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# Women freemasons in Hungary since the beginnings

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## Las mujeres masonas en Hungría desde el principio

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### ***Palabras clave***

Francmasonería; Hungría; Francmasonería húngara; Mujeres masonas; Género.

### ***Keywords***

Freemasonry; Hungary; Hungarian Freemasonry; Women freemasons; Gender.

### ***Resumen***

La resistencia a la masonería femenina se está disolviendo lentamente en Hungría. Sólo después de 1990 se establecieron en Hungría logias femeninas y mixtas de origen extranjero. En la historia de la masonería húngara sólo ha habido tres mujeres húngaras iniciadas en el siglo XVIII, dos fueron admitidas en las logias en el siglo XIX. La única organización femenina de tipo masónico en Hungría, la Estrella Oriental, murió poco después de su fundación. A pesar de la falta de tradición, hoy en día podemos hablar de una logia mixta y una logia femenina que funcionan bien.

### ***Abstract***

Resistance to women's freemasonry is slowly dissolving in Hungary. It was only after the change of regime (1990) that women's and mixed lodges of foreign origin were established in Hungary. In the history of Hungarian freemasonry there have been only three Hungarian women were initiated in the 18th century, two were admitted to lodges in the 19th century. The only female masonic-like organisation in Hungary, the Eastern Star, died shortly after its foundation. Despite the lack of tradition, today we can speak of a well-functioning mixed and a women's lodge.

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In Hungary, women's and mixed lodges were only recently established after the 1990 regime change. At that time the mixed lodge "Tolerance and Fraternity" as part of Le Droit Humain International and the women's lodge "Sunflower" as a member of the Grande Loge Féminine de France started to operate. Although there were some examples of initiations of ladies in Hungarian masonic history, the male lodges avoided accepting female freemasons.

According to the traditional view, recalling the Anderson Constitution, women cannot be Freemasons. Although most of masonic constitutions declare the brotherhood of lodge members and exclude all forms of discrimination, today's situation is the result of a long development in which step-by-step modifications were made, though not in all Masonic organizations.

The first step was to effectively enforce the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of religion. The greatest resistance in this area was manifested in the attitude to the admission of Jews, but it was a long-term practice that the followers of other non-Christian religions and atheists were also expelled from the lodges.<sup>2</sup> The second step is to recognize the lodge membership of blacks, first in separate lodges (Prince Hall Freemasonry), and then the increasing relaxation of the unwillingness of the whites to admit African Americans and Asians into their lodges. This process is not over today, and there are still conflicts stemming from this in the US.<sup>3</sup> Finally, the third step would be to recognize women's Freemasonry.

It can be seen that all three points are about emancipatory processes. Surprisingly, the membership of women has dragged on to this day and it is likely that resistance may persist for some time in some lodges and grand lodges. According to tradition, the United Grand Lodge of England and the Lodges which consider themselves to be regular do not admit women according to their standards.

The establishment of the exclusively female lodges can be interpreted as a reaction to the rejection of female freemasonry. This also represents a similar segregation, although the proliferation of such lodges can lead to the dissolution of exclusively male Freemasonry.

One solution to the conflict could be to create mixed (i.e. men and women together) lodges and grand lodges. It would be conceivable in the future if the traditional masonic organisations opened their doors to women. This is already the case, up to a point. Namely, in 2010, the Grand Orient of France left it to each of its constituent lodges to decide whether to admit women or keep the homogeneity of men's lodges. As a result of this decision, 80% of the lodges have accepted, in principle, the possibility of women initiations, but only 200 women have been admitted compared to the total of approx. 50,000 Grand Orient members.<sup>4</sup>

1 This section is based on the following articles: László Vári, 'A Snapshot of the Contemporary Hungarian Freemasonry', in *Quatuor Coronati Berichte – Wiener Jahrbuch Für Historische Freimaurerforschung Nr. 38/2018*, ed. Marcus G. Patka (Wien: Verlag Erhard Löcker GesmbH, 2018), 162–170.

2 Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, 'L'exclusion des Juifs du temple de la fraternité maçonnique au siècle des Lumières', *Archives Juives* Vol. 43, no. 2 (9 November 2010): 15–29.

3 See: turkeythug01, 'Recognition of Prince Hall Affiliated Grand Lodges', Reddit Post, *R/Freemasonry*, 18 January 2020, [www.reddit.com/r/freemasonry/comments/eqa3ry/recognition\\_of\\_prince\\_hall\\_affiliated\\_grand/](http://www.reddit.com/r/freemasonry/comments/eqa3ry/recognition_of_prince_hall_affiliated_grand/).

4 François Koch, 'Au GODF : mais où sont les femmes ?', *LA LUMIÈRE*, le Blog franc et maçon de L'Express (blog), 7 April

Today, there are three male Grand Lodges (Orders) available to Masons in Hungary: the English-oriented Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary (approx. 300 members), the French-oriented Grand Orient of Hungary (approx. 200 members), and the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Grand Lodge of Hungary (approx. 30 members).<sup>5</sup> Following the UGLE, the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary rejects the admission of women as Freemasons.

The Grand Orient of Hungary's position is ambiguous: the members of the women's and mixed lodges are recognized as Freemasons, they are involved in common ritual work, but some of their own ceremonial gatherings cannot be visited by female masons. The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Grand Lodge of Hungary, like the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary, rejects all contact with lodges that accept women, although they recognize members of such lodges as their brothers (sisters).

The position of Hungarian Freemasons on women's Freemasonry is apparently divided. Among those who accept women as Freemasons, a majority believe in the right to free choice, that is, each mason should have the opportunity to choose between male, female, and mixed lodges at their own discretion. The formal position of the Grand Orient of Hungary, a Grand Lodge most accessible to women, is the following, formed after a long debate and a decision made at a Convention (general assembly):<sup>6</sup>

1. No lodge can admit women or pass and raise them (advance to a higher degree).
2. The lodges of the Grand Orient of Hungary can decide whether to receive sisters for ritual work. This is possible in exceptional cases, but the Grand Council must be informed.
3. The members of the lodges may visit any female and / or mixed lodge individually. There is also possibility for joint work, but this, like all aspects beyond the Grand Orient of Hungary, must be agreed with the Grand Council.
4. Members of the Grand Orient of Hungary may also be members of other Grand Lodges. (e.g. Droit Humain)

The most recent and welcoming opportunity for the rapprochement is the series of seminars running in Hungary initiated by the Grand Orient of Hungary under the name "Inaslépés" (the Entered Apprentice step). At these non-ritual gatherings accepted members of any Masonic order may share their opinion on the history of Freemasonry and symbols, compare rituals, and discuss philosophical questions. This initiative may be unique in the world. More recently, similar seminars have been organized under the name "Legényszó" (Fellow Craft's Word) for the 2nd degree and "Mesterfórum" (Master Forum) for the 3rd degree. In all of them, women masons play an active role. The "Sunflower" women's and the "Tolerance and Brotherhood" mixed lodge in addition to the Grand Orient of Hungary also participates in the work of

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2011, <https://blogs.lexpress.fr/lumiere-franc-macon/2011/04/07/au-godf-mais-ou-sont-les-femmes/>.

5 I would like to thank the representatives of the grand lodges for their kind information.

6 I would like to thank the representatives of the Grand Orient of Hungary for their kind information.

AAECE – AACEE<sup>7</sup> international Masonic umbrella organization – which held its annual general meeting in Budapest on April 12, 2014.

The current women’s and mixed masonic lodges in Hungary are of foreign origin, their foundation and activities will be discussed later. There have been several examples of initiations of Hungarian ladies in history. The earliest case occurred in the 18th century, when 3 Hungarian women were inaugurated. Unlike the case of Ilona Hadik-Brakóczy, which is partly known in masonic circles at home and abroad, this case from the 18th century has been almost completely forgotten.

