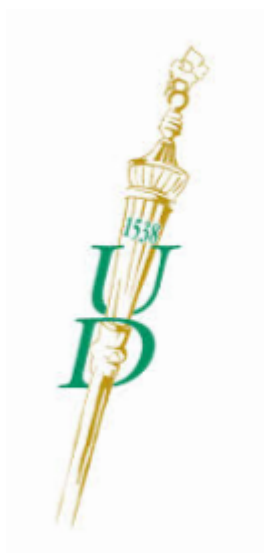


SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Musica dantesca – Music in Dante's poetry

Anett Julianna Kádár

Supervisor: Dr. habil Imre Madarász



Faculty of Arts and Letters
University of Debrecen

2016

I. SETTING THE AIMS, PRESENTING THE TOPIC

The main aim of my dissertation was to create a thematic, comprehensive writing of the connections between Dante Alighieri and music. Regarding the interdisciplinary aspect of the subject my research included music literature, music theory, literature theory, comparative literature, and medieval studies. I analyzed in details the components connected to music in the *Divine Comedy*. The analysis was published in three subsection corresponding to the structure of Dante's writing. The results of above mentioned analysis, the correspondences and emphasized elements were communicated in separate subsections. I examined the relationships of musical components in the *Divine Comedy* and described the music theory background of Dante and his poem.

Like the music is presented in Dante's writings, Dante's words were presented in the next era's music literature as an inspiration for musical works. Dante's musical reception is such an expansive topic that it could be the target of many doctoral thesis.

In my work I gave a synthetic description of the musical reception of the medieval poet starting from his contemporary to nowadays and I demonstrated the musical-literal connection points through Franz Liszt's exemplar. The bibliography already talked about the songs quoted in the *Divine Comedy*, so I did not describe this topic elaborately. I described the systematic arrangement of these musical quotations and observed the musical elements which are not sounding in the dramaturgy of Dante, but they still have a significant role in the analysis.

II. DELINEATING THE METHODS USED

The base of this research is the examination of musical elements which can be found in the Divine Comedy. As the conclusion of the analysis the subsections of the chapter *The Symbolic sounds of Divine Comedy* were wrote. In the order of the research process the analysis came first, after that the exposition of the categorized theories. Since the Dante reception is very wide, I felt the necessity to begin my work with a resume of what the previous musicology and Dante study wrote about this topic before, and what are the innovative, new dates coming from my research. I determined Dante's concept of music using his works *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, *Convivio*, *Divina Commedia*, comparing to the contemporary descriptions. I examined the troubadour poetry found in the *Sacro Poema* and the troubadour poetry of his era.

I included many new aspects and point of views in my analysis which were needed refinement or were completely missing even if they are significant in the topic, for example the relations of numbers and music in the analysis and the analysis of Dante-related concert program books of 1865.

I described Dante's point of view about music comparing what he wrote about it in his works (*De Vulgari Eloquentia*, *Convivio*, *Divina Commedia*) to the contemporary Dante-reception's opinion. I examined his texts in the madrigalist composers choral works and the next musical periods, especially in the one, in which his personality and works were important sources of inspiration. This area is the Romantic period in which many musical works were composed on Dante's themes or inspired by his personality. In the "genius cult" of the Ottocento the personality of Dante was an extraordinary example for the romantic artists. I demonstrated this importance examining Liszt's own books which have his handwriting and markings, his letters, diaries and Dante-related music pieces. The research has an Italian-Hungarian comparative part where I examined the loss or stay of the musicality of the original text in different Hungarian translations. I stressed those parts where the translation of Babits is different from the original

in the context of musicality and the translation of musical terms. I compared the Hungarian translations after the year 1900 of Antal Radó (1930), Ferenc Baranyi (2014) and Ádám Nádasdy (2016).

III. RESULTS OBTAINED

1. Dante and the music

The poet wrote about Music in his *Convivio*. He connected the science of Music to the Sky of Mars, because the main principle in both of them is the most beautiful relation. The sky of Mars is the middle sky from both sides, so it divides into two equal parts the distance between *humana* and *sacra*. It is the fifth sky counting from either sides, being the geometric mean of the structure of the sky. Dante knew well the religious and secular music practice of his times. To prove this statement, I communicated numerous data in my dissertation.

In the VIII. canto of Purgatory Dante describes the transition between two songs sung by the expiatory spirits in the valley. The expression *ascoltar chideea con mano* indicates the directional movement of the precentor. In Dante's time there were no conductors. The function of the conductor was practiced by the solo singer with his arm signs and gestures, as we can see it also in Dante's example. The line *render vano l'udire* refers to the previous canticum, *Salve Regina*, while *una de l'alme* refers to the precentor of the next song, *Te lucis ante*. It's interesting to observe that until this point the spirits were singing in *unisono*, and now this singing style is changed to the so called *responsoric* (solo-chorus corresponding) singing. Both of them were common in the Medieval liturgy. Dante gave such an exact description of these musical liturgies, that it proves the supposition, that he participated on these liturgies and knew their structure and procession.

