

Aufgeklärte Sozietäten, Literatur und Wissenschaft in Mitteleuropa

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und Kultur im europäischen Kontext

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Aufgeklärte Sozietäten, Literatur und Wissenschaft in Mitteleuropa



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What Has Survived of the Masonic Source Documents of the Festetics Archives of Dég?

Contents of the MNL OL P 1134, “Unclassified documents”, Series A, Item No. 1, File Nr. 18.

The mansion of the Ragályi family still stood undamaged in the beginning of the 1860s in Alsósзуha (then belonging to Gömör county). According to local folklore, its vaulted ground-floor salon hosted Masonic meetings decades earlier. The room was approachable through a staircase hidden in the wall. In 1864, a secret wall cupboard was found next to the first-floor entrance to this staircase, full of old military equipment, and personal objects and documents belonging to the *Zum tugendhaften Kosmopoliten* (*The Virtuous Cosmopolitan*) lodge of Miskolc. The Masonic seal, hammers, aprons, and the written documents were transferred to the mansion by István Ragályi, a member of the organization, after the 1788 dissolution of the Miskolc Lodge. This discovery was discussed by Lajos Abafi in the Masonic periodical called *Világosság* (*Light*), and he also mentioned it in monographs he later compiled.¹ Exploring this set of data was only a small part of the extensive processing and study of sources regarding the history of eighteenth-century Freemasonry in Hungary, which

1 Lajos Abafi: Az Erényes Világpolgárok páholya Miskolcon [The Zum tugendhaften Kosmopoliten Lodge in Miskolc.] In: *Világosság* [Light] 10–11 (20th November 1884), pp. 89–100; Ludwig Abafi: *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Oesterreich-Ungarn*. Voll. 1–5. Budapest 1890–1899, cfr. vol. 5. 259–260; Lajos Abafi: *A szabadkőművesség története Magyarországon* [The History of Freemasonry in Hungary.] Budapest 2012, p. 208. Cfr. also: Heinz Schuler (ed.): *Geschichte der Freimaurerei in Oesterreich-Ungarn von Ludwig Abafi* [...]. Register zu den Bänden 1–5. Essen 1986. (I am grateful to Dr. Róbert Péter for calling Schuler’s work to my attention.) – Some of the hidden objects, Abafi says, were given to the City Museum of Tiszafüred and the Archbishopal Museum of Eger by their finder, Béla Milesz, the private tutor of the Ragályi family. Another group of objects were transferred to the archives of the *Felvidék* Lodge in Banská Bystrica or to unknown places. The castle of Alsósзуha and almost the whole village were burnt down in the 1860s. See Samu Borovszky (ed.): *Magyarország vármegyéi és városai* (Magyarország monográfiája). Gömör-Kishont vármegye [The Counties and Towns of Hungary (A Monography of Hungary). Gömör-Kishont County.] Budapest 1903, p. 30.

many members of the newly reorganized movement took a significant part in from the 1860s onwards. The challenges of the early stages of the research were addressed by László Hollós, editor of *Hajnal (Dawn)* and later of *Szabdkömvés Figyelő (The Masonic Observer)*: “We are devoting an entire chapter to the development of Hungarian Freemasonry, however, we can feel that our effort to give even a remotely exhaustive picture of its operations, especially regarding the past, can be no more than wishful thinking. Our almost complete lack of source material precludes a systematic account of this subject. The Freemasonry of today is not in any direct connection with the organization between 1780–1794, as it has not had the good fortune to inherit any documents, certificates or records from it.”²

Gathering all sources started to become more and more organized from the 1880s. In Masonic periodicals such as *Kelet (East)*, its German version, *Orient*, and *Világosság*, many overviews of eighteenth-century documents, found in various collections, were published. The task of writing a more comprehensive history of Hungarian Freemasonry was undertaken by Lajos Abafi (Ludwig Aigner), as we know from a letter he addressed to the Grand Lodge on 20 April 1881.³ The study of sources was boosted by an unexpected turn of events at that time: it was found out that the nineteenth-century Freemasonry had been after all somehow connected with the organization that had operated in the preceding century, and it had inherited a large number of documents and certificates from its predecessor. It is as yet unknown when and under what circumstances Lajos Abafi made contact with Count Pál Festetics, but with his permission Abafi gained access to about 10,000 pages of written sources about eighteenth-century Freemasonry which had been preserved in the archives of the Festetics family’s mansion in Dég.⁴ This rich collection of documents, together with the sources kept in the Hungarian National Museum and in the Brukenthal Museum of Sibiu served Abafi with enough data to

2 László Hollós: A szabadkőművesség története különös tekintettel a magyar szabadkőművesség fejlődésére [The History of Freemasonry, especially the Evolution of Hungarian Freemasonry.] Budapest 1873, p. 80.

3 Central Archives of the National Archives of Hungary (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, in abbreviated form: MNL OL) P 1134, “Unclassified documents”, Document N^o 18/31.

