and then throughout his life. “Professor Ármín Vámbéry,” wrote Hungary in 1901, “has interrupted his ordinary work for a while and is devoting himself to an unusual occupation: painting himself, and in two copies. The scholarly professor dedicated one portrait to King Edward of England and the other to Sultan Abdul Hamid. The portraits are by the artist Lippay.”⁹³

⁹¹ SZEKI Andor, “Magyar tudósok. Vámbéry Ármín,” *Tolnai Világlapja* 5, no. 52. (1905): 2058–2061, 2059. The image in question can be seen in the background of two other photographs taken of Vámbéry's study room. Important: The author wrote the article for the paper as a result of “his visit to the great scientist and with his consent to be published.”, see page 2058.

⁹² Published by Ármín Vámbéry (1832–1913), *Orientalist in dervish clothes*, vambéry.mtak.hu/img/03-02.jpg; *Egy magyar dervis Közép-Ázsiában / A Hungarian dervish in Central Asia*, 5. (dated about 1868); MANDLER, *Armenius Vambéry*, 34.; FELFÖLDI, „Fény metszette élet”, 77.

⁹³ *Magyarország*, 1901. márc. 12., 8. – It is not known whether these have been completed. The Austrian biographical encyclopaedia does not know about them. (Wien, 1972, vol. 5, 234.). What is certain: in 1908 Bertalan Lippay (Berthold

In summary: As consciously as Vámbéry wrote in his travelogues, sometimes with mockery, sometimes with deprivation – seeing himself from the outside – about his incognito, the dervish role he played, he also consciously used the visual possibility of proof. He gave testimony while engaging in role-playing. But he did not reveal all the details to the world, wisely keeping the recipes of the witch's kitchen in the dark. And when he let photographs out of his hand, they became part of his reputation-building system, moving on its conveyor belt, and used as a means of authentication to further build the image of his figure.

To conclude, here is Vámbéry's testimony about his own multiple role-playing from the pages of his book *Vázlatok Közép-Ázsiából* [Sketches from Central Asia], published only in Hungarian in 1868. At the same time, the attentive eye of the reader can also see the minor and major differences between the three photographic engravings and the self-described image in the volume.

“The hard work of resigning myself to my fate lasted only a few days. As for the exterior, I soon got used to the movable and immovable attributes of dervishism, the stench, etc. I gave my better suit, brought from Tehran, to a weak and sickly hadji, which won me every heart. My uniform consisted of a fur sleeve, which I wore without a shirt on my naked body, and a jubbe (overcoat)⁹⁴ [upper felt suit] made up of countless patches, which I had to fasten to myself with ropes. I wrapped my legs in rags and put my head under a huge turban, which served as a sunshade by day and a pillow by night. Like the other hadjis, I had put a large Koran in my pocket as a bag of bullets, and when I saw myself en pleine parade, I could proudly exclaim: ‘Yes, I was born a beggar!’”

Dominik) (1864–1920) “the portrait painter of Pope Pius X” painted an oil painting of Vámbéry, which he donated to the Museum of Fine Arts, from where it was transferred to the Hungarian National Museum (Hungarian Historical Gallery, inv. no. 1259, <https://gyujtemenyek.mnm.hu:443/hu/record/-/record/MNMMUSEUM1466059>).

⁹⁴ “They call this hirkai dervisan (dervish suit), and even the wealthiest dervishes must wear it over their otherwise good suits. It is a symbol of poverty and is often made up of the most varied pieces; the front is uneven and always zig-zag, and while the outside is sewn in large stitches with coarse threads, the lining is made of silk or other valuable fabric. It is the very height of hypocrisy; but mundus vult decipi, ergo decipiatur, [the world wants to be deceived, so let it be deceived], said the wise men of the East before the Romans.” – The author's original note in VÁMBÉRY Ármin, *Vázlatok Közép-Ázsiából* (Pest: Ráth Mór, 1868), 21.