2. Symbolic meaning of the sounds

2.1. The question of *udito*

In the Divine Comedy the requisite of musical perception is understanding and seeing. Understanding the particularities of the transcendental scene. This is the meaning of the words of the eagle in the XIX. canto of *Paradise*:

Quali son le mie note a te, che non le 'ntendi. An other example is when Dante asks the help of Beatrice to understand the difference between the world of beyond senses and it's reflection, the world of senses: *chè io per me indarno a ciò contemplo.* In this situation Dante could not see clearly his environment, and did not hear any music. In the canto XXXI. Dante extends the process of understanding-seeing-hearing. He adds the writing, the perpetuation of his experiences.

2.2. Medieval mystics and the music

In the medieval system of codes music had a transmitting role between God and people, transcendent and *humana*. The function of mystic teachings is very close to this theory. It's role is to pass the individual soul to God, who according to Dante's description stays on the top of creation in the immobile sky over the orbits of the moving skies of the planets. The *Divine Comedy* has more reading. In the second tractate of the *Convivio* Dante talks about these readings, guiding his readers to a better understanding of his works. He describes the following four categories: literal, allegorical, moral and anagogical/mystical In the end of his journey, Dante is accompanied by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the medieval mystical theologian.

2.3. Gothic structure of sounds

The sounding songs in the *Paradise* are all belong to the categories of *musica sacra* and vocal music. In the grandiose moments of the *Sacro Poema* Dante can hear these sounds, and he describes them in such a way that also the cultured readers can hear them. These important moments are the gate of paradise, the change of skies, when the poet get to the understanding of a train of thought etc. Besides these direct musical emphasised thoughts the Paradise got a hidden musical structure. This structure is consisted by the sounding music in the function of time. The first two sounding songs are similar to the last two ones, creating a musical frame of the *cantica*. The sounding songs in the *Paradise* are *Ave maria*, *Hozsanna*, *Dio laudamo* (*Te Deum*), *Sanctus*, *Sperent in Te*, *Regina coeli*, *Miserere mei*. The song *Miserere mei* is not part of the musical structure of the *cantica* because it was sung by solo, not by the whole choir meanwhile in the choir they were singing *Ave Maria*.

2.4. Musical instruments in the Divine Comedy

A wide range of musical instruments can be found in the Divine Comedy. These musical instruments can be presented in a complete way as sounding musical instruments, for example the signal musical instruments of *Inferno*, and the organ which accompanied the angelic choir in the *Paradise*. Besides this, the poet used many times musical instruments in comparisons and metaphors, for example the drum as a stomach and the *leuto* as the whole body in the XXX. canto of *Inferno*. In my work I collected all the musical instruments which can be found in the *Inferno*, *Purgatory* and *Paradise* of Dante, demonstrating how did they look like in the Duecento-Trecento, and what was their role in those societies.

2.5. Troubadours in the *Divine Comedy*

This subsection is discussing the troubadours who can be found in Dante's main work. The Dante bibliography connected to this theme always talks about Sordello and Casella but besides them there are three other important singers. They are Bertran de Born, Arnaut Daniel and Folquet de Marseille. My main target was to present all the troubadours in a historical point of view, and to demonstrate what was their original identity, and what were the characteristics which Dante added to them. The contemporary poets had a slightly different opinion about these personalities than Dante, who stressed some particularities which weren't important to other poets. I described these differences and sameness.

2.6. System of musical symbols in the Middle Ages

The Middle Ages had a particular system of cultural codes which was present in the science, arts and even in the daily life. The base of this system was the ontotheological thinking and antic Greek philosophy. The *musica sacra* had a special role in this system of codes because in the general thinking the idea of transcendency connected to music was accepted and common. They thought that music could make people understand a higher and hidden meaning. It was an implement of communication between transcendent and *humana*, and in this way the music meant the manifestation of transcendency in the earth. The composers were attentive that in their compositions the music had to represent theology. It can be observed in a perfect way on the mensural notations rhythmic system, and on its division of time. They distinguished between ternary and binary tempus and *prolatio*. They called

tempus perfect and *prolatio perfect* the ternary divisions referring to the Blessed Trinity, and they named *tempus imperfect* and *prolatio imperfect* the binary divisions.