4 See József Sisa: A dégi Festetics-kastély [The Festetics Castle in Dég.] Budapest 2005, 36–37. István Schön argues that Abafi first saw the Dég archives in 1882. Cf. István Schön: A magyar szabadkőművesség hivatalos folyóiratai [The Official Periodicals of the Hungarian Freemasonry.] <http://epa.oszk.hu/00000/00021/00025/0007-1ca.html> (utolsó letöltés: 2016. augusztus 31.)

prepare a monograph with the help of his colleagues, Gustav Brabbée in particular. The monograph was written in German and, since it was never completed, only covered the period until 1785. In 1900, Abafi published a one-volume Hungarian version, which was less rich in detail but followed events up until 1867. It appears from the annotations of the volumes that besides the three museum and archival collections mentioned in the foreword, several more documents, books and articles served as sources.⁵

The data about the eighteenth-century Masonic movements in the Habsburg Monarchy was reviewed, evaluated and processed by Abafi based on copies of the Dég collection which he and his collaborators had prepared. These copies gained their real significance later, after World War II; however, there is no evidence that this was recognized at that time. In 1944–1945, the Dég mansion first served as a military hospital for the Germans, then was occupied by Soviet troops. During this period, the archival collection of the mansion was destroyed or lost.⁶ As a result, the surviving nineteenth-century copies became highly valuable sources. Some of these documents can be found today in the National Archives of Hungary, in the “Unclassified documents” Fonds, P 1134, in series A, item No. 1, file Nr. 18. In what follows I briefly summarize the data on how the documents were admitted to the archives and how they were sorted, then I review the main stages and results of the study of them. Then I describe the contents of boxes 5 and 6, introduce a couple of so far unknown and unpublished sources, and finally I call attention to the shortcomings of the exploration of the data and to further questions and possible lines of investigation.

⁵ For the archives where he conducted research see Abafi 1890 (note 1), vol. 1, p. IV.

⁶ Rumour had it that the soldiers who occupied the castle burnt part of the manuscript documents and the books found there in the stoves. In June 1945, the lord lieutenant of Veszprém County commissioned the County Museum director to take stock of the household stuff in the mansion, including works of art and the library. The report of the general practitioner and amateur local historian also revealed that in December books thrown out of the castle had been put into the strongroom of the building, the archives room, but as locals had also used them as fuel the rest of the collection was transferred to the local post office. The books were then inspected by the director of the Transdanubian Scientific Research Institute who took most of them away in two lorries; the rest was sent to the National Széchényi Library, where, according to the GP, the shipment never arrived. See Sisa (note 4), 97–98. A post-war interrogation record found by Reinhard Markner at the National Archives in Kew shows that SS researcher Dr Johannes (Hans) Schick travelled to Budapest in September 1944 in order to inventory the library of count Sándor Festetics. Based on this evidence, Markner assumes that Schick may well have borrowed or confiscated the original Dég documents on that occasion. (I am grateful to Dr. Markner for sharing this information with me.)

How did the nineteenth-century copies of the Masonic documents from Dég reach the National Archives of Hungary?

No data are available concerning the location where Lajos Abafi stored the copies that he used as sources for his books. The documents – I presume – might have been carried to the archives of the Symbolic Grand Lodge of Hungary, located in the Podmaniczky street headquarters of the organization. This might have happened in the year when the building was opened (1896), or in 1900, when Abafi left the fraternity.⁷ It is also possible, however, that the Dég copies were taken to the Grand Lodge archives after Abafi's death (1909) together with other documents.

The first reliable piece of information regarding the whereabouts of the Dég copies originates from 1967. This was the year when the process of arranging the archives of the Masonic organizations was finished and a finding aid of the fonds was printed.⁸ Mrs Pataky, who prepared it, wrote in her preface: “The documents of the Masonic Organizations were handed over by the Ministry of the Interior to the National Archives in 1920, after the dissolution of the Organizations. After the liberation, when the Masonic Organizations were allowed to continue their operations, the National Archives gave the collection back to them. However, when the organization was dissolved again in 1950 the collection had to be handed back to the Archives. During these years a significant portion of the collection was destroyed, and only a fraction of the original amount made its way to the National Archives. Department II of the National Archives started to organize the collection, and in 1960 handed it

7 See József Palatinus: *A szabadkőművesség bűnei II.: A magyarországi szabadkőműves páholyok tagjainak névsora 1868-tól 1920-ig* [The Sins of Freemasonry, vol. 2.: The List of the Members of Hungarian Masonic Lodges, 1868–1920.] Budapest 1939, p. 5. – In 1899, Abafi had got a permanent job from the National Inspectorate of Museums and Libraries: the task was to sort out duplicate specimens of the National Museum's Zoology Collection, and to distribute them to other museums. However, in that time state officials were obliged to leave Masonic lodges, and to present a certificate. In one of his letters, Abafi wrote to his brothers: “I leave one part of my heart to you”. See Sándor Varga: *Aigner Lajos 1840–1909*, in: *Népszabadság*, 19 July 1981, p. 16.

