The Curious Case of Helene Hadik-Barkóczy with the Freemasons
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This study presents and analyses the hardly known story of the initiation (1875) of a woman, the countess Helene Hadik-Barkóczy's into freemasonry and its annulation in detail. In Hungary that time two Masonic Grand Lodges, the Grand Lodge of St. John and Grand Orient worked independently from each other. The countess request was supported by Johannite Grand Master Ferenc Pulszky, and she underwent initiation by a provincial lodge of Grand Orient. Her initiation was then declared void by decision of Grand Orient and collaborators were sanctioned. The countess based her request and argued about its validity on common law. She brought up her knowledge of freemasonry, her legal status of a son (praefectio) and the absence of dispositions about candidates' gender in constitution of Grand Orient. This latter, upholding the Prussian law concept considered null and void the initiation because of the absence of bureaucratic formalities required by them. Interesting phenomenon is the contradiction between 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 Helene (Ilona) Hadik-Barkóczy (1833-1887)

The ancient and high-net-worth Barkóczy of Szala family belonged to the richest landowners in Hungary. The approximately 70,000 acres as primogeniture was only one tenth of the lands of prince and estate Count Esterhazy family, but exceeded the property of famous Count Festetich family.

Helene (Ilona in Hungarian) was the only child of his parents, so her father, John Barkóczy brought two actions against the collateral property inheritance. (Based on the old Hungarian law lack of spear side could cause of collateral property inheritance.) He has established primogeniture in favor of his daughter, and by royal grace her legal status was that of a son (praefectio). The “masculinisation” together entail has provided sufficient guarantees to save the family properties for her.

Helena Barkóczy her good skills continued to develop high-level studies; she interested in the arts and sciences and spoke in several languages, including Latin. She was a founding member of the Hungarian Historical Society and supported a number of foundations. In 1860 she married Earl Béla Hadik, they had five sons and two daughters. Firstborn son Endre Hadik-Barkóczy inherited the Hadik and the Barkóczy properties. Her interest into Freemasonry was motivated family origin; grandfather and grand uncle were Freemasons. She inherited grand uncle, John Barkóczy’s masonic library and studied this material extensively. Her husband did not like this “fad”, once closed her into the Döbling madhouse. But she got out after a week – thanks to her self-managed property and social relations. She had good contacts with relative and friend Francis Pulszky, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of St. John. Her Pálóc castle frequently had guests from prominent peoples of the nearby city Ungvár such as Eugene Tabódy, the worshipful master of lodge “Equality”. Her rank, property, “masculinisation” and her acquaintances may have added a
basis to the decision that she should try entering into the company closed to women, the Freemasonry.

**Francis (Ferenc) Pulszky (1814-1897)**

He was born in a wealthy middle noble family. He started scholarly career at 15 years of age, his world vision is greatly influenced by his uncle, the free-thinking Fejerváry Gabor, passionate archaeologist with whom he made several trips abroad as well.

After the revolution of March 1848 he became member of the first Hungarian government deputed to the court of Vienna (in fact the first Hungarian foreign minister).

Escaping into England after the fall of the war of independence, Louis Kossuth appointed him as his personal representative. He organized Kossuth’s trip to England and America, and escorted him into USA. (By which one Kossuth initiated in Cincinnati as a freemason in 1852 – preceded Pulszky with 11 years.) He was the Hungarian emigrants’ representative in Torino from 1860, but later turned away from Kossuth and supported Francis Deák. As a result, he returned home at 1866 and supported the Compromise with Vienna.

He was extremely versatile: politician, archaeologist, art collector, a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Director of the National Museum for 25 years, and not so gray eminence of the Hungarian scientific and political life. His success was due to his gifts: excellent language sense, rapid comprehension, assured sense of reality added good writing skills, honesty and ruthless. His opponents however held him pretentious, haughty and cynical people.

Pulszky's Masonic career was similar ambitious as his scientific and public activities. The Italian lodge "Dante Alighieri" initiated him during his emigration in 1863 in Turin, and the lodge's membership also contributed to widespread deployment of international relations, such as Garibaldi and Bakunin. Soon he reached the Scottish Rite 33 degree, and after his return home took part in the revival of Hungarian Freemasonry. He became Worshipful Master of the lodge "Einigkeit in Vaterland" (Unity in homeland) in 1868. He later was elected to the lifetime honorary Worshipful Master of the lodge “St. Stephen”. After the establishment of Grand Lodge of St. John in 1870, he elected to Grand Master. Also he was the first Grand Master of Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary (the united grand lodge of Grand Lodge of St. John and Grand Orient of Hungary) from 1886.

