

# In the Footsteps of Magtymguly: Vamberi's Literary Mastery

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**Abstract:** Men of letters and other remarkable individuals, who have glorified their nation, stand as feathers in its cap on the global stage. Magtymguly Fragi, a poet and thinker, navigated the depths "on the ship of intellect into the river of thought," earning reverence not only from the Turkmen nation but also from all Turkish-speaking peoples. Exploring his life and creative legacy, which has secured a significant place in the hearts of millions, has spawned a new scholarly pursuit known as "Magtymguly studies." This discipline delves into the poet's contributions and influence, shedding light on his profound impact on literature and thought across cultural boundaries.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This trend extended beyond national boundaries, capturing the attention of scholars worldwide. The poet's works, embodying a unique artistic perspective, compelled global interest. When delving into the artificial world of Magtymguly based on his translated works, researchers invariably encounter the name of the Hungarian scholar Germanicus Vambery (1832-1913). In his publication "Travelling to Central Asia," Vambery emphasizes the significance of Magtymguly's poems, noting them as essential examples of the pure Turkmen dialect. Furthermore, Magtymguly provides detailed insights into the content and spirit of Oriental peoples, a perspective often absent in the works of other Oriental writers.

Although the information from this source is familiar to specialists, Germanicus Vambery's work "The Turkmen Language and the Divan of Magtymguly" has not received the specialized attention it deserves in the study of Magtymguly's creativity. Published in 1879 in Leipzig's "Journal of the German Eastern Society" ("Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenhandischen Gesellschaft"), the work comprises two parts. Accompanying the article are 31 poems and 10 excerpts from Magtymguly's poems, translated into German by Vambery himself. The originals in Arabic alphabet, along with footnotes explaining the meanings of nearly 100 words and word combinations, enrich the exploration of Magtymguly's literary contributions.

## 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Employing the historical-functional method, this research focuses on luminaries who have brought prestige to their nations. Magtymguly Fragi, a revered poet and philosopher, sailed "on the ship of intellect into the river of thought," earning admiration not only from the Turkmen people but also from Turkish-speaking communities globally. This exploration of his life and lasting legacy has given rise to the academic pursuit of "Magtymguly studies." This discipline meticulously examines the poet's contributions and pervasive influence, illuminating his profound impact on literature and thought transcending cultural boundaries.

## 3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The given literary source is a proof of the high intellectual level of G. Vamberi and the fact that he was a connoisseur of the culture of Turkish peoples, in particular, the composition of their tribes, their everyday life, and geographical environment, as well as the original character of the Turkmen language.

For example, the phonetic peculiarity of the Turkmen language he explains in the following way: "If we compare the Turkmen language with the modern Seljuk language, and also with the language of Osman Turk, then they could not even distinguish them. First of all, in the phonetics of the Turkmen

language, as in the phonetics of the Osman Turks language, we can see a frequent tendency to palatalization. For example, the vowels «kaf» (ii) and «kaf» at the end of the word, thanks to the existing affixation, almost always turn into «g». So, as derivatives of the verbs “dokmek”, “Ijilmak” the words “dokmage”, “kylmaga” are formed, and also, in the Osman Turks language instead of the word “dejl” there is the word “deel”, Chigatayen «tegil» - as “togul”. These peculiarities become more vivid between dental sounds “t” - “d”. Here the sound “t”, placed at the end and at the beginning of the word, is changed into the sound “d”. For example, such words as “turmek”, “tatli”, “toje” and others start to sound like “durmak”, “dadli”, “doje”.

Such opinions are correct from a linguistic point of view. Vamberi, glorifying Magtymguly, places the emotions of his poems in one row with the works of such geniuses of the Orient as Ahmed Yasavi, Fizuli, Sufi Allahyar, and Mashrab. In fact, Magtymguly in his poems reminds Mansur Hallaj, who once said: «Ана-1-Нак», who got up in rags and tatters of Hoja Ahmed Yasavi, generous Bahauddin Naksh- band, Nasimi, who suffered severe tortures, Mawlan Jami, and Hazrat Navoi.