3. Musicality in the three *canticas*

Categorizing the acoustic elements of the *Divine Comedy*, a hypothesis occurred saying that musicality is presented in all three *canticas*. This hypothesis got proved in the analyzing chapters of my dissertation. All three kind of musical material which are sounding in the *canticas* have a heterogeneous nature. The margins of the musical material are corresponding to the margins of the places of the *Sacro Poema*. The musical elements in the *Inferno* are presented as anti-musica, or better to say it is an atonal, chaotic musical material in which the classical harmony is missing. There are nominations of musical instruments in this chapter but they are irrelevant in the process of dissection of the sounding system. In the Purgatory there are songs with simple structure. They are *monodic* or *homophone*, not depending on the performers number or personality. The musical material in the Paradise is much more complicated. The sounding music is corresponding to the numerology in the place of sounding music in the *cantica*, and also in the placement of the sounding songs in the single *cantos*. There are more allusions of polyphony and the *punctus contra punctum* (point against point) composing practice (For example: Par. VI. 124-126, Par. VIII. 16-18).

4. The music theory of Dante's times

I examined where and how did sound the music quoted by Dante during his time, giving an opportunity to the readers to invoke the contemporary sounding. Writings of music theory from Dante's time are very rare to find. The earliest writing of music theory which contains the Trecento's music is the *Tractatus de Musica* of Hieronymus de Moravia, which copied issue can be found in the Sorbonne. Moravia was a cherubic theoretic, Dante's contemporary.

The poet completed his primary education at the cherubic and Franciscan schools, and he most probably was familiar with Moravia's teachings. The work of Walter Odington stresses the mathematical aspect of music, but he writes only

a few complementary thoughts of its practical use. The most comprehensive work on the theme is *Speculum Musicae* of Jakob of Liège. The book's edition of 1955-1973 occupied eight volumes, and it was written in his late years in Paris after 1330.

This book was made in the margin of two periods, *Ars Antiqua* and *Ars Nova*, and it talks about music in an encyclopedic way. By the lifetime of Dante the use of organ in the daily liturgical music practice was common. The harmonies of early polyphony were generally known, in the secular music the troubadour *lira* flourished. They used the "abc" naming for the music notes to place them in the stave, the nomination of solmization (ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la) helped the intonation of semitones and tones. They were thinking in hexachords. There were three prime notes to build hexachord on it. According to this, they had *hexachordum naturalis* (based on C), *hexachordum molle* (based on F) and *hexachordum durum* (based on G).

5. Dante's musical reception

5.1. Early years

There are dates about Dante's musician friends, like Casella, singing his verses. The poet asked his friend, who died short time before their meeting, to sing his verse *Amor, che ne la mente mi ragiona*. After Dante's death his words almost disappeared from the music literature, and they appear again around 1570. Francesco Petrarca and Giovanni Boccaccio were the main figures of the Italian literature after Dante. They were part of the Proto-renaissance literature of the three periods of Humanism and Renaissance. This period was present in the literature, but not in the music. In the Italian humanism the *volgare* language was already in the common cultivated use. Many liturgical texts were written in this period in *volgare*: laudas, prayers, stories of the scriptures. The poets of renaissance humanism are "rediscovered" the antic classical Latin language. They started to use the language of Vergilius, Horatius, Catullus and Ovidius. They made new translations of the antic Greek and Latin poets and writers works. The Middle Age received the indicative "dark" and the artists changed the previous global point of view to a human centric point of view. The target of their works changed from the world after life to this world during the human life. The

poets wrote about humans, society, political life in a more realistic way instead of examining its mysterious nature. The first significant setting to music of Dante's text was *Quivi sospiri, pianti, ed alti guai*, composed by Luzzasco Luzzaschi (1545-1607) in 1576. In the next five years they wrote six madrigals to the same lines, and Dante's other works also got into the texts of madrigalists. In the Baroque and Classical periods the settings of Dante's texts to music are decreased. In these periods the focus was on the rules of classical harmony and musical forms (like sonata-form) and the poet's texts went to the background. The *Divine Comedy* became very popular after these periods, in the Romantic era, mainly as a theme of operas and program musics. I present Dante's popularity in the Romantic music through Liszt's example in the next chapter.

5.2. Ferenc Liszt and the Divine Comedy

Liszt read the *Divine Comedy* for the first time in the companion of Countess Marie d'Agoult. Lina Ramann, Liszt's contemporary biographer described this period as a felicitous, cloudless period, but from Liszt's diary and letters it is known that the couple had many problems in that time. Liszt cited Dante's *Inferno* in one of his diary notes in 1838, comparing himself to Dante's wolf having a lean body full of miseries. Liszt was a passionate reader. In his own books there are signs with red, blue and lead pencil, marginal notes, and highlights. He questioned many times the author's ideas. In his marginal notes he states opposite opinion of the author, or marked those thoughts which were important for him. Most probably he read the *Divine Comedy* in French for the first time but in his library there is a honorary edition of Dante's poem which he received from the *Società Orchestrale Romana* on 6 december 1881. in Rome after the opening concert of the Sala Dante where the orchestra played his *Dante Symphony*. There is another important edition in Dante's library. Persichetti *Dizionario di pensieri e sentenze d'autori antichi e moderni d'ogni nazione*, a book which collects citations from different literary works. In this work Liszt marked more Dante-citation.

