

Cataloguing Islamic manuscripts
in the Oriental collection(s) of the Library of Hungarian Academy of Sciences

by

Kinga Dévényi

Keeper of the Oriental Collection
 Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Access to manuscripts is an important issue as is well shown by the fact that the Fifth Islamic Manuscript Conference organized this year by the Islamic Manuscript Association will specifically address this topic. Access, however, starts with awareness and there can be no awareness without cataloguing. Without proper cataloguing, whole collections may be lost forever for the community of scholars. And needless to say, there are many collections in and outside the Islamic world that still await discovery through systematic cataloguing

Projects, such as the Cambridge Shahnama project, for example, may help to hitherto buried treasures to resurface, as happened in the case of the Shahname MSS of our collection, one among which can be dated to the 15th century and the illuminations of which are available at <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/index/collection/>.



Hunting scene (frontispiece, recto)

Siyavush and Garsivaz play polo (f. 77v)

Shahnama

LHAS Perzsa Fol. 12, middle of the 15th century

For the Hungarians, the Orient represents more than a mere geographical notion, because there had always been an awareness of Oriental origin in the Hungarian people.

Before the conquest of the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century C.E. the Hungarian tribes roamed the steppes for about a thousand years. In the course of their wanderings, they appear to have established relations with a host of peoples.

The Oriental origin of the Hungarians was first documented in the medieval chronicles, where the first ruler of Hungary was described as Attila's successor, and the Hungarians as descendants of the Huns. Envoys were sent to the East to look for Hungarian tribes which remained there. It is the territory of the Volga Bolgars where in 1236, a Hungarian Dominican monk, father Julianus, found Magna Hungaria, the homeland of Hungarians around 400 CE and where he still found Hungarian tribes whose speech he understood.



Julianus and Gerhardus

It was the 19th century, with national independence and the progress of civil society that brought about the corroboration of national identity. The question of where the origins of the Hungarian people lay, and which languages could be deemed as relatives of their language, became a focus of general interest.

It was also a period in which Oriental studies flourished across Europe, encouraging scientific scrutiny in Hungary as well. Hungarian travellers and scholars attracted to the East by the pre-history of their own nation often played a significant role in the geographical, geological, ethnological, zoological and botanical documentation of Asia.

This period - full of vicissitudes – was also witness of spectacular accomplishments in Hungarian history. During the first two decades, a reform movement was emerging in Hungary under the oppressive rule of the Habsburg emperors of Austria, which aimed to achieve civil progress as well as national independence. National institutions such as the

National Museum and Library, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences were established to realize these goals, and to foster and promote Hungarian language and culture.

The Hungarian Learned Society (later known as the Hungarian Academy) was founded by Count István Széchenyi in 1825.



The building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences

Coloured lithography by Adam Slowikowski

The Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was founded a year later in 1826 by the donation of Count József Teleki of 30.000 books and manuscripts from his private library. The neo-classical building of the Academy was built in 1865 and until our days the Oriental Collection is also housed in this building.



The library in the 19th century



The Oriental Collection today

Similarly to the main library, the establishment and enrichment of the Oriental Collection can also be linked to different donations and bequests.

The first sizeable donation of Islamic manuscripts was constituted by the bequest of Daniel Szilágyi (1830-1885). The bequeather was a former student of theology and a young officer in the war of independence of 1848/49 who after the defeat of the Hungarian army immigrated to Istanbul. There he learned the Turkish language well, gained a deep knowledge of Ottoman culture, and opened a small antiquarian bookshop. After his death, the eminent Turkologist and friend of Szilágyi, Armin Vambery was instrumental in fulfilling his oral will and bringing his manuscripts to the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1887.



Dániel Szilágyi (1830-1885) and Ármin Vámbéry (1832-1913), Istanbul 1852

The first description of the collection is also from Armin Vambery who talked about it during a session of the Academy on 25th October 1886. He was also asked by the Academy to compile a catalogue of the more than 500 manuscripts from which more than 400 are in Turkish. Vámbéry, however, declined this offer. So the first hand list and card catalogue of the collection was compiled by the Turkologist and renowned collector of Turkish folk tales, Ignác Kúnos in the 1890s.