## The first admissions: In 18th century Hungary there were three initiated ladies<sup>8</sup>.

The first known Hungarian Mason was prince Pál Antal Esterházy (1711–1762), who was admitted to a lodge in 1733 during his trip to England.<sup>9</sup> The first lodge in Hungary was founded in 1749 in Brassó (today Brasov in Romania) by Márton Gottlob Seuler (1730–1786), later senator, under the name “Zu den drei Säulen” (Three columns).<sup>10</sup> Compared to that, three Hungarian women were initiated relatively soon, though more than six decades after Elizabeth Aldworth<sup>11</sup>, but at least 10 years before Madame de Xaintrailles<sup>12</sup>.

Lajos Abafi, the historian of Hungarian (and Austrian) Freemasonry in the XVIII century, reports that in 1778 Márton Heinzeli, the head of the Eperjes (today Prešov in Slovakia) lodge named “Zurn tugendhaften Reisenden (Virtuous Traveler)”, initiated three women as Freemasons. They wanted to admit more women and set up a separate women’s lodge, but this was forbidden by Heinzeli’s Viennese superiors.

According to Abafi, the case took place as follows:

In 1779, it finally reached a point where neither lodge work nor Rosicrucian conventions could be held and chemical laboratories could not be subordinated. The main obstacle was the reluctance of the wives, especially of the brethren: Emerich Pottornyay, Berzeviczy, Kapy and Kraszniec, against all kinds of practical experiments. To make the ladies more conciliatory and more inclined to the Order, Heinzeli initiated three of them into the 1st

7 AACEE = Adogmatic Associations of Central and Eastern Europe) / AAECE = Association Adogmatique de l’Europe Centrale et de L’Est.

8 Three ladies initiated among four, so all of the four can be considered Masons with three-quarters certainty.

9 According to a report by a contemporary London newspaper, Pál Antal Esterházy became a member of the Masonic “French Lodge” in Suffolk Street in August 1733. Source: Róbert Péter, ed., *British Freemasonry, 1717-1813.*, vol. 5 (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 20.

10 Ludwig Abafi, *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Österreich-Ungarn*, vol. 3 (Budapest: Aigner, 1893), 34-35.

11 Elizabeth Aldworth (1693–1775), née Elizabeth St. Leger, married Richard Aldworth in 1713. They were admitted in the years before his marriage, after accidentally witnessing an initiation ceremony in their house. She was an active Mason, even participating in public Masonic parades. Source: Niamh O’Rourke, ‘Elizabeth St. Leger: Ireland’s First Female Freemason’, accessed 11 November 2020, [https://www.academia.edu/40243483/Elizabeth\\_St\\_Leger\\_Ireland\\_s\\_First\\_Female\\_Freemason](https://www.academia.edu/40243483/Elizabeth_St_Leger_Ireland_s_First_Female_Freemason)

12 Marie-Henriette Heiniken / Mme. de Xaintrailles (?-1818 ) The woman who attained the rank of captain in menswear during the Napoleonic Wars was initiated by the French lodge “Frères Artistes” in the late 1700s. F.-T. Begue Clavel, *Histoire pittoresque de la franc-maçonnerie et des sociétés secrètes anciennes et modernes (Ed.1843)*. (Paris: Hachette, 2018), 34. See: ‘Marie-Henriette Heiniken (Mme. de Xaintrailles)’, <http://localhost/objects/5111/mariehenriette-heiniken-mme-de-xaintrailles:jsessionid=A0315BA0656D8ED8FBA7C699FAEB43A9>.

degree of Freemasonry in 1778. These, however, stormed him with the award of further degrees, because they wanted to gradually found their own Women's Lodge, on condition that this would at least indirectly benefit the Rosicrucian Order, "because more .... and we could more easily hide among them", - Heinzeli promised to do his best in this regard. For the time being, he translated the 3 lowest degrees from French into German and sent the translation to the Rosicrucians in Vienna for examination. 1) The Generalate of the Order, however, prohibited - with full appreciation of the good intention - under threat of suspension or exclusion, the frequency of the women's lodge, 2) and thus this electrification plan had also become into water. The Women's Lodge could not be built, and the ladies, whose expectations had been exchanged, became even more bitter against to brothers.<sup>13</sup>

In any case, it is clear from the hereinabove text that the initiation of the ladies as Freemasons was incidental, in order to revive the Order of the Rosicrucians. The recorders of the event have been so unaware of the significance of this - it was the first time in Hungary that women were initiated as Freemasons - that neither the names of the ladies have been recorded, nor which of the four of them was initiated by Heinzeli. Three of the four were inaugurated, but it is not known who they were, so only at the 75% level that they were Freemasons.

Let us try to make up for the missing names retrospectively. The genealogical tables of the Hungarian nobility show that the wife of the Lutheran pastor Imre Berzeviczy was Mária Dessewffy, the wife of József Kapy, the chief of county Bereg, was Teréz Radvánszky, the wife of Imre Pottornyai<sup>14</sup> (1751-?) was Apollónia Máriássy (1760-?). We did not find the name of the wife of the Lutheran pastor Imre Krasznecz.

Just as the first Masonic lodge was founded in Transylvania by Protestant (Lutheran) Saxon citizens, the next wave of lodge formations took place in a Lutheran environment in Upper Hungary (the Highlands), but at an earlier level of bourgeois development among country-town landowners. This is also evidenced by the surviving information on initiated women. For example, Ms József Kapy, née as Teréz Radvánszky, was the savior of the Lutheran Church, since in the story of the church in Podhradik, we could read that, in the time of Emperor Joseph II, she had a stone church built in place of the wooden church at her own expense.<sup>15</sup>

## The first known Hungarian woman Freemason: Countess Ilona Hadik-Barkóczy (1833-1887)<sup>16</sup>

It was the next remarkable case, when Ilona (Helene) Hadik-Barkóczy was initiated as a Freemason in 1875 to the lodge "Egyenlőség" (Equality) of Grand Orient of Hungary working in Ungvár (now Uzhgorod, Ukraine). The Grand Orient cancelled her admission due to bureaucratic deficiencies, although Ferenc Pulszky, Grand Master of the other grand lodge (St. John Grand Lodge of Hungary) was a supporter.

13 Ludwig Abafi, *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Österreich-Ungarn*, vol. 3 (Budapest: Aigner, 1893), 34-35. (The author's translation).

14 Elsewhere Pottornyay.

15 Hörk, József, *A Sáros-Zempléni Ev. Esperesség története* (Kassa: Szerző, 1885), 330.

16 This section is based on the following article László Vári, 'Was Helene Hadik-Barkóczy a Real Freemason or Not?', in *Quatuor Coronati Berichte 2019*, ed. Marcus G. Patka and Alfred Stalzer, Wiener Jahrbuch Für Historische Freimaurer-Forschung ; 39. (Leipzig: Salier Verlag, 2019), 351-380.

The Grand Orient considered Pulszky's involvement a provocation, the investigation report named Francis Pulszky as the main factor. The results were forwarded to the St. John Grand Lodge. The management of St. John Grand Lodge worked out a special solution after some internal discussions. Pulszky did not run for the Grand Master election, but the chairmanship was not filled. He was re-elected one year later. The case raised a great deal of dust; it was one of the best documented early examples of an initiation of a woman as a Freemason, even internationally, yet its descriptions are incomplete or erroneous.

Freemasonry in Hungary was banned in 1795 by Emperor Francis I following the conspiracy by Ignác Martinovics, and thus interrupted the flourishing of 18<sup>th</sup>-century Freemasonry in Hungary and Austria. Then, apart from the lodge named "Zur Morgenröte des höheren Lichts" (Dawn of the Glorious Light) that was active for about a month during the Hungarian Revolution and the War of Independence in 1848-49, there had been no legally recognized lodge in Hungary until the Compromise with the Austrian monarchy (1867).