8 Lajosné Pataky, Lászlóné Dzubay: *A szabadkőműves szervezetek levéltára: Repertórium. (Levéltári leltárak 39.)* [The Archives of Masonic Organizations: A Repertorium. (Inventories of the Archives, vol. 39.)] Budapest 1967.

over to Department III, as it belonged to the subject coverage of the latter.”⁹ The collection, which was still massive even in its fragmented state, mainly contained sources regarding the history of nineteenth-century Freemasonry. Except for those filed under the biggest organizational units, the documents were sorted by lodges (P 1089–1133). In addition, there are the papers of Lajos (Ludwig) Lewis, who played a significant role in the re-establishment of Hungarian Freemasonry (P 1135).

Fonds P 1134, which is the most interesting for us, occupies 3.83 metres of shelf-space and bears the label “Unclassified documents”. The archivists filed here those documents written between 1862 and 1920 whose provenance was uncertain or whose content was labelled as “Unclassified documents”.¹⁰ The main part of the collection consists of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century documents: works on the history of Masonic organizations, monographs discussing the theoretical aspects of Freemasonry; minutes, circular letters, ritual books, catechisms, and manuscripts of speeches and lectures given in lodges. According to the aforementioned finding aid, “The copies and notes of the documents from the Dég Archives of the Festetich family (1780s)” were filed under file No. 18, batches 3 and 4. There are no detailed information about the contents and extent of the two files.

Research on the Dég documents after 1950

Since the Masonic Archives were moved back and forth between the Podmaniczky headquarters of the Symbolic Grand Lodge and the National Archives after 1945 and in 1950, and since the organization of the collection took a fairly long time in the 1950s, Kálmán Benda was unable to access Abafi’s Dég copies. He could not study these when compiling his three-volume source edition, and he made the following remark on the fate of the original archives: “As the Festetich family’s Masonic collection of Dég was completely destroyed under World War II, many things will forever remain obscure.”¹¹

⁹ Patakyné–Dzubayné (note 8), p. 9. – Further consultation of the annual reports or other internal files of the Hungarian National Archives is needed to find out more about the transferral of the archives and their processing leading up to the printed inventory.

¹⁰ Patakyné–Dzubayné (note 8), pp. 153–164.

¹¹ Kálmán Benda (ed.): *A magyar jakobinus mozgalom iratai* [The Documents of the Hungarian Jacobine Movement.] Budapest 1957 (*Magyarország újkortörténetének forrásai* [Sources to the Modern History of Hungary], vol. 1, p. XXII).

It seems that during the organization of the Masonic collection in the National Archives, which took almost two decades, no one did any research on the Dég copies. Researchers only noticed them not long after the publication of the finding aid. In November 1970 in Mátrafüred, at the International Congress on the Enlightenment, Éva H. Balázs announced in her presentation that in that year she found some of the copies of the Festetics Archives' Masonic documents in the National Archives, and that exploration of the material had begun.¹² By that time, Éva H. Balázs had already had twenty years' research experience in eighteenth-century cultural history, especially sources of the Josephine period, with a special focus on the activity of the Masonic lodges. She had published a monograph about Gergely Berzeviczy a few years earlier. In that, she presented data on several sources from the territory of Hungary and present-day Slovakia which had been unknown until then. She had also studied extensively the documents in the National Archives which belonged to the Berzeviczy family and their relatives.¹³ In the light of all these observations and researches, it is understandable that on recognizing the unique significance of the Dég copies H. Balázs wanted to publish the entire collection in a series. She reported in 1977 and 1979 that she was planning to publish the sources.¹⁴ In these two publications she let the colleagues know that, besides herself, the task would be carried out by her student Bea Boreczky, and alumni and members of the Feudal period student research group. Very little is known about the results of the research in the 1970s and 1980s. In one of her publications, Éva H. Balázs says that the copies of the volumes No. 2–4, 8–11, 16, 17, 20, 21, 49, 53, 63 and 76 contain documents with Hungarian relevance, while volume no. 69, for example, contains manuscripts from Vienna, Lemberg (Lviv) and Prague.¹⁵ In her more general account of the history of eighteenth-century Freemasonry, she only refers to the sources included in the Berzeviczy monograph and to documents from the Vienna archives.¹⁶ In a longer monograph that she

12 Éva Balázs, H.: Contributions à l'étude de l'ère des Lumières et du Joséphisme en Hongrie. In: E. Bene (Réd. par): Les Lumières en Hongrie, en Europe centrale et en Europe orientale, Actes du Colloque de Mátrafüred (3–5 novembre 1970). Budapest 1971, pp. 31–50, here: pp. 36–37.

13 Éva Balázs, H.: Berzeviczy Gergely, a reformpolitikus (1763–1795) [Gergely Berzeviczy, the Reformativ Political Thinker (1763–1795).] Budapest 1967.

14 Éva Balázs, H.: A szabadkőművesség a XVIII. században [Freemasonry in the Eighteenth Century.] In: Világosság 18 (1977), pp. 216–223.; Éva Balázs, H.: Freimaurer, Reformpolitiker, Girondisten. In: Éva Balázs, H., Ludwig Hammermayer, Hans Wagner, Jerzy Wojtowicz (Hrsg. von): Beförderer der Aufklärung in Mittel- und Osteuropa. Berlin 1979, pp. 127–140.