Ignác Kúnos (1860-1945)

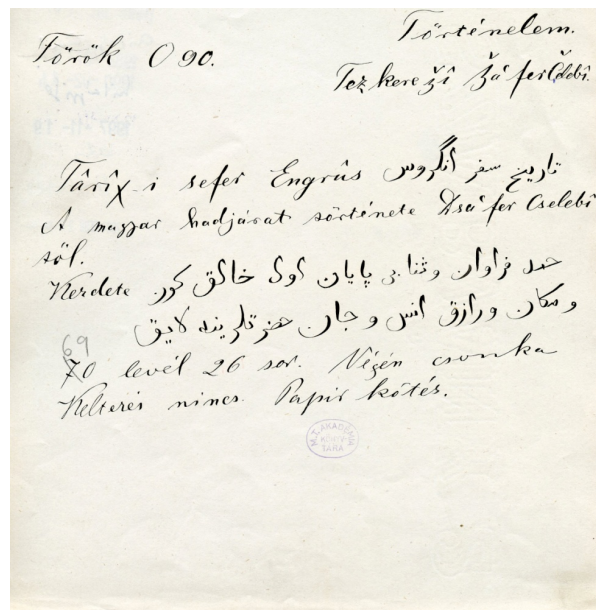
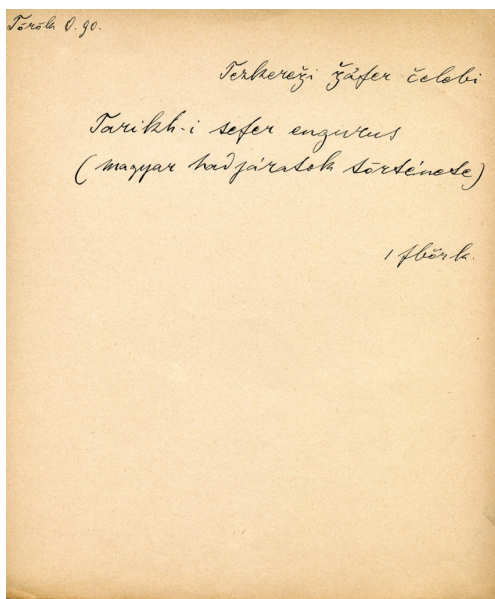
His description was confined mainly to the mention of the title or the title and the author. In the case of collections he only mentioned the first item, and he did not include any

codicological information. He, however, described the manuscripts in some detail in a publication, in 1892 (AÉ 1892, *Collectio Szilagyiana*). His card catalogue was redone by Sándor Kégl (1862-1920), a former student of Goldziher and Vámbéry, who became corresponding member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the first professor of Persian language at the University of Budapest.



Sándor Kégl (1862-1920)

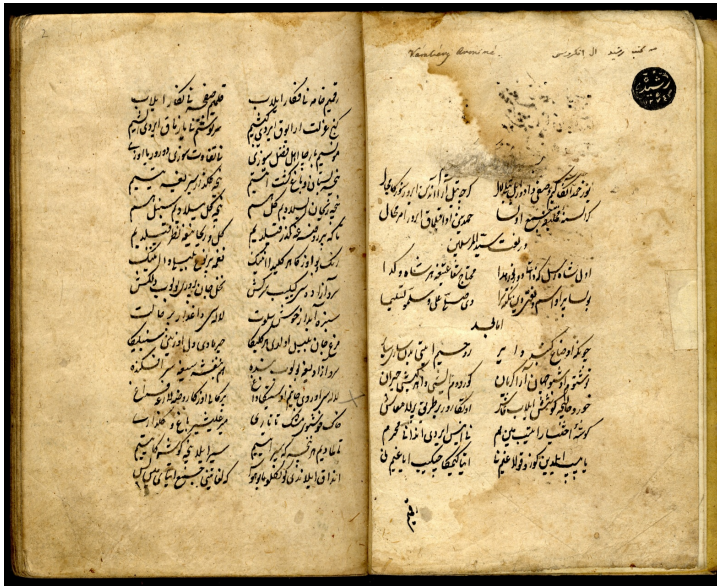
Between 1907 and 1909 he compiled a card catalogue for all the Turkish, Arabic and Persian manuscripts held by the Library of the Academy. He arranged the MSS according to their subject matter, and included in the description the *incipit* and some rudimentary codicological information. His work, however, did not help to raise the awareness of scholars of the existence of these MSS, since he compiled handwritten cards and not a printed hand list.



Efforts to catalogue Turkish MSS in the LHAS

Descriptions of MSTörök O. 90 by Ignác Kúnos and Sándor Kégl

In 1916 a smaller but none the less significant collection was donated by Rusztem Vámbéry to the library. The 604 books and 56 manuscripts (the majority of the latter are Turkish) once belonged to his father, Ármin Vámbéry (1832-1913) who was renowned throughout Europe as a daring traveller and an outstanding Turkologist. From among this small collection we can single out a copy of the well-known Chagatay-Turkish dictionary, where we can observe his stamp as *Rašid al-Ungurūsī* and a manuscript of Turkish gazels which he – according to his notice – took out of the bootleg of a Turkic highwayman somewhere in Central Asia.



