

Róbert Péter

# Different Attitudes Towards Esotericism in the Writings of Leading Hungarian Freemasons of the Enlightenment

The last two decades have seen a worldwide surge in research activity on the subject of Freemasonry. This is clearly illustrated by the emergence of a number of Freemasonry-related research centres, international research projects, conferences, seminars and university courses all over the world. Despite the significant contribution of Hungarian Freemasons to European literary, social and political developments in the age of the Enlightenment, the history of Freemasonry in Hungary has remained a peripheral field of study, excluded from mainstream cultural, social and intellectual history. In other words, it has yet to be integrated into European scholarship on the fraternity.<sup>1</sup> This is exemplified by the fact that recent works on the esoteric aspects of Freemasonry do not make any mention of Hungarian Freemasons.<sup>2</sup> This is not surprising if we consider that, following a positivist approach, the majority of publications on the esoteric-Rosicrucian facets of the fraternity, sometimes written by amateur historians such as Lajos Abafi (Ludwig Aigner), appeared in the late nineteenth century and in the first three decades of the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the

---

**1** The research for this paper was supported by the EU-funded Hungarian grant EFOP-3.6.1-16-2016-00008. I am most grateful to Reinhard Markner for his valuable comments and proofreading my paper. – A special issue of *Helikon* (4/2016) was an attempt to partially fill this gap in eighteenth-century studies. It is available at [https://iti.btk.mta.hu/images/kiadvanyok/helikon/Helikon\\_2016\\_4.pdf](https://iti.btk.mta.hu/images/kiadvanyok/helikon/Helikon_2016_4.pdf).

**2** Renko D. Geffarth: *Religion und arkane Hierarchie: Der Orden der Gold- und Rosenkreuzer als geheime Kirche im 18. Jahrhundert*. Leiden 2007. Jan A. M. Snoek: *Einführung in die Westliche Esoterik, für Freimaurer*. Zürich 2011, ch. “Freimaurererei und Westliche Esoterik”, pp. 221–257; Wouter J. Hanegraaff: *Esotericism and the Academy*. Cambridge 2012, pp. 207–218. Henrik Bogdan: *Freemasonry and Western Esotericism*. In: *Handbook of Freemasonry*. Eds. H. Bogdan and J. A. M. Snoek. Leiden 2014, pp. 277–305. Paul Monod: *Solomon's Secret Arts. The Occult in the Age of Enlightenment*. London 2013.

**3** Ludwig Abafi-Aigner: *Die Entstehung der Neuen Rosenkreuzer*. In: *Die Bauhütte* 11 (1893), pp. 81–85. Ludwig Abafi, *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Oesterreich-Ungarn*. 5 vols. Budapest 1890–1899. Ludwig Aigner-Abafi: *Die neuen Rosenkreuzer*. In: *Latomia* 8 (1900), pp. 59–61; 9 (1900), pp. 68–69; 10 (1900), pp. 76–78. Ladislav de Malczovich: *A Sketch of the Earlier History of Freemasonry in Austria and Hungary*. In: *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* 4 (1891), pp. 20–24, 181–193; 5 (1892), pp. 15–19, 68–69, 187–192; 6 (1893), pp. 85–91; 7 (1894), pp. 18–24, 77–82, 184–189; 8 (1895), pp. 180–188; 9 (1896), pp. 129–144. Sándor Eckhardt: *Magyar rózsakeresztesek*

relevant archival material has yet to be explored; this includes such items as the copies of the nineteenth-century Dég archive kept at the National Archives of Hungary, which, despite their fragmentary nature, contain invaluable information about the history of Freemasonry and other fraternal orders such as the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer alten Systems in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>4</sup>

The objective of this paper is to examine and compare the different attitudes towards esoteric beliefs and practices in the writings of some leading Hungarian Freemasons at the threshold of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By investigating the masonic career and network of Ferenc Kazinczy (1759–1831) we can highlight the different approaches to alchemy and the essence of Freemasonry among his friends, who were notable Hungarian Freemasons.

Kazinczy was a poet, author, translator and editor. He was a prominent figure of the Enlightenment and a leading proponent of the Hungarian language reform. His parents, József Kazinczy and Zsuzsanna Bossányi, were wealthy landowners who paid considerable attention to the education of their children. Between 1769 and 1777 Kazinczy studied law and theology at the prestigious Sárospatak College, where Jan Comenius had taught for four years in the middle of the previous century. His exceptional literary and artistic talent soon became evident to his tutors. He started his literary career as a translator from German. In 1776, he published a Hungarian version of György Bessenyei's novel *Der Amerikaner*, where he used the contemporary Hungarian term for 'enlightenment' (*világosság*).<sup>5</sup> Among his popular translations of European literature were works of Goethe, Lessing, Gessner, and Herder. In 1789, after working as a public notary, he was one of the first two Protestants to be appointed as royal superintendents of primary schools in north-eastern Hungary, tasked with

---

[Hungarian Rosicrucians]. In: *Minerva* 1 (1922), pp. 208–223. László Szathmáry: Magyar alkémisták [Hungarian alchemists]. Budapest 1928. Elemér Jancsó: A magyar szabadkőművesség irodalmi és művelődéstörténeti szerepe a XVIII. században [The literary and cultural historical role of Hungarian Freemasonry in the 18th century]. Cluj 1936. One of the very few recent contributions on the subject is Martin Javor: Rozenkruciáni v strednej Európe – hra na magično. In: *Folia Historica Bohemica* 28 (2013), 2, pp. 279–289.

4 August Pauls: Ein ungarisches Freimaurerarchiv (Schloss Dég). In: *Bundesblatt* 44 (1930), pp. 45–49. Eva Huber: Zur Entstehung des Freimaurer-Archivs Dégh. In: *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur* 39 (5b–6), 1995, pp. 357–373. See also the essay by Réka Lengyel in the present volume.