15 Balázs, H. 1979 (note 14), p. 139.

16 Balázs, H. 1977 (note 14).

wrote a decade later (and which was also used as a course-book), there are no specific references. From her short chapter called “Sources and literature” we learn that “the two chapters on Freemasonry are partly based on specialized literature, but rely more on archival sources from Hungary, Vienna, and The Hague”,¹⁷ but in this study, there is no mention of the Dég copies at all.

Soon afterwards, an international research group was established to compile a primary source edition. According to Éva H. Balázs, in 1995, the group consisted of herself, Antal Szántay and Eszter Deák from Hungary, as well as Ernst Bruckmüller (leader of the project “Logen und Geheimbünde im Mitteleuropa”) and Eva Huber from Austria.¹⁸ As a participant of the project, it was Eva Huber from Vienna who gave a detailed account of preliminary results in an article published in 1995.¹⁹ By then the group had finished a survey of the collection and had organized and analysed some of the data. Even if there are some erroneous information in her article, Huber was able to provide some idea not only about the activity of Franz Xaver Aigner, who compiled the original eighteenth-century collection, but also about the context, contents and significance of the collection, how it came into being and how it reached Dég.

Finally, for reasons unknown, the source edition was not completed. Éva H. Balázs talked about the process and preliminary results of the research twice in her later years. At the end of her career as a historian she wrote: “The research into the functioning of Freemasonry in the eighteenth century has made me exhausted and disappointed – I will leave excellent material to my students.”²⁰ In an interview conducted by one of her students, Lilla Krász, Balázs revealed: “Several hundreds of pages of the Dég sources are ready for publication. That will

17 Éva Balázs, H.: Bécs és Pest-Buda a régi századvégen, 1765–1800 [Vienna and Pest-Buda at the End of the 18th Century.] Budapest 1987, p. 334.

18 Vö. Eva H. Balázs: Überlegungen zu Charakter, Struktur und Zielen der Aufklärung in Ungarn. In: Carsten Zelle (Hrsg.): Aufklärung(en) im Osten. Das achtzehnte Jahrhundert – Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für die Erforschung des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts 19 (1995), 1, pp. 58–67, here: p. 67.

19 Eva Huber: Zur Entstehung des Freimaurer-Archivs Dégh. In: Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur 39 (5b–6), 1995, pp. 357–373. (I am grateful to Róbert Péter for calling this article to my attention.)

20 Éva Balázs, H.: Hogyan lettem történész? H. Balázs Éva válasza [The Way I Became A Historian. Éva H. Balázs's Reply.] In: Korall 21–22 (2005), pp. 166–168, here: pp. 167–168. – From the 1970s H. Balázs collected a large number of 18th-century Hungarian primary sources during her research trips to Vienna, Paris and The Hague. Vö. Balázs, H. 1987 (note 17), pp. 331–336.

soon happen, my students will make it.”²¹ Despite these hopeful statements, the project was not completed in the decade following her death in 2006, and there is no information on any publications on this topic by her students.²²

The monograph by József Jászberényi, published in 2003 was an important milestone in the research into eighteenth-century Hungarian Freemasonry.²³ Jászberényi himself did not study the contents of fonds P 1134; according to him, the material was not accessible at the time. Éva H. Balázs, however, informed him about the progress of the preparation of the Dég copies, and she also granted him access to the sources. Presumably, she gave him documents in either photocopied or typewritten format.²⁴ One such source document is Lajos Török’s letter to Franz Xaver Aigner, which is included in Jászberényi’s monograph, both in the original Latin and in a translated Hungarian version.²⁵ The other document bears the title *Gedruckter Fragebogen*, also included in the German original and in translation.²⁶ It can be confirmed that the Abafi copies of both of these sources can be found in the second batch in box 5 in fonds P 1134. Lajos Török’s letter in volume 11²⁷ – differing from the data given by Jászberényi – is not Nr. 18 but Nr. 9, while the German questionnaire is indeed Nr. 22 in volume 4.

21 Éva Balázs, H., Lilla Krász: Elő-beszélgetés: H. Balázs Éva és Krász Lilla bemutatják a kötetet [Pre-talk: Éva H. Balázs and Lilla Krász present the book.] In: Éva Balázs, H.: *Életek és korok: Válogatott írások* [Lives and Ages: Selected Papers.] Budapest 2005, pp. 15–21, here: p. 21.

22 After Éva H. Balázs’s death her own papers, comprising 32 boxes, was deposited at the Central Archives of the National Archives of Hungary (Fond P 2188). Although boxes No. 1–9. are open for research, access is restricted to the other boxes (Nr. 10–32) until 2039. These materials are accessible only to former students of the professor. Professor Ernst Bruckmüller and Professor Antal Szántay have been so kind to inform me that as a result of the “Logen und Geheimbünde im Mitteleuropa” project the Dég copies were transcribed in electronic format. Transcribers used the photocopies of the original documents, and the files containing the transcriptions were collected by Eva Huber. Professor Antal Szántay and Eszter Deák still have a few of the electronic files but neither of the former participants in the project has any information concerning Eva Huber’s work.