In the poet’s opinion, following his way is possible at some certain conditions, i.e., spiritual advisors are required for the “dervishes, who follow the way of truth”. Because this way is long, and while passing it some genies and ghosts, tigers, wolves, and other misfortunes may stalk to the travellers, bitterness and disappointment may penetrate into his soul. God forbid Satan to try to go too far afield, and if he does it successfully, then all business and good intentions may turn backward. On the assumption of moral postulates, the poet calls to be courteous with parents, contain themselves from gossips, renounce from haughtiness, not to disclose one’s own secrets to alien people, to be watchful and brave; he compares insatiable passion with a dragon, scientists without business - with a garden, deprived of fertility, life in the corporeal - a temporary guest in it; he advises everybody to reconsider the perfection of his spirituality, not to be taken by the accumulation of wealth without allocation of obligatory zakat (purification donations), not to be a companion to a mean man and not to present friendship affection to those who have a “black soul”.

Magtymguly, who stated: “My word is my admonition”, calls people to kindness, turns people from the possibility to fulfill crimes. In this aspect Vamberi’s statement that the poet’s gazels “in most of cases dominate views on religion and morality” is quite reasonable. Indeed, the meaning and the content

of Quran’s ayahs and blessed Hadises are laid in the basis of Magtymguly creativity.

The key to the correct interpretation of such of his lines as “Be with the hope, as Joseph”, “Be as tolerable as Ayub”, “To be a sacrifice, a sacrificial altar to Ismail, son of Halil”, “Suleiman is the king of humanity and gins”, “Comfortably laid the dwellers of a cave”, is concluded in the Koranic narrations. A man who lived in two poles, in two cultural environments, belongs by his mentality to nature - this is one more acknowledgment of Vamberi - researcher of Magtymguly poems. He states: “It may turn laughable that if we, in a society where stealing and robbery prevail, start to recite poems against stealing, or, notifying his countrymen about the harm of smoking tobacco in his gazels, thus, trying to arouse a feeling of fear”.

Such frank interpretations and true acknowledgments may be put forward only by a scientist who possesses a keen eye, who sees something with his own eyes and who has deeply researched the life of peoples of Central Asia from within and having compared it with the way of life in Europe. “In his poems, the poet narrates about the effaced sand migrations of prophets, Saints, the topics of paradise and hell in his own interpretation”. This note is also natural because it underlines the width of the topics of the author’s poems. From the other side, as the scholar mentions, the oriental Muslim man apprehends all concepts, which are related to divinity, as real truth; this is the decree of his faith.

By the way, it is impossible to agree with G. Vamberi’s opinion, set forth in his article, that “In fact, in Magtymguly’s gazelles, one cannot find direct references that he studied in the medrese”, and also a statement that the poet did not receive an education in the medrese. Because it is a well-known fact that he studied in medrese Shirgazi in Khiva, which is confirmed by a farewell poem “Medrese Shirgazi” to this great abode. It begins with the lines:

Three years, each day, you shared salt with me, -  
Farewell, I’m leaving, fine Shirgazi.

Probably, Vamberi did not know about this poem. But the scholar pays attention to the key topic: “Aiming at the harmony with the existing in the desert customs, inspired Magtymguly in line with the moral traditions, carols the combative spirit as well”. The poet characterizes what type of person a fighter should be, about his horse and armour; he praises brevity and courage of the Turkmen tribes yomud, goklen, teke. And these acknowledgments do not cause claims. For, as it appears from the expressions used in his poems, one only needs to proclaim: “Mount, oh, you, mount!”, immediately a brave man,

on his playful horse, being armed with a sword with two blades and other swords and shields, will rush underway, as a tiger. His aim is to prevent the enemy's hand touch his flower. For a brave young man Motherland's freedom, honour, and dignity are higher than everything".

As well as G. Vamberi, appreciating the peculiarity of the Turkmen language, personality, and creativity of Magtymguly, acquaints the European community with them; it should be apprehended as his merit, display of respect, and objective attitude to the culture of the Turkish-language people, in particular, to the greatest poet. Because the scholar himself modestly asks his work "...to be considered as the first and indecisive attempt". Moreover, the copy of the divan, with which he dealt, was distinguished by big drawbacks. In this connection, the scientist expresses his regret: "For this reason, it is difficult and unreliable not only to understand a gazelle but even to read it. For example, there are orthographic mistakes in the spelling of the Arab words: instead of *دوندا* there is *دندا*, and instead of *قوت* – *قوات*. Probably, the rewriter-calligrapher was born in Iran and related to the inscription of the Turkmen words not with such responsibility. Maybe for this reason, not only letters but even the whole words are missed. This creates difficulties in the reading of the whole words, which makes it difficult to read this list".