5 Lajos Csetri: Rendszerek a kezdetektől a romantikáig [Systems from the beginnings to Romanticism]. Vol. 1. Budapest 1981, p. 251. Réka Lengyel: "A világosság a tudomány". A felvilágosodás mint módszer Verestói György halotti beszédeiben ["Enlightenment is science". The Enlightenment as a method in György Verestói's funeral orations]. In: *A felvilágosodás előzményei Erdélyben és Magyarországon (1650–1750)*, Szeged 2016, pp. 315–327.

enacting the Josephian education reforms.<sup>6</sup> He kept this position until 1791, when Leopold II relieved him from this duties.

Kazinczy's interest in Freemasonry can be dated back to the early 1780s. At that time he had an idealist view of Freemasonry and praised its religious universalism and egalitarianism.<sup>7</sup> He was initiated in the lodge *Zum tugendhaften Kosmopoliten* in András Puky's house in Miskolc on 16 January 1784.<sup>8</sup> Count Lajos Török (1748–1810), the chief royal superintendent of elementary schools of the Tisza region, was the founder of this lodge. Twenty years later, on 16 November 1804, Kazinczy married his daughter, Countess Sophie Török. Over time Kazinczy had a controversial relationship with Lajos Török partly due to their different attitudes towards Freemasonry and alchemy. In order to better understand the roots of this conflict, we have to examine Lajos Török's own masonic career and his views of the fraternity.

In 1781 Lajos Török established a lodge in Miskolc, among the members of which we can find the notable chemist and pharmacist, János (Johann) Keil. Török was eager to popularize Rosicrucian ideas in masonic circles in Hungary. His father, József Török (1714–1776), encouraged him to acquire the art of alchemy, and both of them were admitted into Rosicrucian lodges.<sup>9</sup> Although Lajos Török tried to persuade Kazinczy of the beauties of the “cosmogonical sciences” by providing him with books on the subject, Kazinczy not only shuddered at these works but, as is clear from his letters and other writings, he held a very poor opinion of his father-in-law's fascination with alchemy and Rosicrucianism.<sup>10</sup> Although Kazinczy described him as a great man with the most

**6** George Baranyi: Hoping against hope: the Enlightened age in Hungary. In: *The American Historical Review* 76 (1971), 2, p. 334.

**7** Ferenc Kazinczy: *Az én életem* [My Life]. Budapest 1987, p. 118.

**8** Kazinczy: *Az én életem.*, p. 124. Ferenc Kazinczy to György Aranka, 5 January 1793. In: *Kazinczy Ferenc levelezése* [Ferenc Kazinczy's Correspondence]. Eds. János Váczy, István Harsányi, Jenő Berlász. vol. 2. Budapest 1891, p. 289 Hereafter this edition is referred to as *Kazinczy's Correspondence*. For a reproduction of the lodge's German-language manuscript constitution see Lajos Török(?) et alii: *Gesetze und Constitutionen Der Gereiften und vollkommenen Loge der Tugendhaften Cosmopoliten gegen Orient in Miskolcz*. In: *Learned Societies, Freemasonry, Sciences and Literature in 18th-century Hungary: A Collection of Documents and Sources*. Ed. by Réka Lengyel, Gábor Tüskés, Budapest, MTA BTK Irodalomtudományi Intézet, 2017, pp. 162–169.

**9** Szathmáry (note 3), p. 232.

**10** Kazinczy's Correspondence, vol. 12., pp. 90–91 [Kazinczy to Pálóczi Horváth, 18 September 1814]. On Lajos Török, see Szathmáry (note 3), pp., 229–242; László Kiss, “. . . az én széplelkű patikáriuskodni-szerető Ipam. . .”. A gyógyszergyártó és forgalmazó gróf Török Lajos (1748–1810). In: *Széphalom: A Kazinczy Ferenc Társaság Évkönyve* 19 (2009), pp. 213–220.

noble spirit and warm heart,<sup>11</sup> he took his statement that his experiments could succeed only under certain constellations and while reciting special prayers as a sign of madness.<sup>12</sup> Kazinczy, who considered gold-making and necromancy as deceit and foul play, was justified in his belief that Lajos Török was wasting a fortune – and thus his daughter’s future inheritance – on his nonsensical obsession with alchemy.<sup>13</sup>

Kazinczy at least had a more positive opinion of the medicines that his father-in-law produced, by-products of his alchemical experiments. After his retirement in 1795, Török devoted his life to the study of chemistry. Drawing on Johann Christian Anton Theden’s prescription he invented a new drug based on antinominalis tincture (praised by Paracelsus), with the help of which he claimed to have cured himself of dysuria. Several contemporary physicians encouraged him to continue his medical experiments. As a result, he developed three more drugs including an aphrodisiac. They were produced in his own workshop at Nagykázmér castle and sold everywhere in the country; according to Kazinczy, they even helped to cure several people.

However, in 1805 the city council of Pozsony (Preßburg, Bratislava) moved to ban the advertisement of these “illegal” drugs in newspapers. Franz Schraud, the city’s chief physician, urged the total prohibition of their distribution. In the end, no such measures were taken because Török argued that the Hungarian Chamber of Physicians had examined his drugs and approved of their circulation. Kazinczy claimed that Török “gained his chemical experiences from the Rosicrucians, who are not on friendly terms with the medicians ex professo”.<sup>14</sup> Although Kazinczy disliked his father-in-law’s fascination with alchemy, he often defended him against harsh criticism such as the adverse reviews of his book *Neue durch Erfahrung bewährte Theorie der Heilkunde nach kosmologisch-fysiologisch chemischen Grundsätzen* (Kaschau 1803), in which he attempted, with little success, to provide a theoretical framework for his

---

11 György István Ágoston, Török Lajos emlékezete [Memory of Lajos Török]. Széphalom: A Kazinczy Ferenc Társaság Évkönyve 10 (1999), p. 104.