23 József Jászberényi: “A Sz: SOPHIA’ Templomában látom én felszentelve NAGYSÁDAT”: A felvilágosodás korának magyar irodalma és a szabadkőművesség [“I see you, The Most Honorable, consecrated in the Temple of Saint Sophia”: The Hungarian Literature of the Enlightenment and the Freemasonry.] Budapest 2003.

24 Jászberényi does not say whether he has received also other documents from Éva H. Balázs.

25 Jászberényi (note 23), pp. 33–34.

26 Jászberényi (note 23), pp. 135–136.

27 The volumes of the Dég archives were originally marked with Roman numerals but modern historians refer to them with Arabic numerals.

There is no information on why and for how long access to the Dég copies was restricted as Jászberényi mentioned. According to the checkout sheet of box 5, it was requested 21 times between the autumn of 2002 and 2012. I could only find out very little about who these researchers were, why they looked through the material, and whether they had published anything based on it. I have only found two publications from after 2002 which directly reference fonds P 1134. One of them was József Sisa, researcher of the Festetics mansion in Dég, according to which the Dég documents are filed as MOL P 1134, item Nr. 1, file Nr. 18.²⁸ The other researcher, Annamária Lupták gathered information about the activity of the Miskolc Masonic lodges in her paper.²⁹ From the Abafi monograph, she collected specific data on the Miskolc lodge from *Zum tugendhaften Kosmopoliten*, specifically those references that show the volume and file numbers of the related Dég documents. Lupták studied the contents of fonds P 1134, box 5 from this perspective (the box number was 3 at that time, see in more detail later), and she came to the conclusion that of the ten documents referred by Abafi only the copy of two can be found in the collection (Nr 10 in volume 43 and Nr. 1 in volume 46).³⁰

Contents of boxes 5 and 6

As mentioned earlier, “Copies from the Dég archives of the Festetics family” are kept in fonds P 1134, series A, item Nr. 1, Nr. 18. The related documents had earlier been stored in batches 3 and 4, and currently they are in boxes 5 and 6.³¹ Box 5 is an actual box, while box 6 is a large pile of documents tied with a band. In box 5 one can find three individually bound packets. I estimate the four packets to include about 5,000 pages altogether. They are marked as No. 18, and within bigger batches the documents are numbered from 1 to 95. At certain points the numbering is inconsistent: there are one-page documents with individual numbers, while Nos. 57 and 58 consist of at least 500 pages each. In box no. 5,

²⁸ See Sisa (note 4), p. 37.

²⁹ Annamária Lupták: A miskolci szabadkőműves páholy(ok) tevékenysége [The Activity of the Masonic Lodge(s) in Miskolc.] In: Tanulmányok az Eszterházy Károly Főiskola Tudományos Diákköreinek tudományos tevékenységéből (2011–2013) [Studies of Students’ Scientific Groups of the Károly Eszterházy University (2011–2013)], vol. 3, Eger 2013, pp. 153–207.

³⁰ Lupták (note 29), pp. 176–181.

³¹ I am very grateful to Krisztina Kulcsár, archivist of the National Archives of Hungary for the help I received from her while I was working on this paper. She informed me that a few years ago the Dég documents were rearranged. It seems that the numbering of the batches changed in 2012.

the three batches received continuous folio numbering. Nos. 1 to 1,597 can be found on the recto page of the documents. The cover pages of the batches show the call numbers of the documents within, and they also mention the folio numbers of the documents missing (pages 1–14, 95, 211, 338, 539). On the covers and on the documents themselves we can find short notes on the contents of the sources in grey, red, blue and black ink, handwritten by various people.

The Abafi copies from Dég are in box 5, packets 2, 3, and 6. They contain at least 4,000 pages. The folio numbering of the documents in batches 2 and 3 runs from 484 to 1,597. On the pages of box 6, there is no folio numbering, and it includes files Nos. 59–95. One can see the handwriting of different people on them, and they also used various types of paper and ink.³² The documents are well-organized: the copyists kept the original order of the documents as they were kept in the Dég archives, and they organized them in volumes. Only a few of the cover pages have survived. On these, we can find the number of the volume in Roman numerals, and in many cases a list of the documents in the batch. As further marking, the copyists wrote the numbers of the Dég volumes and the documents' own numbers (in Arabic numerals) on the top left corner of the cover pages. There are no certain data on how many volumes the Dég archives held. Lajos Abafi mentions 104 volumes in his Hungarian monograph,³³ while according to a Freemason from Magdeburg, August Pauls, who visited the Dég mansion in 1929, the collection consisted of 115 volumes.³⁴ Eva Huber concludes that since in his German monograph Abafi refers to volume No. 107, Pauls' figure must be the correct one.³⁵ In any case, the origin of the surviving sources are the following: volumes Nos. 1–2, 4–11, 14–30, 35–36, 39–55, 57, 59–65, 67–72, 84, 88–93, 97–98, 103–106. In her 1970 lecture, which I have already mentioned, Éva H. Balázs said that copies survived from 74 volumes of the Dég collection, and that fonds P 1134 contains excerpts from 72 volumes. The batches belonging to different Dég volumes show a large variety regarding number and size. From volumes 5 and 9 we can only find 3 or 4 copied pages, while we have more than 100 pages from volumes 15, 30 and 35. Presumably the fragmented nature of the material results mainly from inadequate storing

³² Eva Huber estimates that 70% of the copies were made by Gustav Brabbée. See Huber (note 19), p. 372.