As a result of the Compromise, the revolutionaries who fled to emigration were able to return home, many of whom became Freemasons abroad – in Italy, France, and Germany. (Kossuth himself, the revolutionary governor of Hungary, entered the Cincinnati Lodge 133 with his companions in the United States in 1852, but did not return home from his emigration to Italy until his death.) On the basis of the right of association provided by the Compromise, two Masonic supreme authorities were established, in 1869 the St. John Grand Lodge of Hungary, recruited from Hungarian citizenship, mostly Germans and Jews, and the Grand Orient of Hungary in 1871, whose membership included returning Hungarian emigrants and individuals from the ranks of the nobility of the counties. Interestingly, Ferenc Pulszky, who returned home from his emigration to Italy as a 33<sup>rd</sup>-degree Scottish Rite Mason, became the Grand Master of the St. John Grand Lodge, which worked within the first three degrees only. The Grand Orient of Hungary, working in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, received its patent (charter) from the Grand Orient of France. Until the union of 1886, the two grand lodges sometimes worked side by side, more like rivals than not.

Countess Helene (Ilona in Hungarian) was the last member of the renowned and affluent Barkóczy family of Szala, so her father, John Barkóczy (1798-1872) brought two actions against the collateral property inheritance.<sup>17</sup> He had established primogeniture in favor of his daughter and, by royal grace, her legal status was that of a son (*praefectio*).

Helene continued to develop her good skills at high-level studies; she interested herself in the arts and sciences and spoke several languages, including Latin. In 1860 she married Count Béla Hadik (1822-1872). Firstborn son, Endre Hadik-Barkóczy inherited the Hadik and the Barkóczy properties. Her interest in Freemasonry was motivated by family origin; her grandfather and great-uncle were both Freemasons. She inherited her great-uncle, John Barkóczy's (1776-1801) masonic library and studied the material extensively.

Her husband did not like this "fad", he even closed her once into the Döbling madhouse. But she got out after a week – thanks to her self-managed property and social relations.

17 Based on the old Hungarian law, lack of spear side could cause collateral property inheritance.

She had good contacts with relative and friend Francis Pulszky, Grand Master of the St. John Grand Lodge of Hungary. Her Pálóc castle frequently accommodated prominent guests from the nearby city of Ungvár such as Eugene (Jenő) Tabódy, the Worshipful Master of Lodge „Equality”.

Her rank, property, „masculinisation”<sup>18</sup> and her acquaintances may have created a basis for her decision to try to enter Freemasonry, an institution closed to women. The Countess endeavoured to gain admittance into Freemasonry around 1871, but she did not “officially” petition the Grand Orient until January 1875.

Although the Countess’ petition was turned down, her confidant, Julius (Gyula) Vezzerle was trying to soften two lodges to facilitate her admission. One was lodge “Egyenlőség” (Equality) of Ungvár, 20 kilometres to the east from the Barkóczy family castle at Pálóc, the other one was lodge “Egyetértés” (Consensus) of Kassa, 87 kilometres away to the west from Pálóc. Vezzerle made progress in Kassa also, but the Ungvár lodge was a complete success; it was not Worshipful Master Tabódy but Deputy WM Géza Mocsáry who succumbed to lobbying and contributed by convincing ten masters to accept the Countess’ admission.

The date of admission was set for 11 November 1875. The countess insisted on Pulszky presence. The initiation had been properly completed, the ten masters voted in favour of the admission, the ceremony was carried out. During the initiation, Pulszky stayed outside (separated from the lodge only by a curtain), and when the initiation ceremony was completed, he marched in, and occupied a guest seat.

The event was brought to the attention of the Grand Master, Georg (György) Joannovics, who, appointed a committee of inquiry, headed by Imre Ivánka, to investigate the matter in detail. On the basis of the investigation report submitted in mid-December, a decision annulling the admission and convicting the “perpetrators” was issued on 5 January, but was not published before 20 March:

Géza Mocsáry – guilty, as the main factor, and was excluded for good; the three principal officers (lights) of the lodge were dismissed from the order; 6 members had their [Masonic] rights suspended [1x12, 1x6 and 4x3 months] 1 person was acquitted.

To justify the decision of rejection the following irregularities were listed: absence of preformed rules, filing and lack of registration. They forbade her admittance into any lodge under the penalty of dissolution of the lodge from the rolls, and it was demanded that she return her invalid certificate within ten days. However, she was not willing to return it voluntarily. The lodge was not dissolved, but it finally decided on self-dormancy (suspension of operations) a few years later – obviously not without relation to the scandal.

The Grand Orient considered Pulszky’s contribution a provocation, as a result of the protests Pulszky did not run for the position of Grand Master in his Grand Lodge, but the chair

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18 Her legal status was that of a son, thanks to the royal grace. The legal method “*praefectio in filium*” is promotion of a daughter to a son.



remained unfilled. He was re-elected a year later. In any case, his position weakened, and while he obstructed the union of the two Grand Lodges, he was now at the forefront of the movement - he was elected the first Grand Master of the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary, created by the union.

After the storm subsided, the Countess continued to support Freemasonry appearing in white works, if invited. After she passed away in 1887, she got a beautiful obituary by the editor-in-chief of the Masonic newspaper Kelet (East), Mór Gelléri. The affair did not spoil his relationship with Ferenc Pulszky, she often visited the famous Pulszky salon. During her visits to Pest, she lived in the apartment of the Pulszky family in the National Museum, and appointed Károly Pulszky, the son of Ferenc Pulszky, as the executor of her will.

Today's accepted, standard emancipatory perspective offers only sketchy explanation. The cause of refusing the admission cannot be attributed simply to the fact that it was an era of male dominance. The differences between contemporary Hungary and Western Europe may account for this.

One difference is the dissimilarity between the perception of the Anglo-Saxon common law and Prussian law used in Hungary. Helene Hadik Barkóczy hoped that if she could make her case similar to Elizabeth Aldworth's - "if you've already learned the secrets vow to them" - she would gain admission based on the precedent. But this idea did not work out. Firstly, because the different perceptions of law and secondly, due to the difference in maturity among the Masonic organizations.

On the one hand, at the time of Elizabeth Aldworth the bureaucratic admission system of Grand Lodges, which gained primacy over ritual initiation in the lodges, did not exist,. On the other hand, it had not yet solidified the organization of the Grand Lodge, which limited the autonomy of the lodges.

The Countess referred to the indisputable power of lodges to the initiation, which can be overridden only in exceptional cases by the Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge was chosen an alternative method to refuse the admission; they did not recognize its validity due to formal deficiencies. So, afterwards the Grand Lodge did not have to formally invalidate the initiation, which was a matter within the jurisdiction of the lodges.

The other factor is the oddity that in the Hungary of the time a feudal instrument, the "praefectio" gave rights - though limited - to the selected female members of the aristocracy to self-determination. Otherwise, girls lived under the guardianship of their father and similarly, wives of their husbands.

An interesting phenomenon is the contradiction between the Countess's emancipatory claims to affiliation based on a feudalistic institution (the praefectio) and the Freemasons' opposition based on the ideal of civic equality.

## Countess Júlia Apraxin (1830-1913), the first - half Hungarian – lady initiated in Spain<sup>19</sup>

Júlia (Julia) Apraxin was initiated in Madrid in 1880 to a Masonic lodge named “Fraternidad Iberica” (Brotherhood of Iberia), however in addition to her Russian ethnicity she identified herself as Hungarian, since she had been brought up in Hungary, and her Hungarian foster father could probably be her real father.

According to the contemporary Spanish Masonic protocol, “Doña Julia de Rubio y Guillén, Condesa de Apraxin” was admitted into the lodge *Fraternidad Ibérica* (Iberian Fraternity) of the “Grande Oriente Nacional de España” (National Grand Orient of Spain) in Madrid on 14th June, 1880. The permission was granted by Grand Master Seoane himself as the head of the National Grand Orient of Spain, highlighting the lady’s manlike services for the French army certified by official documents. As stated in the protocol, the initiation ceremony was attended by numerous Freemasons, Countess “Apraxin” chose the symbolic name “Buda”<sup>20</sup>.