Abūšqā luġāti, MS Török O. 386, 1v-2r.

A Chagatay-Turkish dictionary with an introduction in verse

Possessory note and stamp of Vámbéry (as *Rašid al-Ungurūsī*, 1274 AH)



MS Török O. 373

Collection of gazels in a Turkic dialect

The first report about Vámbéry's collection appeared already in 1916 in the official journal of the Academy (AÉ 1916), though this was only a quite unsatisfactory list.

Later other, smaller collections of Hungarian scholars (among them József Thúry /1861-1915/ and Áron Szilády /1837-1922/) were purchased by the library.

Though Hungarian Turkologists in the 20th century have always been aware of the invaluable and often unique sources this collection contained, without a proper description, this collection of nearly 1000 Turkish manuscripts remained practically unknown. Only a few manuscripts of the collection have been edited until now and the majority of these in the last few years. Among them mention can be made of the oldest known copy of a collection of stories *Ferec ba`d es-sidde* (Edirne, 1451) and a 16th century, autograph source about Hungarian history (*Tárik-i Üngürüs*, 1542).



Ferec ba`d es-sidde

*The oldest known copy of the MS containing 42 stories
From the bequest of Vámbéry, edited in 2006*



Tárik-i Üngürüs

*Autograph manuscript donated by
Vámbéry, edited in 2009*

A decisive turn was taken only in 2002, and this eventually led to the publication of the "Catalogue of Turkish Manuscripts in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences" in 2007 in two versions, English and Turkish, by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Turkish Academy of Sciences (Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi). The three compilers were: İsmail Parlatır, György Hazai and Barbara Kellner-Heinkele.

The catalogue is arranged thematically into 17 categories:

1. Religion (9 subdivisions)
2. Literature (16 subdivisions)
3. Historical works (6 subdivisions)
4. Encyclopaediae
5. Astronomy

6. Geography
7. Year-books
8. Mathematics and geometry
9. Medical science and healing
10. Zoology
11. Botany
12. Grammars and other philological works (4 subdivisions)
13. *Tabir-names*
14. The art of the military
15. Architecture
16. Music
17. Cooking

In the description of the manuscripts the method of the German MS catalogue series, *Katalogisierung der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland* was adopted.

In the entries, after the shelfmark, a short codicological description follows, containing the number of folios, number of lines and columns, paper dimension, written surface, binding, type of paper, watermark, script and ink, illumination, miniatures if any, and catchwords. A controversial but noteworthy decision was to give Ottoman Turkish titles in two transcriptions: one scientific in the title, and one in modern Turkish in the descriptions.

After the above codicological information follows the title (if known) followed by its folio number, a very short incipit and explicit.

The description of the work itself includes the author's life and works, as far as they are known, and respective sources. Ownership notes and different references make the description complete.

There are only slight differences between the English and Turkish versions:

- in size
- in the transcription of Ottoman Turkish titles
- and in the indices (which are fewer in the Turkish version). The English version comprises the following indices:
 - titles
 - authors
 - copyists
 - concordance between library shelf-mark and item number
 - manuscripts containing more than one work
 - dates of copying in chronological order