³³ Abafi 2012 (note 1), p. 5.

³⁴ August Pauls: Ein ungarisches Freimaurerarchiv (Schloss Dég). In: Bundesblatt 44 (1930), pp. 45–49. Cfr. Arthur Singer: Das Freimaurer-Archiv auf Schloss Dég. In: Pester Lloyd 76, 239 (20th October 1929), pp. 10–11; E. Lennhoff, O. Posner: Internationales Freimaurerlexikon. Wien–München, 1932, p. 327.

³⁵ Huber (note 19), p. 357, p. 373.

conditions, as Mrs Pataky's above-mentioned finding aid also mentions. The handwritten manuscripts are legible, the pages are mostly undamaged, and the material is in decent condition in general, but in the first half of the twentieth century it must have been stored improperly, as some documents are even marked by shoe prints. Still, with our current knowledge it is impossible to tell exactly how fragmented the collection is, since there are no data on the precise content and size either of the original set of copies, nor of that portion of them which was transferred back to the archives in the 1950s. According to Eva Huber's estimate, about 60% of the Abafi copies survived and can be found in fonds P 1134 of the National Archives.³⁶

By looking through box 5, we can see the work methods of Lajos Abafi and the researchers of the twentieth-century, and we can also take a glance at the results of the Austrian-Hungarian research group. The contents of the first batch in box 5 are very mixed. It contains documents No. 18/1–56, and the folio numbering runs from 15 to 406, with the gaps mentioned above. Some of the documents can be traced back to Lajos Abafi: letters, drafts, notes from his time as a Masonic archivist, librarian and secretary. In the collection one can also find the pre-studies of monographs about the history of Freemasonry. For example, in batch No. 18/17 one can see relief prints cut out from books, which Abafi probably planned to use as illustrations for his volumes. Documents Nos. 18/43–45 are calls for subscriptions to his Hungarian and German monographs, while No. 18/46 is a proof of a journal article by Abafi. On the rest of the documents in the first batch we can see the traces of an archivist or researcher who knew the sources very well and organized them accordingly. In the smaller units called Nr. 18/3–16 we can see fragments of the *Dég* copies which consists of only a couple of pages, and some pages are only as big as one's palm. These units were placed in separate cardboard holders, which have notes on them written with ballpoint pen in red, black and blue ink (for example, "maybe vol. 29", "maybe vol. 49", "inaugural speech, youth", "IX, No 47", "Spells!", "Based on content and writing could be Bd. 15"). For some reason, the copies of a couple of shorter *Dég* documents are also included in this batch (No. 18/27, 53, 54). Besides that, Nr 18/20 and 21 might have resulted from preparatory work for the source edition planned by H. Balázs and her colleagues: the latter consists of photocopies (137–157, black and white) of handwritten copies from volume 30 of the *Dég* archives (Nos. 2, 3, 6), while the former is the typewritten transcription of the same document in two copies (96–136, black and white). (The Abafi copies of volume 30 otherwise can be found in batch 3 in box 5, folio

³⁶ Huber (note 19), p. 373.

numbers 1170–1179.) No. 18/25 contains the photocopied versions of the Dég copies of volume 70, No. 18/24 is the handwritten transcript of the same document written with a ballpoint pen in blue ink, while No. 18/55 contains the photocopies of volumes 23–24. Based on all this, it can be assumed that the members of the research team made photocopies of the Dég collection (or at least parts of it), then they transcribed them in a typewritten form.³⁷

The contents of the Dég documents

As the Austrian-Hungarian research group never finished compiling the source edition, only a fragment of the collection has been published: the few quotations from some documents included in Eva Huber's aforementioned article and the ones available in Jászberényi's monograph. In general, the collection includes sources, mainly minutes, protocols, membership books and letters connected to the activities of eighteenth-century Masonic, Rosicrucian and Illuminati lodges operating on the territory of the Habsburg Monarchy. They were mainly written in German, but some were in Latin or in Hungarian, and with a few exceptions almost all of them originate from the 1770s, 1780s, and 1790s. The collection is closely connected to the Masonic activities of Franz Xaver Aigner, who compiled it. In the 1790s he was a member of several lodges in Pest and Buda, and he was a central, leading figure. Based on the data found in the Dég documents, Eva Huber discusses in detail how Aigner started collecting documents related to Hungarian Freemasonry in order to provide his fellow and future members of the organization with reliable information on the history of Freemasonry.³⁸ In 1795, after the revenge on the Jacobine movement, the police court office of Francis I ordered Aigner to collect and preserve all known documents of the lodge.³⁹ Besides his personal motivation, that was already present years earlier, this was the main reason why Aigner started to mobilize his wide network. In the summer of 1796 he acquired a large amount of documents from Masonic and Rosicrucian lodges in Prague and Vienna. In 1797 he also acquired the documents of Rosicrucian lodges from around Kaschau too.⁴⁰ This way, by the end of the 1790s the collection had taken shape. Eva Huber divides this

³⁷ It is reasonable to assume that these transcriptions and copies can be found in that part of her own archive to which access is restricted until 2039.