The unnecessary letter “t” in the surname of the Countess evidently occurred as a slip of the pen when writing or reading out the protocol. As we will see later, our heroine used many names and aliases during her life, one of them being Julia Buda inspired by Buda<sup>21</sup>, one of her places of residence and of activities.

Born on 16th October 1830 in Vienna, Julia Apraxin was registered as the daughter of the Russian aristocrat and diplomat Count Alexandre Petrovich Apraxin and Countess Hélène (Ielena) Bezobrazova, an aristocratic lady of Polish-Russian origin. In 1828 Julia’s mother met Count József Esterházy and the couple married later in 1841, following the divorce from her first husband, Count Esterházy – as we know from his diary – who treated Julia as his own daughter. In her childhood and youth, Julia lived with her parents and brother Demeter in Vienna and in the Esterhazy Castle in Cseklész, near Pozsony (today Pressburg, Bratislava).

On 15th October 1849 she married Count Arthur (Artúr) Batthyány. Settling down in Vienna for about ten years with their five children, the couple lived the worryless life of the high society with balls, dances, masquerades and carriage ridings filling their days. In 1853 Johann Strauss II dedicated one of his polkas, the *Tanzi Bári* (Dancing Bear) to her, insinuating that the Countess acted as a bear-leader making men dance like bears.

The Batthyány-Apraxin couple moved to Pest at the turn of the 1850s. Julia opened her salon, where she organized weekly literary evenings. Her declared purpose was to bring together the aristocracy of birth and the spiritual aristocracy.

Hungary was halfway between the fallen Revolution and Freedom Fight of 1848-49 and the

19 This section is based on the following lecture:

László Vári, ‘Buda, the First Woman Freemason in Spain. Life and Career of Countess Julia Apraxin’ (La masonería: mito e historia, XV Symposium Internacional de Historia de la Masonería Española, Lisboa, 12 October 2018).

20 Spanish sources often mistakenly consider it as “Buddha”.

21 Former capital of Hungary, Buda united with Pest and Óbuda on 1 January, 1873 to become the new capital under the name “Budapest”.

Compromise (1867). Julia Apraxin started her public life in Hungary as an enthusiastic patriot in all the aspects of the Hungarian affair. She had learned Hungarian very well, although some of her French accent had been preserved. She began to study sciences taking lessons from renowned scholars of the age.

She wrote novels, short stories and plays, which were staged. In one of her pieces, she depicted the supremacy of the spiritual aristocracy over the aristocracy of birth — and this may have been one of the reasons the aristocracy cast her out. The other reason was her divorce from her husband, the third and the most amazing thing was that despite her aristocratic roots, she became an actress.

As a result of this news, the aristocracy pressed the police to prevent “Countess Julia Batthyany” from appearing on stage. However, the audience received the aristocratic lady’s ambition with great enthusiasm and stood beside her. Eventually, the Countess acted as Julia Budai and regardless of her talent, she had a great deal of success.

Julia Apraxin travelled to Paris on 1st May 1863 with Georg (György) Molnár. Molnár was Júlia’s stage director and lover. Molnár was looking for spectacular stage instruments and plays; on the other hand, Julia was longing for appearing on the stage of the Théâtre Français. Preparing the way well, they gained contacts through the Hungarian revolutionary emigration; Louis (Lajos) Kossuth sent a letter of support to Prince Napoleon for Julia. However, the Prince’s support was insufficient to reach the Théâtre Français managing only to join Achille Ricour’s learner theater (Théâtre des jeunes artistes). Photographic business cards were printed on which Júlia was wearing a revolutionary Hungarian uniform. When the uniform image ran out, Julia was photographed in a hussar costume in the studio of the famous Parisian photographer Erwin.

In addition to the French press, Hungarian and Austrian newspapers also reported on their performances; while the Hungarians praised the Austrians gloated over the less successful ones. She gained membership in Société des Gens de lettres (Society of the People of Letters) in August 1863 thanks to her three previous novels. The value of this membership is indicated by the fact that, according to the 1881 data, only 66 of the 1700 French women writers were members of the Society. In addition to Julia Apraxin’s studies for the realization of her artistic dreams, she successfully entered the world of French aristocracy. She lived in Faubourg Saint-Germain, the elite quarter.

Julia Apraxin concluded a Russian orthodox marriage with Lorenzo Rubio Guillén y Montero de Espinosa (1835-1895), a Spanish cavalry captain in 1867. On the news of Julia’s marriage, which her mother considered invalid from the Catholic point of view, she terminated her daughter’s monthly allowance from that point, but Julia recovered it through a lawsuit. Later, after her mother’s death, she had to retake her father’s inheritance from her relatives.

The couple travelled to Kolozsvár in 1876, where Julia converted to the Unitarian religion, then divorced, and married Lorenzo again according to the Unitarian rite. Since Julia Apraxin’s first husband, Artur Batthyány died in 1893, it became possible for her and Lorenzo to enter into matrimony

in the Roman Catholic Church. On 1<sup>st</sup> February 1894, the Apraxin – Rubio Guillén couple swore allegiance to each other once again in Madelaine, one of the most prestigious churches in Paris, in a Catholic marriage ceremony. A civil marriage was also concluded in the 9<sup>th</sup> district of Paris.

Still living in Paris, on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1879, the couple gave a party in a stylish hotel in Madrid for the elite of the Spanish capital including the representatives of the worlds of politics, science, the police and literature. Presumably, Julia met with the representatives of the “Fraternidad Iberica” Masonic lodge, allowing members of the Investigative Committee to prepare a recommendation of the countess.

In any case, on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1880, the first woman in Spain was initiated in a masculin lodge with great interest, about which the French Masonic newspaper *Chaîne d’Union* reported in detail<sup>22</sup>:

The first initiation of a woman in Madrid

On Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> June, an extraordinary Masonic event took place. An illustrious lady, a member of the Austro-Hungarian aristocracy by birth, with Spanish connections, was admitted by Fraternidad Iberica lodge No. 90 of the Grand Orient of Spain..

There were 79 participants, many of whom represented the currently 149 lodges of the Grand Orient. The Brethren were wearing ceremonial clothing, a white tie as well as profane and Masonic jewels, the majority of which were decorated with precious stones sparkling in the rays of light falling onto them. We must but mention the American Freemasons, who were wearing real treasures. Let me also say that all the social classes were represented.

The neophyte was wearing a very expensive, white dress and her exquisite figure invited affection and respect. The church floor was strewn with flowers – she was treading on a carpet of roses, carnations and other flowers. After the newly initiated received light among the pillars, the Worshipful Master stepped to her, led her to the altar and took her oath. Her passage under the vault of steel was strewn with flowers by the Freemasons. In the final stage of the initiation, they tied around her waist a gold-stitched-bordered white apron with beautiful Masonic jewels painted in the middle of it.

An eloquent speech on the importance of the role of women in the modern society by Orator Neus followed.

A wonderful buffet was awaiting the participants with its exquisite feast of tastes and elegance originating from one of the best restaurants of Madrid praising the skills of the restaurateur-Brother.

Upon closing the works, the participants congratulated the new Sister confirming their further support; the event filled everyone with enthusiasm, which may open new perspectives to the female population in Spain.”

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22 *La Chaîne d’union* VI (1880): 207–208. (The author’s translation).

Since some of the readers of *Chaîne d'Union* had argued about the correctness of the report and the regularity of the initiation, assuming that the Countess was admitted into a female, adoption lodge, in new articles, they clarified that Julia Apraxin had been admitted into a masculine lodge<sup>23</sup>:

We could see her diploma, which is perfectly correct. Our Sister and her husband, who is also a Freemason, told us that the countess had been admitted in the same way as any other profane; she had been initiated in a Blue Lodge passing all the challenges required. Without any doubt, we have established that, based on the aforementioned facts, the lady is a Freemason.