12 “Aber da er mir sagte, so was könne nur unter gewissen Constellationen, nur unter Hersagung gewisser Gebete geschehen, so wußte ich, daß bey ihm pflückt [!].” Kazinczy’s Correspondence, vol. X, p. 507 [Kazinczy to György Károly Rummy, 28 July 1813].

13 Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, K 762, 40a–45a. Kazinczy’s personal note about his father-in-law and his father is reprinted in László Orbán: Kazinczy feljegyzései alkímiairól, szellemidézésről és egyéb “efféle bolondságok”-ról. [Kazinczy’s notes about alchemy, necromancy and other “similar absurdities”.] In: Széphalom: A Kazinczy Ferenc Társaság Évkönyve 21 (2011), pp. 33–42. My thanks go to Olga Granasztói who drew my attention to this paper.

14 Kazinczy’s Correspondence, vol. IV, p. 127. [Kazinczy to István Sárközy, 21 April, 1806].

chemical experiments. Kazinczy stated that he was neither a charlatan nor an impostor.<sup>15</sup> Although the authorities treated Török's drugs as mere quack remedy, they were used against various diseases including cholera well after his death up until the early 1870s.<sup>16</sup> According to László Kiss, Török should be remembered as one of the pioneers of alternative medicine in Hungary.<sup>17</sup>

Both Lajos Török and his brother József (b. 1742) were affiliated to the Girált lodge in Pottornay's mansion round 1780, where alchemical experiments were carried out.<sup>18</sup> Kazinczy not only detested these Rosicrucian labours but also the libertine attitudes and the womanizing of the members of this lodge.<sup>19</sup> The prime mover of the Girált lodge was Martin Heinzeli (1735–1798), who later changed his name to Márton Hanzéli. He had a major impact on Lajos Török's masonic career since his initiation, and played a central role in establishing masonic lodges and Rosicrucian circles in Upper Hungary. Intending to become a Protestant preacher, Heinzeli studied theology, philosophy, mathematics and some medicine at the University of Greifswald. After his return to Hungary, he worked as the tutor first to the three sons and then to the grandsons of György A. Pottornay until his appointment as a professor of the Royal Academy at Kassa (Kaschau, Košice) in 1787. Along with Pottornay and his three sons, Heinzeli became a member of the lodge *Zum tugendhaften Reisenden (Virtuous Traveller)* in Eperjes (Prešov). Later he was the leading spirit of this lodge and its Deputy Master. He became a central figure of Rosicrucianism in this region. For Heinzeli, Craft Masonry was a mere preparation for the Rosicrucian secrets. He thus came to regard Rosicrucianism as a higher masonic degree system, an idea not supported by all of the lodge members, some of whom were only interested in the Craft degrees.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The relevant Kazinczy letter is quoted in Ágoston (note 11), p. 110.

<sup>16</sup> The success of Török's medicine is perfectly illustrated by the book which Gyula Garzó, a reformed minister, published sixty-three years after Török's death: *Néhai gróf Török Lajosnak Cholera ellen alkalmazott Rusz tincturája s ezen üldözött gyógyszer fényes sikerének okiratai, Kecskemét 1873*. Sándor Dörnyei: *Kazinczy Ferenc gyógyszergyártó apósa*. [The drug maker father-in-law of Ferenc Kazinczy.] *Gyógyszerészettörténet* 5 (2007), 3, pp. 16–19.

<sup>17</sup> Kiss (note 10), p. 220.

<sup>18</sup> Ágoston (note 11), pp. 101, 103.

<sup>19</sup> *Kazinczy's Correspondence*, vol. XII, pp. 90–91 [Kazinczy to Pálóczi Horváth, 18 September, 1814].

<sup>20</sup> Abafi, *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Oesterreich-Ungarn*. vol. 2., pp. 267–271, 279–282, vol. 3, pp. 383, 388, vol. 4. pp. 30–33, vol. 5., pp. 213–235. MNL OL (Hungarian National Archives) P 1134 A.1.18 5. box (previously 3) nos. 43–48. These copies of the nineteenth-century Dég archive include Heinzeli's correspondence between 1774 and 1783.

As already mentioned, an alchemical laboratory for Rosicrucian experiments was set up in Girált, the manager of which was Jákob Glosz.<sup>21</sup> This small village became the centre of masonic and Rosicrucian activities in Upper Hungary. When the wives of four lodge members disapproved of their husbands' alchemical experiments,<sup>22</sup> Heinzeli initiated them into the first degree in 1778 in order to dispel their misgivings. This was an unprecedented move in the history of European Freemasonry of the period since the lodge in Eperjes was not an adoption lodge. The ladies in question, whose names are not mentioned in recent scholarship on the involvement of women into Freemasonry,<sup>23</sup> even wanted to be admitted into the higher degrees and to create a separate female lodge. Obliging, Heinzeli translated the rituals of the first three degrees from French into German for them. He sent his translation to the superiors of the Rosicrucian Order in Vienna for approval. Although they acknowledged his good intentions, they banned the visit of any female lodge under threat of expulsion. Hence, the establishment of this female lodge had to be called off, which caused the disillusioned women to become hostile towards the local Freemasons.<sup>24</sup>

Besides Lajos Török, Kazinczy also heavily criticized Sándor Báróczy (1735–1809) because of his practice of necromancy and alchemy, which “never made him any gold”.<sup>25</sup> He claimed that he had no time for these follies at which even a child could laugh. Báróczy was a member of the royal household guard and a Freemason in Vienna. He claimed to have authored several alchemical works; however, according to Abafi, they perished in the fire of the Nagyegyed College Library in 1849.<sup>26</sup> Hence we are only aware of one of his alchemical writings, namely *Mostani adeptus, vagyis a szabadkőművesek*

---

**21** At the time, many lodges influenced by Rosicrucianism set up alchemical laboratories, for example *Zur Grossmuth* in Pest. József Jeszenovszky, its Worshipful Master from 1776, had a keen interest in alchemy and Rosicrucianism. See Jancsó (note 3), p. 200.