To our opinion, today the processes of the more detailed reading and comprehension, analysis, and comparative study of literary and historical source in the named reputable in volume German journal are called to elucidate the value of Vamberi's merits as a researcher and translator. The study of the German text, as well as its free translation into German, published by him, anyway, reveals new meaningful layers of the poet's poems. The comparison of some lines of just one poem "Together with stones" may serve as the proof of our idea. There are some differences between its variants in Turkmen, Uzbek, and the variant, which had Vamberi. These differences made immense influences on the content of the work. In Turkmen: "Garry dunya al içinda, Adamzat hyyal içinde". In the Uzbek language, these lines are told differently: "Қари дунё қуради дом, Инсон хаёл сурап мудом". In Vamberi's variant, there is a difference in one word: "Қаро дунё ал ичинда, Одамзод хаёл ичинда".

Vamberi transfers the meaning of the word "ar" by the construction "der Trug", i.e., in the meaning "lie, deception". However, what is the world like: dark (каро) or old (гарры)? And which of them is closer to the outlook and philosophy of Magtymguly?

In the Arab alphabet, these words have a similar inscription. Maybe in the West, the world is characterized as consisting of dark color (In Trug est diese schwarze Welt). But in the East, the world is defined as "ancient, old". Moreover, Magtymguly uses the word-combination "old world" («коне dunya»). And later, in the continuation of the poem, there are moments that deserve special consideration. In Turkmen: "Kop koyler bile oturdym, Bilmedim ne iş bitirdim In the translation into the Uzbek language: "Кўп ўйлар суриб ўтирдим, Билмадим, не ишлар битирдим". Vamberi has it the following way: "Кўп гўйлар лабима уйирдим, Билмадим, на иш битирдим". The first line has the meaning: "Many words were uttered; many things were told". Vamberi transfers the meaning of the Persian word "гуй" as: "die Rede", i.e., as "speech, sentence", which sounds convincingly. There is one more example of difference. In the Turkmen: Bikar goyma omur tagty, Oyandyr sak uyumyş bagty - Mahtumkuly (1974). In the Turkmen language, the word "уюмиш" has the meaning "to sleep", and it is just this, what was taken into consideration while translating the word into the Uzbek language: Бекор қўйма умр тахтин, Уйғот ухлаб ётган бахтни - Makhtumkuli. (1992). In Vamberi's variant the word "тагт" is absent, instead of it the word "сахт" is used, which has the meaning: "exacting, strict, heavy": Бекор қўйма умр сахти, Унидиёрсан уймиш багти. The combination of words "умр сахты" is translated as "das schwere Leben", which means "strong, powerful life". In the whole, the meaning of the translation corresponds this meaning. In fact, the word « уймиш » contains the meaning: «folding, gathering, submission, following». In Magtymguly's creativity this word is very frequently used exactly in these meanings («нафсинга уйма», "Қуръонга уйдим"). The word-combination "уймиш багт" Vamberi translates as «das gunstige Schickasal», i.e. «convenient fate». The two lines in Vamberi's variant correspond the meaning: «Do not leave your life, which is full of power and strength, without devoting it to a business, do not be useless, otherwise, you'll fall into oblivion the happiness, which smiled upon your grant of fate». Thus, a brief study of one poem with its translation revealed few differences, which influence the translation. Such serious versions, the cardinal change of the content is met in the other poems also. For example, let's take one stanza of the poem "Meet Field" («Мейдан ёлукса») as an example, and compare it. In Turkmen: "Yigit bardyr, sozun tapmaz, surrudyr, Yigit bardyr, demi daşlar eridir. Jay yerinde gayra galsa, garrydyr, Gog yigidin aty gaman yoluksa" - Mahtumkuly (1974). In Uzbek: "Йигит