His primacy and authority in the Hungarian Freemasonry was unquestionable, veritable cult developed around him.

He supported from the background the initiation Helena Hadik-Barkóczy - but not into his own grand lodge but into a lodge of the "competing" Grand Orient.
Emerich (Imre) Ivánka (1818-1896)

During the War of Independence he was a National Guard captain, then a lieutenant colonel, and later became secretary of Prime Minister Batthyány. Jelačić arrested, imprisoned him until 1850 in dungeons of Königgrätz. From 1865 to 1895, he was a member of the Chamber of Deputies, from 1878 to 1891 CEO of the North Eastern Railway Company – he translated the railway language into Hungarian. He became from 1895 Upper House member. He also founded the Hungarian Red Cross.

His Masonic career was meteor-like. In 1873 he was admitted to the lodge "Matthias Corvinus" and became master in the same year. Crossing the "Hungaria" lodge in Budapest, firstly elected to Orator than Worshipful Master. He got the 18, 30 and 33 degree Scottish Rite in the following year, 1874. In 1875 he was elected into the "Great Consistory" and became vice chairman of the Federation Council. He worked as member or chairman in several examination committees and in 1875 he was the investor of Hadik-Barkóczy case. He filled the grandmaster post of Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary between 1896 - 1893.

Grand Lodge of St. John (1870-1886)

After the prohibition due to Martinovics conspiracy (1795) - disregarding a few attempts - the Hungarian Freemasonry could work legally in Hungary only after the consolidation as a result of the Compromise. In 1861 was established the lodge "St. Stephen" but the political situation did not allow for survival. Then, in 1868, was founded the mother lodge "Einigkeit in Vaterland" belonged to the United Grand Lodge of England. In 1869 soon followed by the lodge "The Three Lilies", and in the following year the re-established "St. Stephen" lodge.

As the number of Johannite, 3-grade lodges reached 7 in 1870; they established the Grand Lodge of St. John, of which was elected Francis Pulszky as Grand Master. In same year, the number of lodges increased to twenty-two. The text of the constitution of Grand Lodge of St. John in 1875 did not mention the precondition of male membership.

Grand Orient of Hungary (1871-1886)

By the Scottish Rite lodges member Hungarian immigrants composed group led by the John Besze and Stephen Türr sought to spread at home the Scottish Rite. The first "Scottish" lodge, the "Matthias Corvinus, the fair" was founded in 1869, which was soon followed by many others as well. Having failed to reach a settlement with the 3-grade lodges, shortly after the establishment of the Johannite grand lodge also founded in 1871 the Hungarian Grand Orient and George Joannovics was elected as Grand Master. The Grand Orient in 1873 had 1004 members in 18 lodges. In the constitution of the Grand Orient in 1875 the candidates’ gender requirement was not included neither. The Grand Orient and St. John grand lodge worked to dissemination of Freemasonry in Hungary sometimes with cooperation, sometimes with rivalling. Finally, after lengthy negotiations, in 1886, the two main Masonic authorities merged the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary.
The process of the events

The Countess endeavoured to gain admittance as a member of the freemasonry around 1871. This time she put the freemason oath into Pulszky’s hands as she declared later. Pulszky did not make a statement in connection with this, but conceivably, that to soothing the Countess he played an admission ceremony. The Countess’ first "confession" after the events stated that in addition to the books she gained Masonic secrets from Pulszky too - although this claim was subsequently withdrawn.

Eugene Tabódy, the master of lodge “Equality” in the middle of 1874 requested assistance in his letters to Grand Orient how to “behave with the Countess’ vividly manifesting interest facing the direction of Freemasonry?” “Theodore Csáky, Deputy Grand Master in his reply exhaustively and clearly performed the causes on which detention of women and so the Countess cannot be accepted into freemasonry.”

This response contains the usual contemporary stereotypes - women cannot keep secrets, titivating herself and incite strife among men. But it was an extremely surprising one to me in the Deputy Grand Master’s arguments: “The woman has no place in the lodge as no place next the green table ...” So he drew a parallel between card-playing and Masonic work.