**22** Abafi only mentions the names of their husbands: Imre Berzeviczy (his wife: Mária Dessewffy), József Kapy (Teréz Radvánszky), Imre Pottornyay (Apollónia Máriássy), Imre Krasznecz (wife not identified). Cf. Abafi, *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Oesterreich-Ungarn*, vol. 4, p. 34.

**23** Cf. *Women's Agency and Rituals in Mixed and Female Masonic Orders*. Eds. J. Heidle and J. A. M. Snoek. Leiden 2008. J. A. M. Snoek: *Initiating Women in Freemasonry. The Adoption Rite. Text and Studies in Western Esotericism*. Leiden 2012; Cécile Révauger: *La longue marche des francs-maçonnnes: France, Grande Bretagne, Etats-Unis*. Paris 2018.

**24** Abafi, *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Oesterreich-Ungarn*, vol. 4, pp. 34–35.

**25** Kazinczy's Correspondence, vol. II, pp. 51–55 [Kazinczy to György Aranka, 25 March 1790]. For an English translation of the letter see Ferenc Kazinczy: *Letter to György Aranka (1790)*. Translated by Bernard Adams. In: *Learned Societies* (note 8), pp. 196–200.

**26** Lajos Abafi, *A magyar testőrök és a szabadkőművesség* [Hungarian royal household guards and Freemasonry]. In: *Koszorú* 6 (1882), p. 444.

*valóságos titka* (*A Modern Adept or the Real Secret of Freemasons*),<sup>27</sup> which is a translation of a French book generally ascribed to Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont (1711–1780) and originally published in 1755. Báróczy wrote a lengthy introduction (*Előljáróbeszéd*) to his translation, in which he provided a thorough apologia for alchemy by refuting the main criticisms against it and supporting his sometimes naïve arguments with numerous references to early modern alchemical literature. This is one of the earliest fictional literary pieces relating to esotericism in the Hungarian language. Although Kazinczy considered Báróczy to be a sophisticated polyglot poet, as we have seen, he condemned his esoteric and magical beliefs and practices. “I have always thought that he was a double character. The theosophist Báróczy was a totally different person”, Kazinczy wrote about him in 1810.<sup>28</sup> Besides Kazinczy, the poet and playwright György Bessenyei (1747–1811) also harshly attacked and ridiculed alchemy and the cabbala in his book *A holmi* (1779), with which he wanted to enlighten some of his contemporaries including Báróczy, who was not fond of Bessenyei.

We know of a Latin masonic catechism in Kazinczy’s handwriting, which, when compared to contemporary German examples, is devoid of both deistic and pietistic allusions.<sup>29</sup> According to Jászberényi, the catechism was used in his Miskolc Lodge. Yet Miskolc does not exclude the possibility that Kazinczy compiled a simplified catechism for his masonic friends in Transylvania. As a result of Joseph II’s *Maurerpatent* of 1785,<sup>30</sup> this lodge was dissolved in 1787. However, its members, including Kazinczy, continued to meet in a secret room at István Ragályi’s mansion in Alsószuha; in a hidden closet there masonic writings and tools were discovered in 1864.<sup>31</sup>

**27** [Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont]: *Mostani adeptus, vagyis a szabadkőművesek valóságos titka* [L’adepte moderne, ou le vrai secret des franc-maçons]. Béts 1810. See György E. Szőnyi’s forthcoming paper entitled *The modern adept. A novel on alchemy and its Hungarian reception in the time of the Enlightenment*.

**28** Quoted in József Jászberényi: “A Sz: Sophia’ Templomában látom én felszentelve Nagysádat”: a felvilágosodás korának magyar irodalma és a szabadkőművesség. [Hungarian literature at the age of the Enlightenment and Freemasonry.] Budapest 2003, p. 40.

**29** Ambrus Miskolc: *Kazinczy Ferenc szabadkőműves kátéja* [The masonic catechism of Ferenc Kazinczy]. *Irodalomtörténet* 40 (2009), pp. 493–509. For a reproduction of the text see Ferenc Kazinczy: *Rituale Receptionis Tyronis*. In: *Learned Societies* (note 8), pp. 170–178.

**30** Denis Silagi: *Jakobiner in der Habsburger-Monarchie: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des aufgeklärten Absolutismus in Österreich*. In: *Wiener historische Studien* 6 (1962), pp. 31–49.

**31** Lajos Abafi: *A szabadkőművesség története Magyarországon* [The history of Freemasonry in Hungary]. Budapest 1993, p. 209.

Between 1784 and 1794 Kazinczy was affiliated with at least four lodges based in Miskolc, Pest, Zalaegerszeg and Álmosd.<sup>32</sup> Although a Master Mason apron attributed to him is still extant, complete with its secret cyphers standing for “Labor omnia vincit” (Virgil, *Georgica* I, 145–146), we do not know where and when he was raised to the degree of a Master Mason.<sup>33</sup> As a staunch reformer of the Magyar language, in 1789 he proposed that Hungarian should be the official language in masonic lodges,<sup>34</sup> all of which at the time used either German or Latin for their rituals.<sup>35</sup> For him, Freemasonry was “a society which makes a little circle of the best-hearted men; one in which the great inequalities that exist in the world outside it are forgotten”.<sup>36</sup>

As regards his views on masonic rituals, he was only interested in the Craft degrees. Although he knew about the higher degrees, he had no desire to be initiated into them, since he regarded them as aberrations, as is testified by a letter to his friend György Aranka.<sup>37</sup> Although he detested mysticism and alchemy,<sup>38</sup> he became a member of the Order of the Rose in Kassa (Kaschau) under the name of Koloman Fichtenbach.<sup>39</sup> A peculiar Rosicrucian order named after the fictitious Henriette Rosenwald, which had been founded in 1783 by the ex-Jesuit Franz Rudolf Grossing (*né* Grossinger). In this ostensibly charitable society women could also be initiated. However, Kazinczy was very soon disillusioned with this organisation. Just like Heinzeli and contemporary English masons such as Captain George Smith and William Dodd, he advocated the establishment of separate female lodges.