³⁸ Huber (note 19), p. 359. – For Aigner's life and activity see Huber's paper and Abafi's monographs.

³⁹ See Abafi 2012 (note 1), pp. 408–412.

⁴⁰ Huber (note 19), p. 364, p. 368.

collection into the following subgroups: 1. documents related to Aigner's Masonic activity, 2. the documents of the Rodomskoy Prefecture of Prague, 3. documents of the Masonic and Rosicrucian lodges of Vienna, 4. smaller collection units. We do not know how the archival order evolved or what proportions the collection was divided between original documents and copies. As Huber also mentions, it is unclear what financial resources Aigner used to buy documents or have them copied. Presumably Antal Festetics must have given him financial aid; Aigner sold the whole archives to him in 1805 when the financial situation of his family was not secure. The circumstances of the sale and how the documents were transported to Dég is described in document 47 of volume 62.⁴¹

Most of the source material allows us to take a glance into the activities of the Prague, Vienna and Upper-Hungarian lodges, and a smaller part preserves data about lodges of Pest and Buda, of several of which Aigner was the founder.⁴² Below I introduce only a few documents in more detail in order to illustrate what kind of research projects could benefit from these sources, and what kind of new data could be extracted from them.

We can find about 70 pages from volume 17 of the Dég collection in batch 2 in box 5. One of the Latin documents (950r-960v) is called *Codex Constitutionalis Provinciae Latomiae Libertatis*, and it includes the text of the constitution concerning Hungarian Masonic lodges that was adopted in 1775 and the catechisms connected to the various degrees. Lajos Abafi tells us that on 22 October 1775 four Croatian lodges modified and shortened the previously valid constitution, and he publishes the summary of the text.⁴³ The Latin text is the same as part of a certain document in the collection of the Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv in Vienna (Kabinettsarchiv, Vertrauliche Akten, 60/2-2-2. ff. 68–112). We have not found it elsewhere, and the catechisms are different from the ones surviving in Kazinczy's manuscripts.⁴⁴ Interestingly, the constitution of the Draskovich Observance was already referred to in 1979 by Éva H. Balázs, and she discusses it in detail in her 1987 monograph.⁴⁵ Her source was the Vienna manuscript, so presumably she was not aware that a version of the Masonic constitution could be

⁴¹ Huber (note 19), p. 370.

⁴² Huber (note 19), p. 360.

⁴³ Abafi 2012 (note 1), pp. 83–94.

⁴⁴ See Ambrus Miskolczi: Kazinczy Ferenc szabadkőműves kátéja [The Masonic Catechism of Ferenc Kazinczy.] In: Irodalomtörténet [Literary History] (2009), 4, pp. 462–509. – The remaining copies from vol. 16 of the Dég archives contain some German language catechisms (documents Nos. 2–4), vows, and the Hungarian language version of them (document No. 9).

⁴⁵ See Balázs, H. 1979 (note 14), pp. 129–131; Balázs, H. 1987 (note 17), pp. 156–160. In H. Balázs's paper there is a different reference number to this document (Kn. 60/2. ff. 1–195). I would like to thank Krisztina Kulcsár for informing me about the new reference number.

found in the Dég collection too. The version identical with the Vienna manuscript might be the one Abafi also used, and which was file 1 of volume 20.⁴⁶ I did not find the copy of this among the documents surviving from volume 20.

It is also important to mention the copies of volume 2, which can be read in box 5, folio numbers 484–538. This source material contains summaries of meeting minutes from the *Zur Grossmuth (Magnanimitas)* lodge of Pest. Between 1786 and 1790 the documents were written in German, but from 14 May 1790 (from file No. LXXVI) in Latin. The last summary was written based on the meeting minutes of the CIX meeting on 21 August 1792. A remarkable difference from the entire Dég collection is that in this case, the Latin texts were written in the left-hand column, which were then translated to Hungarian in the right-hand column. The Latin and Hungarian texts were written in different kinds of ink, presumably by two different authors. In his German monograph, Lajos Abafi discusses the activity of the *Zur Grossmuth* lodge until 1785,⁴⁷ while in the Hungarian version he follows its history from its foundation in 1770 to 1790. According to him, the lodge had been operating based on Draskovich's constitution, and between 1776 and 1778 he was the Grand Master as well.⁴⁸ In the middle of the 1780s the lodge disbanded for a while, but in 1786 it was reorganized. The events of 1786–1790 are discussed in detail by Abafi, who clearly acquired his data from the relevant copies of volume 2.⁴⁹ At the end of his summary he mentions the meeting of 2 March 1790, when members of the lodge voted Latin to be the language of their meetings, and hence of their meeting minutes as well. Regarding the following two years, we can only find sporadic references in his monograph; therefore, the thirty pages of relevant Dég copies offer a lot of new information. For example, it appears that at the meeting of 14 May 1790 the Grand Master promised to acquire the baptism certificate of Lajos Festetics Jr. (?–1840), nephew of one of the founders of the Georgikon, “in order to trace his profane age” (523r-v). Two meetings later, on 12 of July, they read out loud the answers he submitted to the lodge's questions, and then they voted unanimously to admit him to the lodge (524v), and on 21st July, he was initiated Entered Apprentice (525r). At the next meeting, on 5 July 1790, two Entered Apprentices were passed to the degree of Fellowcraft: László Thomka and Ádám (Pálóczi) Horváth (525v). In this period the members of the lodge included József Orczy, Gedeon Ráday, László Podmaniczky, Márton György Kovachich, Lipót Schaffrath, Ignác Martinovics, Pál Spielenberg, Dániel