The Countess were not willing to give up its intention in spite of convincing arguments for all Freemasons, Theodore Csáky organized a meeting in December 1874 with the countess, Eugene Tabódy worshipful master, Francis Pulszky grandmaster and own participation in Pulszky's apartment of Budapest. Here Pulszky and Csáky together represented the opinion, „that women are not allowed to admission into Freemasonry”. Despite this, the Countess in January 1875 submitted an application for her admission to Grand Orient.

The request argues that the preservation of Masonic secrets read from books worthy way would be sworn in, and relies her “masculinisation” with which she gained independence before the law. At the meeting, she convincingly demonstrated its skills in the Masonic secrets. And it turned out why she is so confident in her admission. She stubbornly believed “that the 33-grade freemasons are the absolute leaders of the Order, and that the whole federation’s head in Hungary is Ferenc Pulszky grand master.”

The admission application shows that the Countess alluded to Elizabeth Aldworth precedent case. (She was admitted after she overheard a Masonic gathering.) Finally trump card argument was her "masculinisation"; in addition, she entrusted to Pulszky’s power. Later opened her purse, Fröbel Association in Kassa (it was a Masonic charity organization) gave a surplus of HUF 500; this indicated that Freemasonry can count her estate.

The admission application in the light of history not surprisingly, rejected. “This petition on January 10, 1875. the Federal Council was rejected with no votes against by main reason for bringing it up to the admission of women is prohibited by law.”
Meanwhile, the Countess’ confidential man, Julius (Gyula) Vezerle - who has previously practiced as a lawyer - tried to soften two lodges for the admission. One was away 20 kilometres to the east from castle of Barkóczy family in Pálóc, the lodge "Equality" of Ungvár; the other was away 87 kilometres west from Pálóc in Kassa, the lodge "Consensus". Vezerle in this work helped by Pulszky. Vezerle - in spite of being profane – got a ticket from Pulszky to access the lodges. Typical of the age and circumstances of the two grand lodges that these lodges accepted the signature of the head of the other Grand Lodge as well.

Vezerle made progress in Kassa also, but in Ungvár was a complete success; the worshipful master Tabódy did not, but deputy master Géza Mocsáry agreed and contributed convincing ten masters. Incurred the idea to make a medical certificate about Countess’ bad state of health, but her physician refused to sign it. The date of admission was set for 11 November 1875.

The countess insisted Pulskzy presence. The initiation has been properly completed, the ten master voted in favor of the admission of the countess, also conducted the ceremony. The Countess replied in writing to the usual questions, wrote his "last will and testament," and the deputy worshipful master is duly completed the admission document. The filling was legal but the document is not. As it turned out later because Géza Mocsáry could not get original diploma issued by the Grand Orient, so he ordered the printing of them. Pulskzy during initiation stayed outside (separated from lodge only by a curtain), and when the admission ceremony was complete, he marched in, and occupied the location of guests. He answered the deputy master’s greeting speech. He appeared as Grand Master; therefore, he was careful not to engage in the initiation. About the admission made a "drawing board" [Protocol] which describes in detail the events.

Then two weeks later, on 24 November was an interesting interlude in the Grand Orient Convent. Delegates from Kassa inquired Theodore Csáky, Deputy Grand Master, how to deal Helena Hadik-Barkóczy’s admission request, because she would very generous if lodge in Kassa will admit her – as said Gyula Vezerle.

Despite opposition voiced by Csáky the two delegates from Kassa next day visited Francis Pulskzy, and they told if Pulskzy would lead the initiation, they did not oppose it. Pulskzy was evasive of course, because the countess was admitted in Ungvár. While the delegates from Kassa discussed with Pulskzy the bomb exploded – Theodore Csáky got confidential message from Eugene Tabódy about initiation of Countess Helene Hadik-Barkóczy. He immediately notified grand master George Ioannovics who is assigned to a committee of inquiry, led by Emerich Ivánka. He entrusted the task to Ivánka, because he have successfully conducted a number of investigations, in addition he was familiar in Ungvár - less than a year he checked the lodge work. The investigation took place on December 8 in lodge of Ungvár. The participants of the initiation of countess had to answer the following questions:

1. Who asked to participate?
2. As you know, in previous year the countess was reject, why vote you now to initiate her?
3. Do you know about a health report of countess?
4. Do you know about countess’ promises of money?
5. The signs were regularly communicated?
6. Did you see her EA diploma?
7. Did you see other empty EA diplomas?
8. Where were Pulszky in the time of initiation?
9. Was agape after the work?
10. Who revealed the signs to the countess?