Thanks to Joseph II’s relaxation of censorship, Kazinczy and his masonic friends founded a new journal entitled *Magyar Museum*. According to Abafi, it served as the official journal of the *Zum brennenden Busch* lodge in Kassa. He left this lodge around 1790, perhaps because of its esoteric affiliations.<sup>40</sup> After

---

32 Jancsó (note 3), pp. 177–182.

33 Jászberényi (note 28), pp. 119–121.

34 Kazinczy’s Correspondence vol. II, p. 54 [Kazinczy to György Aranka, 25 March 1790].

35 János Váczy: *Kazinczy Ferenc és kora*. [Ferenc Kazinczy and his epoch.] Budapest 1915, pp. 120–121.

36 Kazinczy’s Correspondence, vol. II, p. 53 [Kazinczy to György Aranka, 25 March 1790]; Ferenc Kazinczy: Letter to György Aranka (1790). Translated by Bernard Adams. In: *Learned Societies* (note 8), p. 198.

37 Kazinczy’s Correspondence, vol. II, pp. 52–55 [Kazinczy to György Aranka, 25 March 1790]; Ferenc Kazinczy: Letter to György Aranka (1790). Translated by Bernard Adams. In: *Learned Societies* (note 8), pp. 197–198.

38 Kazinczy’s Correspondence, vol. IX, p. 175 [Kazinczy to János Kis, 6 December 1811].

39 Jancsó (note 3), pp. 78–82.

40 Cf. Jancsó (note 3), pp. 175–177.



a fierce argument with the co-editor, János Batsányi, who had re-written one of his articles without his permission, Kazinczy started his own literary journal in 1790, to which he gave his own masonic name, *Orpheus*. He used this short-lived journal to fight against the forces of darkness and superstition and to propagate radical tenets of the Enlightenment along the lines of the writings of the French *philosophes*. He also translated Rousseau's *Social Contract* into Hungarian, which could not be published at that time. He advocated the freedom of the press in a number of official county assemblies in this period. Kazinczy popularized the philosophy of the Enlightenment by his translations, his writings, and the renewal of the Hungarian language. Both the national and the cosmopolitan aspects of the Enlightenment project co-existed peacefully in his mind.

Kazinczy was arrested in December 1794, along with seventy-five other men, for his involvement in the Hungarian Jacobin conspiracy. Initially sentenced to death, this was subsequently commuted to a 2831-day prison sentence (1794–1801). Following his imprisonment, some of his masonic friends, such as Ferenc Széchenyi, disowned him. Kazinczy subsequently warned his friends, such as the leading Hungarian Enlightenment figures of Dániel Berzsenyi (1776–1836) and Ferenc Kölcsey (1790–1838), of the dangers of joining Freemasonry. However, when he travelled to Vienna he still copied and commented on long passages from the *Journal für Freymaurer* (1784–1786).<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, he made occasional references to Freemasonry in his autobiography<sup>42</sup> and letters. In 1809 he commented on a book devoted to the history of the Hungarian Jacobins, and refuted the idea that the Freemasons had played a major role in the conspiracy. In 1814 he decided to collect those rituals that had been used in lodges in the last two decades of the previous century.<sup>43</sup> For this he asked the assistance of his friend, Ádám Pálóczi Horváth (1760–1820), whose masonic career and attitude towards alchemy and the fundamental tenets of the Enlightenment will be analysed in the next section of the paper.

Pálóczi Horváth was a leading figure of the Enlightenment in Hungary. He attended the famous Calvinist College in Debrecen in the 1770s. Since he did not feel a calling for the priesthood and became involved in conflicts with the

---

41 Ambrus Miskolczi: Kazinczy Ferenc útja a nyelvújítástól a politikai megújulásig. *Orpheus világában, avagy a magyar demokratikus politikai kultúra kezdetei* [Ferenc Kazinczy's road from the language to the political reforms. In the world of Orpheus, i.e. the beginnings of the Hungarian democratic political culture]. Budapest 2009, p. 474. For a partial reproduction of Kazinczy's notes see Ferenc Kazinczy: *Notes on Freemasonry*. Translated by Bernard Adams. In: *Learned Societies* (note 8), pp. 230–232.

42 Kazinczy: *Az én életem* (note 7), p. 118.

43 Kazinczy's *Correspondence*, vol. XI, p. 448 [Kazinczy to Pálóczi Horváth, 3 July 1814].

college administrators, he left and went on to study law and engineering instead. In his youth, Pálóczi Horváth learnt how to carry out alchemical experiments from a Protestant minister, Tót Pápai.<sup>44</sup> He later regretted that he did not then come to know Lajos Török and Sándor Báróczy, who, as we have seen, were ardent practitioners of alchemy. Pálóczi Horváth's interest in alchemy, the occult, and mysticism remained with him throughout his life. Pálóczi Horváth's esoteric worldview is also manifested in his recently discovered manuscript *Eska, Magyar Sibilla vagy Magyar versekkel felelő Kaballa (Eska, Hungarian Sibyl, or Cabala [machine] replying with Hungarian poems)*.<sup>45</sup> To Pálóczi Horváth, unlike his influential friend, Kazinczy, the mystical higher degrees, which he studied even before his own initiation, were always appealing. In his correspondence with Kazinczy, he defended the Rosicrucians whom, as we have seen, Kazinczy had condemned. It was Pálóczi Horváth who explained to Kazinczy the meanings of certain objects such as a scimitar and a globe with a cross, which the latter found among the effects of Lajos Török, his father-in-law.<sup>46</sup>