In the following issue of *La Chaîne d'Union*, there is already an offer for the newest novel of the Freemason Countess made for the Freemason Brethren<sup>24</sup>:

<<One or the other>>, the author of this work is our Sister, countess Julia Apraxin. [...] Dear Brethren, do read this book ... . [...] in our July issue, we informed the readership on countess Apraxin's initiation into the mysteries, being lieutenant-colonel Lorenzo Rubio-Guillerm's, our revered Brother's wife, [...]"

Apart from her initiation, we have no knowledge of the countess ever visiting the works of the lodge. However, it is known that even after a few women had been admitted, initiations of women were abandoned, and they rather founded an adoption lodge in 1892 for women.<sup>25</sup>

The Countess's novel *L'Une ou l'Autre?* (One or the other?) recommended by *Chaîne d'Union* to Freemasons was dated 1881, and was quite successful because it was released more than once. The work was published as a sequel in Madrid's *El Imparcial* (The impartial) newspaper of 3rd March 1881, translated by D. Adolfo S. de Figueroa with the title *¿Cuál de las dos?* The novel appeared later as a book published by the newspaper.

We do not know much about her life in Madrid. Her husband was found dead on 13th October 1895 on the fast train to Bayonne. The obituary was given by "Doña Julia, condesa de Apraxin" in the "*La Correspondencia de España*", stating the place and time of the Mass for his soul: Montserrat Church, 25<sup>th</sup> October 1895.

She probably moved to Madrid at the time; however, the Parisian newspapers did not mention her anymore and neither did the Spanish press. Her death was reported by the weekly Catholic *La Lectura Dominical* in the 24th May 1913 issue: "The pious Apraxin Julia, Countess of Apraxin, [passed away] at the age of eighty three." Thus Julia Apraxin's death occurred between 16th and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Clearly, a woman of this age had to have serious support and merit to be invited among the Freemasons. The record of the initiation includes Grand Master Seoane's recognition of Julia Apraxin's services to the French army. György Molnár, a colleague and lover of Júlia Apraxin,

23 *La Chaîne d'union* VIII-IX (1880): 233-234. (The author's translation).

24 *La Chaîne d'union* XI-XII (1880): 323. (The author's translation).

25 J. a. M. Snoek, *Initiating Women in Freemasonry: The Adoption Rite, Initiating Women in Freemasonry* (Brill, 2012), 201.

says in his memoirs that “by one of the camp Red Cross societies started from Paris, mostly organized by her, she survived the Carlist War.” This, then, may have been the service so highly revered by the Spanish Freemasons on the side of Queen Isabella. The French Masonic newspaper *Chaîne d’Union* mentions her husband as a high-ranking Brother, and this circumstance, the support of her Masonic husband, may have been essential for her admission.

## **Mária Rónay (1899–1968) and her colleagues are the founders of the Eastern Star chapters in<sup>26</sup>**

In 1948, Grand Master Géza Supka established the Hungarian Grand Chapter of the “Eastern Star” Masonic appendant body for women in Hungary, which consisted of five chapters. The membership consisted of 22 sisters (female relatives of Freemasons) and five male Freemasons; the Secretary General became Mária Rónay, Supka’s lover.

The flourishing of Freemasonry in Hungary was interrupted by the outbreak of World War I in 1914, and then the counter-revolutionary system that came to power after the turmoil of war and revolutions officially disbanded the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary in 1920<sup>27</sup>.

The prohibition decree was repealed only after the end of World War II, and from then on, Masonic lodges operated again in Hungary for a short 5 years. In the first four years of this, Géza Supka, an archaeologist, writer and politician was the Grand Master. Supka was an old Mason, elected to a number of lodge and grand lodge positions. After the devastation of the war, Hungarian Freemasonry, which needed help, was embraced by American masonic lodges. Arthur H. Keil (1904–1981), a Hungarian emigrant who became a Freemason in the US, had irresistible merits in organizing this. In 1948, he visited his homeland as a representative of the American Freemasonry, negotiated with state leaders, and wreathed the statues of Lajos Kossuth and George Washington, the two great Freemasons, as part of the centenary celebrations of the Hungarian War of Independence.

Through his foreign contacts, Grand Master Supka was constantly interested in whether women’s masonic organizations were recognized by masons in a given country, and whether women’s masonic organizations operated? It was clear from the responses that either such organizations did not exist or if they had, the regular Freemasonry forbade contact with them. Only the Eastern Star Order, a non-Masonic but affiliated organization operating in the United States, was eligible. Considering Supka’s European failures and American support, it was a logical step to ask the Hungarian Freemason Arthur H. Keil, who lived America, to establish a women’s order in Hungary. This was already part of a series of steps towards American high-level masonic organizations.

26 This section is based on the following article: László Vári, ‘An Unknown Eastern Star Chapter in Hungary’, in *Quatuor Coronati Berichte – Wiener Jahrbuch Für Historische Freimaurerforschung Nr. 36/2016*, ed. Marcus G. Patka, Robert A. Minder, and Heinz Sichrovsky (Wien: Löcker Verlag, 2016), 418-429.

27 The ban was not considered valid by the Reform Grand Lodge of Hungarian Freemasons, which operated as a Hungarian organization of FZAS between 1913 and 1930. See: László Vári, ‘The Hungarian Grand Lodge of the Freimaurerbund “Zur Aufgehenden Sonne”’, in *Quatuor Coronati Berichte – Wiener Jahrbuch Für Historische Freimaurerforschung Nr. 37/2017*, ed. Marcus G. Patka, Heinz Sichrovsky, and Gerhard Hellwagner (Wien: Löcker Verlag, 2017), 173-193.

The protocol on the establishment of the Eastern Star organization in Hungary is as follows:

MINUTES of the foundation of the Hungarian Chapter of Order of the Eastern Star in the house of the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary on 17 June 1948.

The next master Brethren were present: Rudolf Balló dr.; Andor Gerő; Imre Gerő dr.; Arthur H. Keil; Géza Supka dr.; Gyula Tímár; and the following sisters:

Mrs. Rudolfné Balló dr.; Mrs. Béláné Bazsányi; Mrs. Imréné Bálint; Mrs. Pálné Fehér; Mrs. Imréné Gerő dr.; Mrs. Mihályné Görgey dr.; Mrs. Tamásné J. Horváth dr.; Mrs. Ferencné Kepes; Mrs. Kálmánné Karpely; Mrs. Imréné Kószegi; Mrs. Ferencné László; Mrs. Imréné Pogány; Mrs. Istvánné Rada; Étay Emília Mrs. Rappaport dr.; Ms. Mária Rónay; Mrs. Pálné Rózsa; Mrs. Jenőné Simonyi; Mrs. Miklósné Szász dr.; Mrs. Tiborné Szalay dr.; Mrs. Józsefné Szabó; Mrs. Ödönné Szirtes and Mrs. Miklósné Temesváry dr. Géza Supka dr., Grand Master of M.S.Np. welcomes the participants and outlines the fundamental laws of the chapters of the Order of Eastern Star in short, as well as the symbolic sense of the chapter's equipment.

He announced that on behalf of the Order Eastern Star of New York and representing it, Arthur H. Keil, Master brother from Ehlers Lodge and member of the Order of Eastern Star, appeared today, who received the mandate from Worthy Patron of Grand Chapter of New-York State Order of Eastern Star, to take oath of the Order of Eastern Star from a group of Masonic sisters in Hungary, as well as some of the Hungarian Master brothers and inform them about the Order's secrets.

Brother Arthur H. Keil calls the honed listed masters and sisters to take the Eastern Star's oath and this occurred to act with a diligent observance of the Chapter's rites.

After the oath of the Eastern Star, the present sisters and five Master brothers formed the Nr. 1 – 5 chapter, and under the corresponding section of the Constitution, the Grand Chapter of the five chapters established. The Grand chapter's first meeting decided to inform about its forming the Grand chapter of Order of Eastern Star of New-York state and sends brotherly greetings through the sea.