The answers showed that Géza Mocsáry deputy master organized the "admission work" and persuaded the required ten masters who all did that time, some later also agreed with the admission. No one knew, with one exception about the deteriorated state of Countess' health. They all trusted of Helena Hadik-Barkóczy’ sponsoring, despite promises to that is not sounded out publicly. The initiation properly completed, some noticed that the Countess knows the ceremony. The apprentice diploma lacked the Seal of Grand Orient and was not the latest type. After the admission work Pulszky and the Countess dined in narrow circle, there was no "agape" [ritual dining]. The investigation found that the deputy master Géza Mocsáry is the main culprit, in part also responsible the other participants in the initiation, but also determined undeniable responsibility of Francis Pulszky - but he did not belong to the jurisdiction of the Grand Orient. Géza Mocsáry in his defence insisted on the legitimacy of the admission, citing a number of reasons justifying: the Grand Orient's constitution does not prohibit the initiation of women; in addition the Countess is "masculinised"; she familiar with the Masonic secrets; she is fleeing from her husband to the Freemasonry; her mind would have threatened of the refusal of admission; she will give financial and spiritual support to Freemasonry both local and national levels; and although it would take on the responsibility, and he requires the adoption of admission on behalf of the lodge.

Theodore Csáky, Deputy Grand Master and worshipful masters of lodges of Kassa and Ungvár "interrogated" Helene Hadik-Barkóczy. The Countess undertook to do so certainly because she hoped to accept her initiation with leadership of the Grand Orient. "In her testimony" she protested against the accusations of bribery, and she still hoped Pulszky's power.

The investigation has been completed with the Countess’ questioning, Emerich Ivánka prepared the report, and the main conclusions are as follows:

- The main factor of the attack against our Scottish rite order: Francis Pulszky.
- Pulszky's assistant is the profane V. (Gyula Vezérle)
- Géza Mocsáry led for the prior-intent astray our brothers.
- He made a false AE diploma as vice WM.
- Only this thing enough to exclude him from masonry.
- The other brothers’ punishments will be strict but fair.

According to the investigation report submitted in mid-December it was born on January 5 the verdict, but only published on 20 March:
It can be seen that the sentences were not so heavy, the lodge is not disbanded, moreover, with the exception of Géza Mocsáry all involved masters were later pardoned. (Three months suspensions during the investigation expired.) Two years later the lodge was put to “sleep” [dissolution] this incident certainly played a role. Other two months of headaches are caused to the officers what to do with the absolutely correctly admitted woman, who passed through all ritual. They consulted with the friendly Grand Lodges, and the Federal Council also discussed the incident. It is worth noting that the initiation was not cancelled, but formal objections were raised against the admission. After the decision of rejection, justification of irregularity were the absence of pre-form rules, filing, lack of registration. They forbade her admittance into any lodge under the penalty of erasion of the lodge from the rolls, and it was demanded that she return her invalid certificate within ten days – she was not willing to voluntarily return.

It remains to be resolved - in terms of the Great Orient - Francis Pulszky's impeachment, who called in the Ivánka report main factor. In any case, the findings of the investigation have been forwarded to the St. John Grand Lodge - for information on the one hand, waiting for their response on the other hand. The Johannite management after some internal discussion elaborated a special solution. Pulszky did not run for grand master’s election, but the chair has not been filled in. He was re-elected a year later.

The scandal was largely discussed in the press, including the Masonic press. The description of the case appeared in the journals “Pester Lloyd” and “Homeland”. The Masonic journals in Hungary dealt differently with the events. The Grand Orient journal, the bilingual (German and Hungarian) “Dawn” (Hajnal) continuously reported on the developments and at the end of 1876 these articles were collected and supplemented in the journal with a uniform structure. In the “East” (Kelet), the journal of the St. John Grand Lodge, however, almost never published a word about the event; - Pulszky authority was probably to be protected. When Pulszky "voluntarily" resigned the nomination as grand master, it could not clear out the cards to see what lies behind it. The Viennese Masonic journal, the Freimaurer Zeitung recommended the recognition of initiation in several articles.