Pálóczi Horváth intended to join Freemasonry as early as 1786, which is evident from his later correspondence with Kazinczy,<sup>47</sup> but due to the strict rules and the elitist nature of Hungarian Freemasonry he had to wait another three years. In late 1788 he asked to be admitted to the *Zur Grossmuth* lodge in Pest but his request was delayed by the lodge members. In a letter to Kazinczy he complained that all Hungarian Freemasons were 'Eclectics', whereas his own religiosity was based on rationality rather than superstitions.<sup>48</sup> Finally, his initiation took place on 19 November, 1789.<sup>49</sup> His mentors included Gábor Csapody, chief justice of Somogy county, and Ferenc Kazinczy. The latter, who only visited the lodge that night, gave him his masonic name, Árion.<sup>50</sup> On that day Csapody presented him with a prayer book, dated according to

<sup>44</sup> Kazinczy's Correspondence, vol. XII, p. 124 [Pálóczi Horváth to Kazinczy, 8 October, 1814]. According to Hegyi, the name of this Protestant minister was Molnár-Pápay-Tóth. Ferenc Hegyi: Pálóczi Horváth Ádám. Debrecen 1939, p. 14.

<sup>45</sup> Ádám Pálóczi, Horváth Eska. Magyar Sibilla vagy Magyar versekkel felelő Kaballa. In: Barna Tóth, "Magyar versekkel felelő Kaballa". Pálóczi Horváth Ádám versgenerátora. In: Lybus – Magyarságtudományi Forrásközlemények 2015, pp. 315–341.

<sup>46</sup> Kazinczy's Correspondence, vol. XII, p. 123 [Pálóczi Horváth to Kazinczy, 8 October 1814].

<sup>47</sup> Kazinczy's Correspondence, vol. I, pp. 267–272 [Pálóczi Horváth to Kazinczy, 7 February 1789].

<sup>48</sup> Kazinczy's Correspondence, vol. I, p. 272 [Pálóczi Horváth to Kazinczy, 7 February 1789].

<sup>49</sup> Kazinczy's Correspondence vol. I, 509 [Ádám Horváth to Kazinczy, 1789], vol. II, p. 281 [Kazinczy to Pálóczi Horváth, 2 October 1792]; The German lodge minute about his initiation is quoted in Jancsó (note 3), pp. 224–225. See also MNL OL P 1134 A.1.18 5. box. no. 4.

<sup>50</sup> Kazinczy's Correspondence, vol II, p. 16 [Kazinczy to György Aranka, 1790].

masonic chronology (5784).<sup>51</sup> Pálóczi Horváth wrote a poem about his initiation, and two decades later, when Freemasonry was banned in Hungary, he even entitled his collection of songs *Magyar Árion (Hungarian Arion)*.<sup>52</sup> He was most active in the Lodge *Ad Magnanimitatem* in the 1790s. He later joined *A jó tanácshoz (Good advice)* lodge in Zalaegerszeg and became its secretary. This lodge had a Latin ritual. Its Worshipful Master, János Spissich, was accused of supporting the Hungarian Jacobins led by Martinovics. The documents confiscated during the criminal investigation of this movement refer to Pálóczi Horváth twice. In response to the investigation, Pálóczi Horváth started encrypting his letters, which he admitted in his correspondence with Kazinczy two decades later. The protagonist of one of his poems is József Hajnóczy, one of the leaders of the Jacobins, with whom he was personally acquainted. In 1793 he even translated a German book which demonstrated that Freemasons were not Jacobins.

Pálóczi Horváth's political views were in harmony with his masonic ideals. As a representative of Somogy county in the Hungarian Diet he advocated religious tolerance and the spread of Hungarian scientific works. In 1790 and 1791 he published two pamphlets in which he demanded political rights for women. He asked why women were not permitted to hold office in civil administration and the legal profession when at the same time, a woman could be the monarch.<sup>53</sup> Pálóczi Horváth's two pamphlets are regarded as the first to demand gender equality in Hungary. Indeed, his liberal ideas concerning the rights of women anticipated many of the best-known feminist tracts published in Western Europe. It should be noted that although he did have some radical political views, Pálóczi Horváth could easily reconcile the ideas of the Enlightenment with the national traditions of his homeland. This is exemplified by the fact that he was the first to collect Hungarian folk songs, which appeared in print later. Miklós Révai, who planned to establish a Hungarian Scholarly Society, designated him as a member.

More than half of the authors of the literary journal *Orpheus* (started by Kazinczy in 1790), to which Pálóczi Horváth also contributed, were Freemasons. In its fifth issue, Pálóczi Horváth published a poem entitled *Új esztendő hajnala (The Dawn of the New Year)*, in which one can trace the signs of some masonic ideas. In fact, the theme of Freemasonry may provide a master key to interpret and understand his wide-ranging writings. *Felfedezett titok (A secret revealed,*

51 Jászberényi (note 28), p. 65.

52 See István Csórsz Rumen's paper in this volume.

53 Énekes poézis. Válogatás Horváth Ádám ötödfélszáz énekeiből. Eds. Tamás Katona, Mária Domokos and Imola Küllős, Budapest 1979, pp. 336–337.