The Secretary-General's affairs of Grand Chapter performs Ms. Mária Rónay, / Budapest, VI. Podmaniczky u. 45 / E. S. sister.  
dated as above

Secretary General

Grand Master

Mária Rónay became a journalist in 1926. She was editor of the magazine *Literatura* between 1927 and 1939 and editor of *Világ* magazine between 1945 and 1949 as Géza Supka's grey eminence. She wrote many successful youth novels, but her »adult« literary experiments did not reap satisfaction among the critics. Supka as a writer and scholar fascinated her. She became his lover, not bothering that Supka did not divorce from his wife for the sake of her, de-

spite the combativeness of his daughter, Magdalena Supka and her husband Géza Féja. Mária held out beside Supka until his death. It's only her, who did not appear as a wife among the Freemason sisters. Her activity, her executive ability was a big profit of the Grand Lodge programs, although the Grand Master's leading wind helped her sail in her fruitful functions.

Yet, a related memorabilium can be found in a collection of the Hungarian National Museum, an Eastern Star flag. Since an Eastern Star organization never worked before and after in Hungary, probably Arthur H. Keil may have brought it to found the chapter. The symbols depicted on may have illustrated Géza Supka's review.

The Eastern Star organization in Budapest did not work for long. As Imre Gerő reported about it<sup>28</sup>:

“[...] Arthur H. Keil, in the course of his Hungarian visit attempted to found this female organization from the women's rows, but apart from some first formal works, this experiment as an organization went dormant and the sisters' work was performed in an informal form.”

What may have motivated Supka to create this form of female Freemasonry? Three factors should be taken into consideration: Under the 25 years of prohibition and as a result of World War II, the number of Freemasons reduced to just a fraction of what it was before. For the pursuit of Freemasonic philanthropist activities, especially towards the aging, the ill and the old freemasons, the deceased's widows, support for orphans, there was an insufficient number of hands. The sisters' help was necessary and the Grand Lodge worked on obtaining it. For Supka, an “enlightened” thinker, and incidentally a Freemason, may have been disturbed by the obsolete tradition of the discrimination of women. In a lot of lectures, he talked about his ideas and oriented others into this direction. Furthermore, he could find a woman, even in his narrowest environment, who met the still rigorous requirements of Freemasonry. It was Mária Rónay, a woman journalist, second in charge after Supka, the grey eminence in the journals *Literatura* and *Világ*. And she was Supka's lover who he had an affair with until his death.

## **“Tolerancia és Testvériség” (Tolerance and Brotherhood), a mixed lodge belonging to Le Droit Humain International<sup>29</sup>**

In 1989, almost 40 years after the ban on Freemasonry in Hungary in 1950, new social and non-governmental organizations, including Freemasons, could be established on the basis of the so-called “Civil Law”<sup>30</sup>. Shortly after the re-establishment of the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary, both mixed and women's Freemasonry established lodges in Budapest. Due to the English-oriented leadership of the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary, adherents of the Latin orientation seceded and re-established the Grand Orient of Hungary. From this, the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Grand Lodge of Hungary was later separated.

28 Imre Gerő, *A magyar szabadkőművesség története a második világháború után*. (Toronto: „Unitas” Magyar Szabadkőműves Kör, 1960), 27–28.

29 The source of the lodge's history is for the most part the “Tolerancia és Testvériség” lodge website: <http://droit-humain.hu/a-tolerancia-es-testveriseg-paholy/paholyunk-tortenete/>

30 1989. évi. II. tv. Az egyesülésről. [1989 II. Law. About right of association.]



On November 9, 1991, Hungary's first "mixed" lodge was established in Budapest under the name "Tolérance et Fraternité". The lodge was established with the help of the DHI (Le Droit Humain International), International Mixed Masonic Order Belgian Federation approx. after a year of organizing work. Far more than the number required to establish a lodge, the majority of the founding 18 master Masons were Belgians, as well as Swiss, Austrian, French and a Hungarian, who came from different Masonic orders and had not all known each other personally before. The engine of the foundation was a Belgian Masonic couple, Gisèle and René André, who were working in Budapest at the time.

More than 200 Masons arrived from Brussels on a separate charter flight *to light the pioneering* lodge named „Tolerancia és Testvériség” (Tolerance and Brotherhood). The ceremony was held in the ballroom of the Hotel Intercontinental, and the first three Hungarian seekers were initiated there the following day. In the beginning, the foreign lodge members travelled to Budapest, at their own expense, for the monthly works held in private apartments and rented premises - e.g. in the hall of a party house decorated with a statue of Lenin. For the next few years, the "sanctuary" was in a villa in Istenhegyi út, and then the lodge room of the Grand Orient of Hungary was rented for the works. For the 20th anniversary of the lodge, they managed to set up a separate lodge room in a self-owned downtown apartment.

The 5th, 10th, 20th and 25th anniversaries of the founding of the lodge were celebrated with widespread international participation, with almost 150 guests attending these events almost every time. The first and second Worshipful Masters of the lodge were the female and then the male members of the now-late Belgian couple, and the lodge work was in French. The lady was a French high-school teacher, the husband was a diplomat, who was accredited to Hungary at the time. The newly admitted Hungarian members were introduced to the mysteries of the Masonic work and rituals both by the Belgian couple and the founding members who regularly arrived in Budapest. Since then, many Hungarian women and men have held the position of head of the lodge, and the first Hungarian Worshipful Master was elected on the fourth birthday of the lodge.

According to the tradition introduced by the Belgian founders, the lodge has always held the second degree initiations in a foreign lodge, together with the locals and with their participation, thus referring to the wandering paths of the old guilds' journeymen. The lodge also strengthens its international relations with this.

The youngest member is currently twenty, the oldest is over eighty. The members are lawyers, teachers, writers, musicians and doctors by profession, so they are mainly middle-class intellectuals. Many petitioners have been initiated over the years, although some have dropped out. Among the 30-35 active members of the lodge, there are still Austrian, French, Finnish and Chilean Masons living in Hungary.

True to the Masonic tradition, the lodge also carries out charitable activities, adapted to its not very significant financial strength. They were raising funds for the Tisza flood victims for several years, they bore the cost of educating a little girl orphaned in the East Asian tsu-

nami, helped migrants, and supported the purchase of medical equipment for a children's hospital. At the time of the 2020 coronavirus epidemic, a foundation was helped to provide educational equipment for children with disabilities. Basically, however, the lodge is an intellectual workshop and its main activity is self-construction.

They work on the first three degrees of the Scottish rite, but with the help of the Viennese Droit Humain brethren, they already operate a Lodge of Perfection, but the higher degrees are performed at a Chapter in Vienna. They do all their work "for the glory of the Great Architect of the Universe and for the development of mankind". On the work desk, next to the open Bible, there is an open blank book and the Constitution of the Order: Faith in God is neither mandatory nor forbidden to members (just like in most French lodges). Initially, the works were conducted in French, but later the rituals were translated to meet the needs of the Hungarian members, and they were adapted to the Hungarian Masonic traditions.

Zsuzsanna Ágnes Berényi (1935-2019), a seasoned researcher of Hungarian Freemasonry, reported on the establishment of the lodge in her newspaper articles and studies. She was among the first to be admitted to the lodge, but her membership soon expired. Zsuzsanna Berényi, who recently died at the age of 84, wrote several books and countless articles on the history of Freemasonry, all of which were based on archival documents. The tiny but extremely energetic lady was active until the day she passed away, corresponding with publishers, working on her articles, which would appear posthumously. Upon the death of her parents, she inherited the family business, the First Hungarian Fire Enamel Badge Factory, which ushered her into learning about the existing types of badges and their production. She wrote a number of articles on badges and badge-making. For a long time, she was publishing on her own, combining her two fields of research: Masonic badges and medals. She presented her results at numerous conferences both in the country and abroad. As an avid Esperantist, she was welcomed all over the world. As an admirer of Louis (Lajos) Kossuth, she wrote a book and articles about Kossuth's freemasonry.