The documents published in "Dawn" released in a German-language pamphlet of the same year for the Masonic public. This publication was soon forwarded to Helene Hadik-Barkóczy, who in "readers' letters" protested against injurious terms found in the pamphlet. It is worth noting how changed the tone of writings about the Countess. While it was not possible to know what will be the outcome, were very respectfully, according to their own viewpoint, but factually have been described what happened, but after the devastating decision - seeing the Countess cannot assert interests nor reprisal - style was quite coarsening to the impudence. The Countess' protest letters were published in "Dawn", but with some impertinent commentaries. In response to the Grand Orient perspective soon published a pamphlet - also in German - replica, which reflect from the views of Helene Hadik-Barkóczy and argued that her admission was perfectly proper and lawful.
One important argument was the Grand Orient’s constitution, because it had not contains conditions to gender of the candidate. The pamphlet referred to this constitution against the cancelling decision of the Grand Orient Council, which allows the withdrawal of an initiation. only in the case of immorality and intellectual immaturity of the admitted person

**Overall assessment**

Today's reports describe the events with a number of false facts and gaps, in addition to sometimes questionable interpretations.

The well-known William R. Denslow: 10,000 Famous Freemasons using the expression ”said to have been a Freemason” about the Countess. He wrote about she gained admittance as a member of the craft but the Grand Orient cancelled the admission and draconian punishments meted out. Other sources mention the Countess “masculinisation” and awareness regarding Freemasonry.

Mór Gelléri Masonic journal editor wrote an article about Helene Hadik-Barkóczy's death and in it succinctly describes the incident, but exaggerates penalties than were in the reality, and relativize Pulszky’s role. The Zsuzsa L. Nagy's study is the most fidel to the reality - however, the very compact description completely omits the details. Today's standard obvious emancipatory perspective gives only sketchy explanation. The cause of refusing the admission is not simply the male dominant era. The differences between contemporary Hungary and Western Europe may explain this. One difference is the dissimilarity between the Anglo-Saxon common law conception and Prussian law used in Hungary. Helene Hadik Barkóczy hoped that if she could make her case similar for Elizabeth Aldworth’s - "if you’ve got the secrets let to swear up for it" - she would admit based on the precedent. But this idea did not work out.

First because the different conceptions of law and second, due to the difference between the maturities of the Masonic organizations.

On the one hand, at the time of Elizabeth Aldworth (1693 - 1775) did not exist the bureaucratic admission system of Grand Lodges, which gained primacy over ritual initiation in the lodges. On the other hand, it has not yet solidified the organization of the Grand Lodge, which limited the autonomy of the lodges.

The Countess referred to the indisputable powers of lodges to the initiation, which can be override 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 caused formal deficiencies. So afterwards it had not formally invalidate the initiation of the lodge. The other factor is the oddity that in Hungary at this time a feudal instrument, the “praefectio” gave rights - though limited - to the selected female members of the aristocracy to self-determination. Otherwise, the girls lived under the guardianship of their father, the wives similarly of their husbands.

Interesting phenomenon is the contradiction between countess’s emancipatory claims to affiliation based on a feudalistic institution (the praefectio) and the freemasons’ opposition based on the ideal of civic equality. (The Articles of the “Dawn” pointed out several times that they
cannot afford because that would be the submission of wealth and rank.) There are no doubts, of course, that this cause had only less weight.

The acceptance or non-acceptance the Countess’ “masculinisation” associated with the old question of whether women's exclusion from the masonry, the Anderson Constitution what it refers to actually - the gender or capacity to act before the law.

My opinion is that the Anderson's biological sex (male, female), in fact, means the modern so-called social gender.

However, the consequence of thousands years of patriarchal arrangements this difference did not arise in writing, and often still is not understood by readers.

Therefore, it was possible - and not simply due to carelessness - that the constitution of Grand Orient of Hungary as well as the constitution of Grand Orient of France as a model for statutes also omitted this requirement.

One can also envisage the possibility that the gender just “disappeared” by the translation from the constitution of the Grand Orient of France.

But the German constitutional text analysis can rule out - otherwise it examined and rejected the possibility in the pamphlet written to justify the Countess. Assessing the role Francis Pulszky is a separate question. Is it a conscious attempt for women's emancipation to admit his patronized woman into Freemasonry, or just trying to satisfy the women's whim? Nothing is written about it in 1880-82 "My life and my age" in four volumes published autobiography. Probably he tried to choose the easy way of trying to let admitting the countess into a lodge belonged to the Grand Orient because he knew that his own Grand Lodge never would that. However there was no considerable difference between English and French oriented Freemasonry at that time, than it is today, the Johannites probably could were even more rigid. The union of the two grand lodges was probably encouraged by the Hadik Barkóczy Helena case. Pulszky's involvement facilitated negotiations with Grand Orient, mainly because Pulszky wished to be grand master in the united grand lodge. And he became grand master indeed.