In addition to these, indices of

- persons

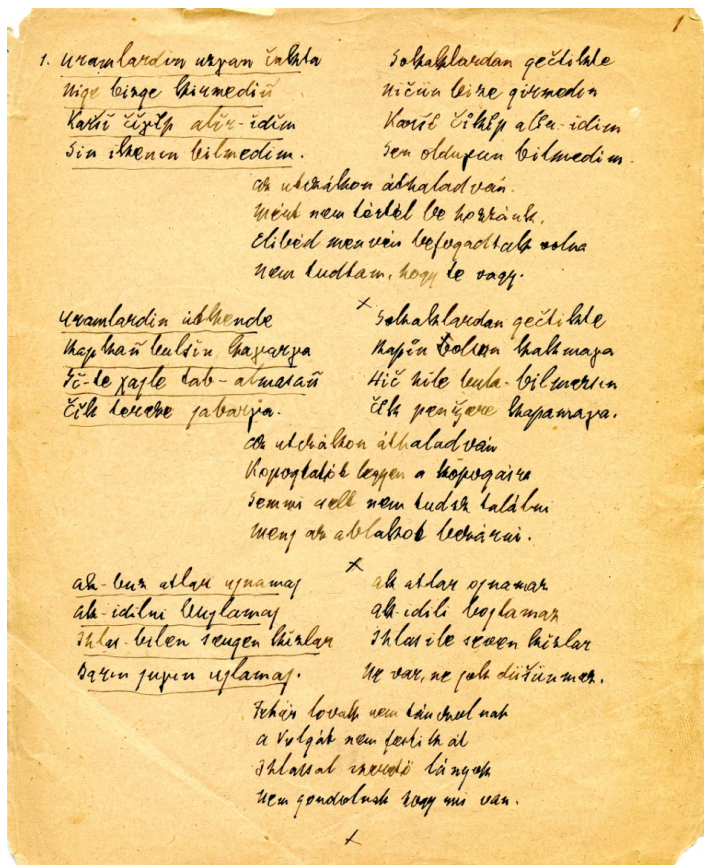
- geographical names
- institutions
- and subjects

mentioned in the descriptions help the researcher.

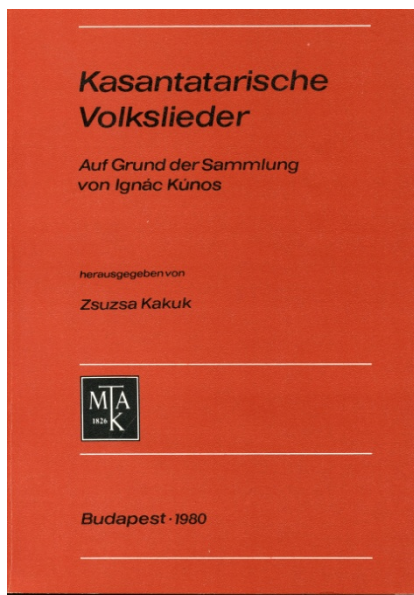
This is supplemented by a glossary of Turkish terms used in the descriptions.

The Turkish edition – for technical reasons – contains only three indices: those of shelf-marks, titles and authors.

One of the greatest shortcomings of this catalogue is that it includes only Ottoman-Turkish manuscripts and does not even mention those items of our Turkish collection which are outside this scope. From among the material which still await cataloguing, mention should be made here of the Kúnos bequest, donated by his widow to the library in 1951. This comprises, among others, a collection of Kazan Tatar folk songs, about 600 of which were edited in 1980 by Zsuzsa Kakuk.

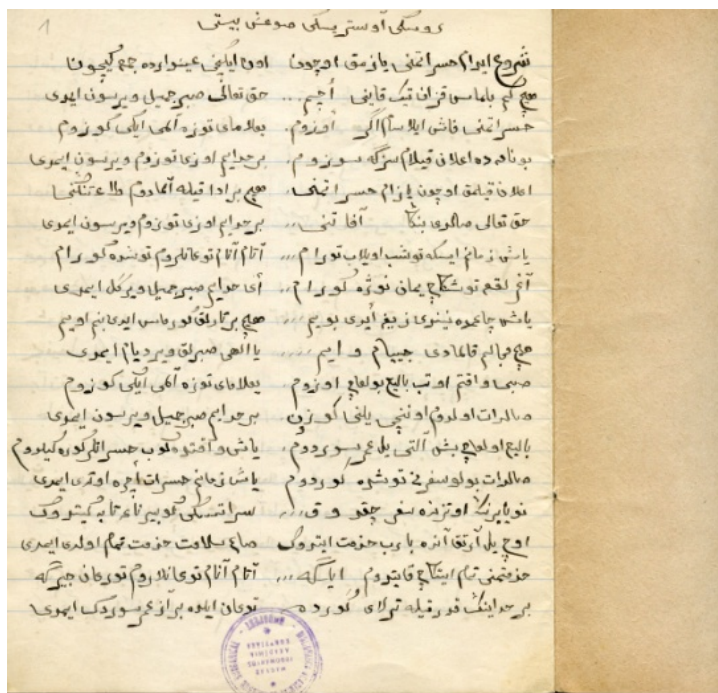


From the bequest of Ignác Kúnos, A leaf from MS Török O. 110/IV.
Collection of folk-songs and other memorials of the Tatar folklore 1915-1917.
Tatar text with Ottoman-Turkish and Hungarian translation.



The 634 verses which were published from the bequest of Ignác Kúnos by Zsuzsa Kakuk in 1980 were arranged in alphabetical order by the editor.