борки, сузи дилинг \_ огулар, Йигит борки, дами тошни эритар, Узок, жойда ёлгиз к,олса қ;аритар, Мард йигитнинг оти чаман учраса” - Makhtumkuli. (1992). Here is deep understanding and craftsmanship, which is displayed by the translator. The text, which served as a source text for Vamberi, was a little bit different: The word-combination “дами тошни эритар” (“his breath will dissolve the stones”), In Vamberi’s variant appeared in the derivative word “дамдоши, which is translated into German in the meaning ‘ihre Umgebung (Genosse), i.e. «those friends, who surround him». Outside the text, this word Vamberi explains as “a companion, a fellow who became a relative”. And the word “ихрамок” he translates as “verachten in the meaning: «hates, don’t respect». In all Turkmen and Uzbek variants the word «ат» (“horse”) in the fourth line means the name of a beast, intended for riding. Vamberi by mistake appreciated it as a word, which characterizes «name, fame, heroism of a young man», which is expressed by him in the German language. The word «чаман» in his opinion, may correspond to the German word «die Flur» - “flower garden”. In the variant, which he uses, instead of the word “қариш” (become old) is the word “қуриш” (to dry, to become dry). For this reason, the meaning of this poem may be understood as: “There are such brave young men, who, if they do not know what to say, they without fail will ask other people; and there are such mean young men, who do not display respect even to their close person, hating him. If a young man is a poor wanderer and finds himself in foreign countries, and even if he lives in a blossoming place, his glory and his good name will fade, as a dried canal, where there is no water”. another variant may be more powerful and authentic than this one. Most likely that we should believe the variant, which Vamberi had. Because both the art of “tazod” (тазод) (skilful usage of antonyms in the poem), and the blame of the wandering life in foreign countries are important peculiarities, which are inherent to Magtymguly’s poetry. Undoubtedly, there are differences in the variants of the poet’s divan, which are rewritten or issued at different times and on different geographic latitudes. It was well known to specialists. Because the existence of manuscripts is naturally determined, and each time, rewriting them, each representative of Turkish nations strived at adjusting them to his own dialect. And it is not known whose variant is the one, which Vamberi used. Comparing this variant (1879) with the one of the last editions, which published in (vol. I - 1992; vol. II - 1994) in Ashgabat, we found many textual alternative versions. There are, for example, such differences, which do not influence

them eaning, as: юрак- кунгил (heart or soul), аёл - хотин (woman), ал - цул (hand), уят - х,аё (shame), жушиб - тулиб (raging -overfilling^, “ах” чекар - “ах” деяр” (gasp). Along with this, there are enough differences which influence the content, melody and meter: “царо дунё - цари дунё (dark world- ancient world), амалинг надир - аслинг надир (what is your trade - what is your origin) and so on. Such kind of alternative versions occur also in the names of places, and also in the names (For example: %омун - Харун\ Фаргона шах,рина - Даргантг шахрина). Of course, one cannot but notice such like alternative versions in the texts of Magtymguly poems. On the other side, separate words, word-combinations and even lines sometimes seem to be more well-grounded even more than their contrasts in the copies, which are the property of contemporary readers. For example: “Сирка айтур: “Бол манам”, зифт узини ёг саяр (“Vinegar says: “I’m honey”, resin considers itself butter”). In the Turkmen and Uzbek variants instead the word “зифт” (from the Afab language - glue, resin) the word “oil” (“nebit”) is used. Seriously considering, logically correct is the definition of boasting zift (glue, resin), which considers itself “oil”, but having less value than oil, which is called “black gold”. Another example: “Алцукму лиллац”, Давлат бсщйс“Апхукму лиллах,” - “Command belongs to Allah”. “Алхамдулиллах,” - “Praise Allah”. Because a person, who asks eternal richness, expressing his thankfulness to Allah for goods, which He presented him, can pray God for addition. Secondly, he, who asks such wealth believing that all people are given as much as they have deserved, may become a Muslim, who will reconcile oneself to destiny. In this meaning both Arab word-combinations are equal, and for this reason the usage of any of them is not considered as a mistake from life, literary or scientific point of view and by Shariat.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

In a word, the variant used by G. Vamberi, and his translations, can assist in the training of the critical text of Magtymguly’s “Divan” and also benefit those who want to translate the poet’s poems into other languages. Magtymguly is a great word, and his word is sacred; for this reason, it penetrates deeply into the hearts of people. Today, the number of researchers studying Magtymguly abroad is growing day by day, including in Uzbekistan. The work of each person who has enough wisdom and skills to translate the lines of the Great poet, transferring their true meaning from the bottom of his soul, deserves praise. The

merit of each intelligent person lies in translating the works of Fragy to save the wealth implied in them and carry them to other people, thus widely publicizing it. German Vamberi, a Hungarian scientist, is one of them.

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