1792), a sentimental novel, is the confession of a 28-year-old man recorded before his early death. The protagonist is suspicious about Freemasonry because of its alleged godless nature, but after some hesitation he becomes convinced of the compatibility of masonic tenets with Christianity, and decides to apply for admission. He is then forced to undergo several trials in order to prove his virtues to the brotherhood. However, as a requirement for a marriage to a young countess he promises that he would never join the fraternity. After her death he wishes to be admitted, but because of his hesitation he is rejected. In all, the novel can be seen as an apologia for Freemasonry.

Between the ban on Freemasonry in the Habsburg dominions, including Hungary (1795), and his renewed correspondence with Kazinczy about Freemasonry (1814), in which the two discussed the advantages and disadvantages of alchemy,<sup>54</sup> we know very little about Pálóczi Horváth's masonic activities. It seems that he secretly met with some of his old masonic friends and possibly even initiated two new members.<sup>55</sup> In this period his interest turned to mysticism. In the early 1810s he composed his other important masonic work entitled *A Bölcsesség nagy Mestereinek [...] Biográfiája* (*The Biography of the Grand Masters of Wisdom*, 1812), which contains the biographies of 105 Grand Masters. This work also mirrors his alchemical interests. According to Béla Hegedüs and Márton Szentpéteri, this still unpublished manuscript is a kind of doxographical *philosophia perennis*, which depicts a fictitious history of Freemasonry from Adam via all the significant founders of religions and philosophers to Thomas Aquinas.<sup>56</sup> One of the main sources of this work is a collection of twelve books written in cipher which he had received in 1783 at the deathbed of a German lieutenant called Federspiel,<sup>57</sup> who had asked him to open them only after his initiation. Pálóczi Horváth copied these documents, most of which have been lost. In 2010 Hanna Vámos managed to decode Pálóczi Horváth's transcription of the sixth volume, which is held at the library of Nagybjalom.<sup>58</sup>

---

54 Kazinczy's Correspondence, vol. XII, pp. 67–68 [Pálóczi Horváth to Kazinczy, 4 September 1814], vol. XII, pp. 91–92 [Kazinczy to Pálóczi Horváth, 18 September 1814].

55 Abafi: *A szabadkőművesség története Magyarországon*. p. 427.

56 László Márton: *Iskolája az emberi szívnek. A szabadkőműves irodalom antológiája*. [The school of human heart. An anthology of masonic literature.] Budapest 2009, pp. 64–65, 77–80.

57 Kazinczy's Correspondence, vol. XII, pp. 125–126 [Horváth Ádám to Kazinczy, 10 October 1814].

58 Hanna Vámos: 'Leleplezett titok. Pálóczi Horváth Ádám titkos, szabadkőműves dokumentuma [Revealed secret: Ádám Horváth Pálóczi's secret masonic document] In: Magyar Arión: Tanulmányok Pálóczi Horváth Ádám műveiről [Hungarian Arión: studies about Ádám Horváth Pálóczi's works] eds István Csörsz Rumen and Béla Hegedüs. Budapest 2011, pp. 41–56. For a partial reproduction of the text see Anon.: *Biographies of the Grand Master Masons*. In: *Learned Societies* (note 8), pp. 201–203.

Having discussed the varied attitudes of leading Hungarian Freemasons towards esotericism, one can raise the question of how we can contextualize these in recent Enlightenment and esoteric scholarship? Historians have offered different theoretical models for the relationship between (the) Enlightenment and esotericism. In the footsteps of Christopher McIntosh, Nicolas Goodrick-Clarke associated the overtly esoteric aspects of high-degree Continental Freemasonry with the concept of Counter-Enlightenment. According to his account, the Counter-Enlightenment ran against “the modernising impact of rationalism”.<sup>59</sup> Although Kazinczy’s and Bessenyei’s rationalism and renunciation of alchemy and esoteric practices may fit into McIntosh’s and Clarke’s categorization of the Enlightenment, their concept of Counter-Enlightenment cannot be applied to the mentality of either Báróczy or Pálóczi Horváth since, as we have seen, they were far from simple anti-rationalists.

Monika Neugebauer-Wölk has developed a more sophisticated theoretical framework regarding the nexus of Enlightenment and esotericism. She defines the latter as “a spectrum of occidental religious and scholarly traditions whose purview extended into the eighteenth century and was appropriated, criticized and modified in various ways. An important product of this confrontation is exemplified in ‘enlightened’ or ‘rational esotericism’, the proponents of which considered themselves rational thinkers while simultaneously utilizing their own esoteric topology”.<sup>60</sup> It is possible to analyse the views of Heinzeli, Pálóczi Horváth and Báróczy on rationalism and alchemy with the help of Neugebauer-Wölk’s model.

In his book *Super-Enlightenment: daring to know too much*, Dan Edelstein examines “how Enlightenment principles could coexist, seemingly without difficulty, with those lasting currents of mysticism, magic, mythical speculation and hermeticism that persisted throughout the eighteenth century”. He questions the opposition between hermetic and scholarly philosophy and argues that their representatives “often shared an identical epistemological framework”. He stresses the heterogeneity of the Enlightenment, understood as a fragile “movement

---

<sup>59</sup> Christopher McIntosh: *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason*. Leiden 1992; Nicolas Goodrick-Clarke: *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction*. Oxford 2010, p. 151.