A larger part of the bequest remains unedited. Kúnos collected a large amount of folklore material between 1915 and 1917 among prisoners of war in the town of Éger (Cheb) now in the Czech Republic. This collection contains folk songs, tales, diaries, playlets, etc. in different dialects, e.g. Crimean Tatar, Mishar, Bashkir, Kumyk, Nogay. To this we may add a later collection by Kúnos (from between 1922-25) he made amongst Tatars who lived at that time in Istanbul.



MS Török Qu. 111/VI. Fol. 1r of the "Diary of Tatar captives"

Other manuscripts published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences which comprise non-Ottoman Turkish material can be linked to the scholarly activity of Gábor Bálint de Szentkatolna (1844-1913). This scholar who learned languages with exceptional ease spent the year 1871 in Tatarstan where he collected texts and perfected his knowledge of the Tatar language. The results of his field work, the text, and a grammar together with a Tatar-Hungarian-German dictionary were published in three volumes between 1875 and 1877. A critical edition was published in 1988.

One of the newest acquisitions of our library – also outside the scope of the catalogue – are constituted by typed copies in Tatar and Russian translation of Vámbéry's letters to Fatih Kerimi, the editor of the Tatar newspaper *Vaqit* between 1898 and 1913 (MS Török Qu 118). These were presented to the Hungarian president on the occasion of his visit to Kazan in 1994. It greatly enhanced the value of these pieces that during my stay in Kazan, I managed to get a copy of the original letters from the State Archives.

But this leads us away from the issue of cataloguing. Having presented the history and present state of Turkish catalogues, let's turn our attention briefly to the cataloguing of Arabic manuscripts in the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

As was the case of the Turkish manuscripts, the first card catalogues were prepared by Sándor Kégl in the first decade of the 20th century. Nearly a hundred years after this first description, a completely novel approach was taken. Owing to various circumstances a decision was made to produce – instead of a printed catalogue – an online catalogue of these manuscripts. Cataloguing started – with the help of the Islamic Manuscript Association – in the end of 2008, so I can only give a preliminary report on the progress and structure of the records. The records can be found within the on-line catalogue of the library, in a special directory of Oriental MSS which is searchable separately as well as together with the records of the main catalogue. The records have the following structure and use the following MARC fields:

- ⊙ 001 (automatic field)
- ⊙ 005 (automatic field)
- ⊙ 008 (to be filled in, e.g. date)
- ⊙ 040 Catalogue source (automatic field)
- ⊙ 041 Language
- ⊙ 100 Author
- ⊙ 240 Uniform title
- ⊙ 245
 - a) Title (in the MS)
 - c) Author (in the MS)
 - e) Copyist
- ⊙ 260
 - a) Place

- c) Date
- ⊙ 300
 - a) number of folios / lines
 - b) illustrations
 - c) page dimension, text block
- ⊙ 501 Content; Marginal notes (this field can be repeated)
- ⊙ 503 References (GAL, Zirikli, Kahhala)
- ⊙ 505 In the case of collections: the other MS(S) contained in the collection (repeated according to the number of MSS)
- ⊙ 533 Information on microfilm or digitisation
- ⊙ 561 Ownership information (with remarks, stamps, etc.)
- ⊙ 562 Codicology: binding, paper, script, ink
- ⊙ 583 Information on eventual conservation
- ⊙ 588 Missing pages
- ⊙ 600 Author of commented work
- ⊙ 630 Title of commented work (it seems to be a field in HUNMARC)
- ⊙ 700 Copyist
- ⊙ 740 Additional title
- ⊙ 850 (Library – Automatic field)
- ⊙ 852 Shelf mark
- ⊙ 856 Link to illustrations
- ⊙ 880 Names and titles repeated in Arabic and in LOC transliteration (field repeated as necessary)
- ⊙ 988 Incipit, explicit and colophon (in 3 different 988 fields)
- ⊙ LKR Link to the first MS in a collected volume
- ⊙ BAS (Automatic field)

Names and titles are also displayed and searchable in Arabic. The transcription used is the German (which has long traditions in Hungary), but names and titles are searchable by using Library of Congress transcription as well.

The descriptions are supplemented by at least two digitised pages from each manuscript, usually the ones containing the incipit and the explicit. Major illustrations are also linked to the descriptions.

This is a project we wish to continue and hope that in the not too distant future it will be possible to extend it to comprise the Persian manuscripts in our collection so that they may also wake of their Cinderella sleep and serve the community of scholars all over the world.