⁴⁶ Vö. Abafi 1891 (note 1), p. 299.

⁴⁷ Vö. Abafi 1893 (note 1), pp. 382–389; Abafi 1899, 189–199.

⁴⁸ Abafi 2012 (note 1), pp. 104–105.

⁴⁹ Abafi 2012 (note 1), pp. 276–296.

Cordines, Károly Koppi, and János Nagyváthy, who had left the army. Besides official matters, the summaries barely include anything on what the members discussed at the given meeting or what lectures or readings they listened to.

Copies from volume 15 (pages 839–897) of the Dég collection could serve as source documents for studying the life of the Pest lodges in the 1790s. For example, on pages 865r-v, we can read excerpts from meeting minutes of the lodge called *Zu den sieben Sternen* (*Seven Stars*) from 1792. From these it appears that József Kármán, the author and editor, was admitted as a member on 10 June 1792, and we can also read the copies of his short biography and testament. The activity of the lodge is discussed in detail by Abafi in his monograph,⁵⁰ but the Dég collection – as we can see – offers a lot of new data that Abafi never published.

Further research topics

Based on the research that has been so far conducted on boxes 5 and 6 of fonds P 1134, “Unclassified documents”, item 1, No. 18 in the National Archives, we can conclude that the 4,000 pages of copies from the Dég collection provide source material of primary quality for the study of Austro-Hungarian Freemasonry at the end of the eighteenth century. It is possible that some of the eighteenth-century primary sources preserved in the Dég copies have further available copies in other collections, and a survey must be made to discover which of these are available in modern source editions.⁵¹ The question of whether the entire Dég collection needs to be published can be only answered only once this task is completed. However, it is also possible to do basic research from several aspects based on the original copies. The publication of certain documents or batches individually is also worth considering.

It is also an option to follow the direction of one of the possibilities mentioned above. As Annamária Lupták, for example, studied the question of from which of the original documents referred to by Abafi the copies in fonds P 1134 originate, it would be important to make similar comparisons regarding as many lodges as possible, and not only based on Abafi’s data but on Elemér Jancsó’s as well. It is only studies like these that can tell us how and to what extent these two researchers used data from the Dég collection, and they would

⁵⁰ Abafi 2012 (note 1), pp. 366–386, 403–414.

⁵¹ Cfr. for example Hans-Josef Irmen (Hrsg.): *Die Protokolle der Wiener Freimaurerloge “Zur wahren Eintracht” (1781–1785)*. Frankfurt am Main 1994. (Schriftenreihe der Internationalen Forschungsstelle “Demokratische Bewegungen in Mitteleuropa 1770–1850”, 15.)

also show what is missing from monographs but has been preserved in the copies. In my opinion, it is worth considering that while more than a century has passed since the beginning of the twentieth century, research has produced new results only in a few narrow subareas of the field. Recognizing this will hopefully encourage researchers to exhaust the potentials of the Abafi and Jancsó monographs much more, to continue these scholars' work, and to enrich the field with new results.

Until now neither Lajos Abafi-Aigner, nor his similarly active predecessor, Franz Xaver Aigner has received adequate scholarly recognition for their lives and achievements. Files No. 18 of fonds P 1134 provide enough source material for both topics, but it would be also worth finding any documents, letters, notes and other manuscripts of Abafi which have found their way into other collections. The following questions, for example, are left to be answered: has anything been finished of the works on Rosicrucians and Jacobines that were meant to be the continuation of the history of Freemasonry? If yes, why have they not been published, and are there any remaining manuscript fragments? If not, can we find the notes collected in preparation for these works?⁵² Besides the potential research topics mentioned above, answering these questions would also significantly enrich our knowledge of the history of eighteenth-century Freemasonry, and on these two excellent representatives of the organization, whose lives and work were tied to Freemasonry in so many ways.

⁵² August Pauls says that Abafi completed these unpublished works. Arthur Singer, a Budapest journalist, did not find any trace of the manuscripts in the 1930s. See Pauls (note 34), p. 46.