<sup>60</sup> Monika Neugebauer-Wölk, *The Enlightenment in the referential context of modern esotericism*. 2007. Available at [https://web.archive.org/web/20070909125348/http://www.izea.uni-halle.de/forschergruppe/index2\\_en.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20070909125348/http://www.izea.uni-halle.de/forschergruppe/index2_en.htm). Monika Neugebauer-Wölk, *Zur Konzipierung der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft. Freimaurerei und Esoterik*. In: *Geheime Gesellschaft. Weimar und die deutsche Freimaurerei*. Eds J. Berger and K. J. Grün. München 2002, pp. 80–89; F. Maurice: *Die Mysterien der Aufklärung. Esoterische Traditionen in der Freimaurerei?* In: *Aufklärung und Esoterik*. Eds. M. Neugebauer-Wölk and H. Zaumstöck. Hamburg 1999, pp. 274–287; Monika Neugebauer-Wölk: *Esoterik in der Aufklärung. Rezeption–Integration–Konfrontation*. Tübingen 2008.

continuously oscillating between opposing poles”, and that of Freemasonry, which is supported by the fractured nature of European Freemasonry in the eighteenth century. According to Edelstein, Freemasonry played an important role in what he calls the Super-Enlightenment because masonic lodges promoted both Enlightenment and mythical ideas.<sup>61</sup> The concept of Super-Enlightenment can help to interpret the complex nexus of masonic myths, (al)chemical experiments, esoteric rituals and scientific lectures in (Hungarian) lodges. It may be noted that in her investigation of the spiritual search of Freemasons, Giovanna Summerfield also emphasized the complementary nature of esotericism and rationalism. She argues that illuminism and spiritualism were in harmony with the tenets of the Kantian *Aufklärung*.<sup>62</sup>

In Hungary, the end of the eighteenth century saw an increase of the number of pharmacies after the education of pharmacists started in Buda in 1777. In the masonic lodges and Rosicrucian circles we find chemists, pharmacists, and physicians. Hence one may ask to what extent did the (al)chemical experiments carried out in Rosicrucian laboratories contribute to the development of scientific culture and natural sciences such as medicine and medicinal chemistry in the last decades of the eighteenth century in Hungary? It is clear that some of their members, such as Lajos Török, drawing on his chemical experiments in Rosicrucian laboratories, invented and produced drugs which remained in use for a long time. In the late eighteenth century the names of one third of Hungarian pharmacies included the word gold, which alludes to the alchemical roots of pharmacy. Furthermore, even by the end of the eighteenth century pharmacists made many different essences and extracts by using procedures and tools developed by alchemists, which one can see on the labels of pharmaceutical bottles and in the notes of physicians.<sup>63</sup> The above research question has been thoroughly examined in Southern and Western European countries as well as Germany for decades. For Hungary, however, we cannot provide an adequate answer to the above question due to a lack of research into the alchemical experiments carried out by, *inter alios*, Hungarian Freemasons and Rosicrucians in the eighteenth century.

It is important to remember that Abafi intended to complement his five books on the history of Freemasonry by writing the history of Rosicrucianism in

---

<sup>61</sup> Dan Edelstein: *The Super-Enlightenment: daring to know too much*. Oxford 2010, pp. 2, 6, 10–13.

<sup>62</sup> Giovanna Summerfield: *Credere aude: mystifying Enlightenment*. Tübingen 2008.

<sup>63</sup> Ágnes Romhányi: *Magyarországi gyógyszerészek és üzleteik a 18. század végén (Az 1786. évi patikavizitációk tanulságai)* [Hungarian pharmacists and stores at the end of the 18th century (The lessons of visits in pharmacy in the year of 1786)]. *Művelődés-, Tudomány- és Orvostörténeti Folyóirat* 3.4 (2012), p. 47.

Austria, Hungary, and Württemberg. Unfortunately, his manuscripts were never published, nor have they been rediscovered ever since.<sup>64</sup> As Reinhard Markner has shown in an unpublished research paper, it is virtually impossible to reconstruct the history of the Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross as a truly European phenomenon without investigating what remains of the Dég archive in the form of manuscript excerpts and copies made by Abafi and his collaborators, as well other hitherto neglected sources. This investigation is not made easier by the fact that transcriptions of the Dég material made over the course of an international research project under the aegis of professors Ernst Bruckmüller and Éva H. Balázs in the early 1990s will not be accessible to researchers until 2039 in the Hungarian National Archives.<sup>65</sup> One can only hope that Markner is right in assuming, on the basis of an interrogation report he found in London, that the original Dég manuscripts which Abafi relied upon did not go up in flames at Dég towards the end of the Second World War but were in fact either borrowed from their owner, Count Sándor Festetics, or summarily confiscated in 1944 by Dr Johannes Schick, an agent of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, who intended to pursue his research into the history of Rosicrucianism.<sup>66</sup> Like many other masonic archives seized over the centuries, the original Dég documents might resurface in a European or Russian library at some point.

In conclusion, it must be said that although eighteenth-century Hungarian Freemasons made significant contributions to the esoteric currents of the Enlightenment,<sup>67</sup> this remains a largely neglected area of research. Most works on the subject were written in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and though still valuable, clearly show their age. This paper has demonstrated that there is a need to contextualize the history of Hungarian Freemasonry and Rosicrucianism within the current scholarly debates on Western esotericism and the Enlightenment.

---

**64** Pauls (note 4), p. 46.

**65** Some of the copies and transcripts of the masonic Dég material filed under P 1134 and other related documents can be found in Éva H. Balázs' remains in the Hungarian National Archives (P 2188 4. 19–28 boxes). I thank György Laczlavik (Hungarian National Archives) for this information. György Laczlavik's letter to Róbert Péter, 25 February, 2016, ref. no.: 03/241-2/2016. According to her will, only some of her students are permitted to consult this material until 2039.

**66** Cf. Johannes Schick: *Das ältere Rosenkruzertum. Ein Beitrag zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Freimaurerei*. Berlin 1942.

**67** This paper does not discuss Ignác A. Fessler's masonic career as he played a key role in the history of German rather than Hungarian lodges in the late eighteenth century. He was asked to revise the Craft rituals and write a constitution for the *Royal York* (Grand)lodge. See Florian Maurice: *Freimaurerei um 1800: Ignaz Aurelius Feßler und die Reform der Großloge Royal York in Berlin*. Tübingen 1997.