Among the male members of the mixed lodge, Pál Rózsa (1925-2011), a professor of matrix theory, is a good example. His father, an English teacher, and almost his entire family fell victims to the Holocaust. After graduation, no matter how much he wanted to study, he could not enter university because of Anti-Jewish legislation, so he was a blue-collar worker before he was called up for labour service. He was taken to Transylvania, but escaped, returning home only in 1945.

He needed money for his university studies - but he didn't have any. A few days later, an aunt of his, after learning about this, encouraged "someone" to help him financially until he graduated from university. So it happened: he was asking his aunt in vain about the anonymous benefactors. Uncle Pali, as he was called, never learned of his supporters by name: all he learned was that his father's former friends and companions had helped him. His father was a Freemason, so the mysterious, anonymous supporters might have been Freemasons as well.<sup>31</sup>

31 In the so-called Palatinus list can be found his father and grandfather. His father, Dezső Rózsa (1885-1943), a literary historian and English teacher, became a member of the Haladás lodge in Budapest in 1907. His grandfather, Márk Rózsa (Rosenberg) (1851-1930), a music teacher, was also a member of this lodge from 1873. See: József Palatinus, *A szabadkőművesség bűnei II: A magyarországi szabadkőműves páholyok tagjainak névsora 1868-tól 1920-ig* (Budapest: Budai-Bernwaller Ny., 1939), 271.

Uncle Pali became a renowned mathematician, a beloved teacher of many generations. His main field of education and research was matrix theory, but he even gave exciting lectures that could also be followed by lay people, e.g. about the golden ratio, the Fibonacci series, the great Fermat conjecture, or the relationship between mathematics and music.

As soon as he learned that the Masonic movement had resumed in Hungary, he applied to follow in the footsteps of his father and his benefactors. Until his death, he was a member of the “Tolerancia és Testvériség” Masonic Lodge for almost twenty years.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to the ritual, private works the mixed lodge holds open, so-called white works, from time to time. Some of these are: White work on the relationship between mathematics and music, „Tolerancia és Testvériség” lodge, 5th April 2008; The golden ratio – is it really an universal law?, „Tolerancia és Testvériség” lodge, 27th January 2011; The Freemason Franz (Ferenc) Liszt – a festive commemoration, Grand Orient of Hungary and „Tolerancia és Testvériség” lodge, 23rd September 2011; Esotericism as the knowledge of the initiates (ancient symbols), „Tolerancia és Testvériség” lodge, 5th May 2017.

## **Napraforgó (Sunflower) – Women’s lodge belonging to Grande Loge Féminine de France (Women’s Grand Lodge Of France)<sup>33</sup>**

The Napraforgó<sup>34</sup> Lodge was founded on May 12, 1992, with the help of the Hungarian members of the Paris Lodge, La Rose des Vents (Wind Rose) under the protection of the Women’s Grand Lodge of France and was allocated serial number 245. Their first Worshipful Master Ms. M. Ny. was elected, being an active member of the lodge to this day. The French Grand Master Marie-France Coquard<sup>35</sup> herself was present at Bringing in the Masonic *Lights*.

In the lodge, they work on the first three degrees of the Scottish rite, the works on the higher degrees being held in Paris. Initially, the language of the works was French, but later they switched to Hungarian. The Masonic literature in Hungarian, received from the Hungarian Grand Orient was of great help in this. The Sunflower Lodge works in a lodge room rented from the Grand Orient of Hungary, and currently has about 25 active members. They have a good relationship with the Grand Orient of Hungary, they often work together, especially on festive occasions.<sup>36</sup>

32 Maria Heller, “‘Freemason Conspiracy’”, *Eleven Emlekmű Kiállítás* (blog), accessed 11 November 2020, <http://kiállítás.eleven-emlekmű.hu/en/freemason-conspiracy-maria-heller/>

33 Website of the lodge: ‘Napraforgó Páholy – Magyarországi női szabadkőműves páholy’, accessed 11 November 2020, <http://napraforgopaholy.hu/>

34 When preparing for the founding, they wanted to name the lodge after Ilona Hadik-Barkóczy. See: Zsuzsanna Ágnes Berényi, *Szabadkőműves páholyneveink 1991-ig.*, Magyar Névtani Dolgozatok 114 (Budapest: ELTE, 1992), 26. Here she wrote about the women’s lodge founded in 1991 and named after Countess Ilona Hadik Barkóczy.

35 Marie-France Coquard held Masonic responsibilities from 1974 to 1999, Grande maîtresse de la Grande Loge Féminine de France (1993-1996).

36 Such was the case, for example, their celebration of St. John’s day on June 26, 2010 with the Grand Orient of Hungary.

Dr. Inczeffyné dr. Katalin Ivicsics talked in a 2010 public-service-television interview<sup>37</sup> about female Freemasonry and the lodge when she was the Worshipful Master. The film *Napraforgók* (Sunflowers) about the Lodge and Freemasonry was screened at Kino Cinema on Monday, May 11, 2015 at 5 p.m., followed by a roundtable discussion.<sup>38</sup> The lodge medal has been modelled after the medal of the founding French La Rose des Vents (Wind Rose) lodge, and the sunflower, combined with the all-seeing eye, is also depicted in their truly feminine “bijou”.

True to European Masonic tradition, drawing (lectures) are held within the works of the lodge. Some of these titles are: Women’s freedom; Fractals and family; Algebra in everyday life; Symbolism of light; The Halo phenomenon; Commemoration of Zsuzsanna Ágnes Berényi.

The lodge also holds public “white” works and organizes events for the general public. Some of these are: Women’s Secrets, Women’s Roles - Women’s Day Conference at Kossuth Club, March 8, 2013; On the brink of a climate catastrophe, “I won’t give up” Cafe & Bar, November 20, 2019.; Sunflower Lodge Women’s Day Event, “Public Treasury” Library, March 11, 2020.

The Sunflower Lodge also carries out charitable activities, usually associated with big promotions, such as giving a reading to the visually impaired through the From Page to Voice portal<sup>39</sup> or joining the Baptist Charity Service Christmas “shoe box” promotion<sup>40</sup> every year. Homeless women living in the Podmaniczky Street Hostel at the Women’s Night Shelter<sup>41</sup> are regularly donated and collections have been organized for the “non-luxury bag” campaign<sup>42</sup>.

## Conclusion

In Hungary, with a few rare but interesting exceptions, there was no tradition of female freemasonry. From time to time the idea arose in the lodges that women should be given the right to enter Freemasonry, but this never went beyond planning. The only attempt that was made was the establishment of the Order of the Eastern Star. Although it is not considered to be Masonic, it is closely related to regular Freemasonry. However, the established chapters soon ceased to function.

The mixed and female Masonic lodges currently operating had no local tradition, they were founded with foreign support after the regime change. Today, however, they have integrated well into the local and international masonic world and have established good relations with the men’s lodges that are willing to do so. They participate in social development through their self-improvement and charitable activities.

37 ‘Prizma - Szabdkömvűesség’, *Nemzeti Audiovizuális Archívum*, nava.hu/id/930442/| Date of transmission: 2010.01.18., [Prism - Freemasonry, Cultural history].

38 <http://napraforgopaholy.hu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Napraforgok3.mp4>.

39 See: ‘Lapról Hangra - Főoldal’, accessed 11 November 2020, <http://www.laprolhangra.hu/>. website, operated by the Informatics for the Visually Impaired Foundation.

40 See: ‘Cipősdoboz’, <http://ciposdoboz.hu/>. website operated by the Baptist Charity Service.

41 See: ‘Podmaniczky u. 33’, <http://resalapitvany.shp.hu/hpc/web.php?a=resalapitvany&o=1157453077>. website operated by the “RÉS” Social and Cultural Foundation.

42 “The aim of the campaign is to pack a Ladies Bag of basic feminine hygiene and lingerie for women in need, which will be donated to women in difficult circumstances across the country with the help of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service.” See: ‘nemluxustaska | Nem luxus táská - kampány a nők támogatásáért’, <http://nemluxustaska.hu/>.

The free and legal operation of lodges is a litmus test for a country's democracy and peaceful life of its citizens. The flourishing and peaceful coexistence of various Masonic orders, including women, is a positive sign. They are always banned in dictatorships; in crises; steps taken to suppress freedom are reinforced by the voice of the supporters of Masonic conspiracy theories, from tsarist Russia all through the example of the 20th-century European dictatorships, to Pinochet's Chile.

The currently growing number of attacks do not seem to be good signs either for Hungarian Freemasonry or the entire Hungarian society.

## Appendices

### a) Abafi about three women initiated by Heinzeli in his German-language work<sup>43</sup>:

Es kann endlich so weit, dass man schon 1779 weder Logen-Arbeiten, noch Rosenkreuzer-Conventionen abhalten und chemische Laborationen schon gar nicht unternehmen konnte. Das Haupthinderniss war der Viderwille der Frauen, insbesondere der Bbr Emerich Pottornyay, Berzeviczy, Kapy und Krasznecz gegen allerlei practische Versuche. Um die Damen versöhnlicher und dem Orden geneigter zu stimmen, nahm Heinzeli 1778 drei derselben in den 1. Grad der Fmrei auf. Diese bestürmten ihn aber um die Verleihung weiterer Grade, weil sie nach und nach eine eigene FrauenLoge gründen wollten, In der Voraussetzung, dass dadurch wenigstens mittelbar ein Nutzen für den Rosenkreuzer-Orden entstehen könnte, „weil man mehr M. v. St. d. L. haben würde und wir uns leichter unter ihnen versteckt halten können“, – versprach Heinzeli sein Möglichstes in dieser Beziehung zu thun. Vorläufig übersetzte er die 3 untersten Grade aus dem Französischen ins Deutsche und sandte die Übersetzung zur Begutachtung an die Rosenkreuzer-Obern nach Wien. 1) Das Ordens-Generalat aber untersagte – bei voller Würdigung der guten Absicht – unter Androhung der Suspendirung, bzw. Ausschliessung, die Frequentirung der Frauen-Loge, 2) und damit war auch dieser Electrisirungsplan zu Wasser geworden. Die Frauen-Loge kann nicht zu Stande, und die in ihren Erwartungen getauschten Damen wurden noch erbitterter gegen die Bbr.

### b) The *Chaîne d'union* Masonic journal about the initiation of Julia Apraxin<sup>44</sup>:

Première Initiation à Madrid d'une Femme.

Lundi 14 Juin, eut lieu un grand événement Maçonique. Une illustre dame, appartenant par sa naissance et ses propriétés à la noblesse austro-hongroise et par ses liens à l'Espagne, a été reçue dans la loge Fraternidad Iberica, no 90, de l'Or. National d'Espagne. Le nombre des assistants était de 79 parmi lesquels on comptait des Représentants de 149 Loges actuellement régies par le Gr. Or. National. Tous les FF. étaient en habit de cérémonie et cravate blanche, portaient des décorations profanes et Maçoniques, la plupart

43 Ludwig Abafi, *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Österreich-Ungarn*, vol. 3 (Budapest: Aigner, 1893), 34-35.

44 *La Chaîne d'union*, VI (1880): 207-208.

en pierreries, ce qui produisait un effet admirable sous l'effet des lumières. On remarquait des Maçons américains qui étaient parés d'un vrai trésor. Mais ajoutons que dans celle tenue, toutes les classes de la Société étaient représentées. La néophyte était revêtue d'une robe blanche d'une grande richesse ; sa figure d'une grande beauté, inspirait à la fois et la sympathie et le respect. Elle s'avança dans le temple, sur un tapis de roses, d'œillets et d'autres fleurs qui jonchaient le sol. Après que la nouvelle initiée eut reçu la lumière entre les colonnes, le Vénérable descendit pour la prendre et la conduire à l'autel, afin qu'elle renouvelât son obligation. On forma la voûte d'acier et tous les FF.·. présents jetèrent des fleurs sur son passage. L'investiture achevée on la revêtit d'un petit tablier de soie blanche, bordé d'or, au milieu duquel étaient peints admirablement les insignes Maçonniques. L'Orat.·., le F.·. Neus, prononça un éloquent discours sur *l'importance du rôle de la femme dans la Société moderne*. On passa ensuite au splendide et parfait buffet, servi avec une élégance et un goût par les soins d'un F.·., éminent restaurateur de Madrid, où il tient un des établissements les plus connus. Les travaux de table achevés, chacun félicita la nouvelle sœur et toute l'assistance se retira, enthousiasmée d'une fête aussi solennelle qui ouvre de nouvelles destinées au beau sexe en Espagne.

c) The Chaîne d'union again about the initiation of Julia Apraxin <sup>45</sup>:

Mais pour ne parler que de la Dame qui fut reçue Maçon par la L.·. Fraternidad Iberica, no 90, elle est venue à Paris, où elle est encore pour quelque temps. Nous avons eu la faveur de la voir et de causer avec elle. Elle était porteur d'une lettre d'introduction du Gr.·. Secret.·. du Grand Orient National d'Espagne. Cette dame nous a inspiré et la meilleure estime et la plus grande considération. Elle nous a montré son diplôme qui est parfaitement en règle. Notre Sœur et son mari, qui est également Maç.·. nous ont expliqué qu'elle avait été reçue au même titre qu'un profane et quelle avait été initiée en L.·. Bleue de Maç.·. ayant passé par toutes les épreuves du véritable Maçon. Elle est donc Maçon par ce fait; nous le constatons sans l'apprécier. Les différentes Maçonn.·. en général n'admettent pas encore l'initiation de la femme aux mystères purs de la Maçonn.·. Le Grand Orient National d'Espagne a fait une exception. Sera-t-il suivi? A d'autres que nous de résoudre ce point fort délicat.

d) The Chaîne d'union about the Julia Apraxin's book. <sup>46</sup>:

L'Une ou l'autre? par la Comtesse Julie Apraxin, est une roman des plus attrayants et des plus émouvants. [...] Nos FF.·., voudront lire ce livre.

45 *La Chaîne d'union* VIII-IX (1880): 233-234.

46 *La Chaîne d'union* XI-XII (1880): 323.

e) An introductory material of the lodge:

*Napraforgó Lodge*  
*The Women's Lodge in Hungary*



Napraforgó Lodge  
(At the address of the Grand Orient )  
1132 Budapest Visegrádi u. 60.  
noipaholy@freemail.hu

The Napraforgó Lodge is the women's lodge in Hungary, established in 1992 in the times following the change of regime.

The symbol of our lodge is the sunflower, which is a flower with a solar character, the epitome of female fertility and vitality, but it also includes the desire for light and love.

True to Masonic tradition, we strive to diffuse public morality, culture and and love for our fellow human beings aiming at practising charity. Therefore, we consider self-cultivation, self-improvement and the development of our personality to be our main task.

We are open to dealing with social issues, but we exclude political and religious matters from our circle and respect domestic laws.

Our work is private to outsiders, but on several occasions (together with men's or mixed lodges) we also organize educational lectures, forums and other programs.

If you wish to be a member of the Napraforgó Lodge, please send a handwritten cover letter with your contact information.

In case you have any queries, feel free to contact us at noipaholy@freemail.hu and we will be glad to help.

You can find more information about Freemasonry at [www.nagyoriens.hu](http://www.nagyoriens.hu) or [www.szabadkomuves.lap.hu](http://www.szabadkomuves.lap.hu).

***Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!***

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