5.3. Terzinas in the music of Romanticism

Liszt wrote two significant compositions inspired by Dante's main work. These are the *Dante Sonata* and *Dante Symphony*. The original title of the works are *Après une lecture du Dante, Fantasia quasi Sonata* and *Eine Symphonie zu*

Dantes Divina Commedia. The sonata presents the mood of Dante's work while the symphony presents the *Divine Comedy* in a direct way. The initial theme of the *Dante Sonata* is a descending *tritonus* scale. The *tritonus* is known as the interval of devil since the beginning of polyphony. It's not just a symbol of devil, but a direct manifestation in music according the medieval thinking. They called it *diabulus in musica* and all the composers tried avoid it's use in their music during the tonal music periods. The *Dante Symphony* belongs to the category of program music. Liszt wrote Dante's lines in the music score also for the musical instruments which aren't able to pronounce vocal music or syllable but using the rhythm and music articulation they could express each word.



Registry number:
Subject:

DEENK/133/2016.PL
Ph.D. List of Publications

Candidate: Anett Julianna Kádár
Neptun ID: PL1ES5
Doctoral School: Doctoral School of Literature
MTMT ID: 10039083

List of publications related to the dissertation

Hungarian book chapter(s) (2)

1. **Kádár A.J.:** Dante Alighieri és a zene.
In: Így kutattunk mi! Tudományos cikkgyűjtemény I.: A Nemzeti Kiválóság a Konvergencia Régióban Program. [s.n.], [s.l.], 118-119, [2015].
2. **Kádár A.J.:** Liszt Ferenc és az Isteni Színjáték.
In: Pro Scientia Aranyérmesek XI. Konferenciája : Szeged, 2012. november 8-10. : előadások. /, Pro Scientia Aranyérmesek Társasága, Budapest, 260-265, 2013. ISBN: 9789638828927

Hungarian scientific article(s) in Hungarian journal(s) (4)

3. **Kádár A.J.:** Adalékok Liszt Ferenc római koncertjeihez: A Sala Dante és Liszt.
Itali. Debreceniensis. 19, 87-92, 2013. ISSN: 1219-5391.
4. **Kádár A.J.:** A szférák zenéje Dante Alighieri közvetítésében.
Juvenilia. 3, 141-148, 2010. ISSN: 1788-6848.
5. **Kádár A.J.:** A "rime sparse" - szétszórt rímek a zeneirodalomban : Petrarca és költészetének utóélete.
Juvenilia. 2, 103-115, 2008. ISSN: 1788-6848.
6. **Kádár A.:** A reneszánsz udvari muzsika és a petrarkizmus.
Debr. Disputa. 5 (7/8), 107-112, 2007. ISSN: 1785-5152.





Foreign language scientific article(s) in Hungarian journal(s) (1)

7. **Kádár, A.J.:** I mistici, la musica e Dante.
Nuova Corv. 26, 125-128, 2014. ISSN: 1218-9472.

Foreign language scientific article(s) in international journal(s) (3)

8. **Kádár, A.J.:** Dante in musica: Il fallimento e il successo della Sinfonia Dante.
Oss. Letterario. 19 (101/102), 39-41, 2014. ISSN: 2036-2412.
9. **Kádár, A.J.:** L'udito di Dante nel Paradiso.
Oss. Letterario. 18 (95/96), 28-30, 2014. ISSN: 2036-2412.
10. **Kádár, A.:** Franz Liszt e Dante.
Quad. Vergeriani. 7, 92-103, 2011. ISSN: 1827-2126.

Non scientific journal article(s) (3)

11. **Kádár A.J.:** Az itáliai reneszánsz mártírjai.
Agria. 8 (4), 267-271, 2014. ISSN: 1789-4379.
(Ismertetett mű : Madarász Imre : Két máglya : Savonarola és Giordano Bruno. Budapest : Hungarovox, 2014, 151 p. ISBN: 9786155331174)
12. **Kádár A.J.:** Beatrix királyné levelei.
Klió. 4, 53-55, 2012. ISSN: 1216-2965.
(Ismertetett mű : Enrica Guerra : Il carteggio tra beatrice d'Aragonia e gli Estensi 1476-1508. Róma : Aracne, 2010, 290. p. ISBN: 9788854834354)
13. **Kádár A.J.:** Adriano Papo, Gizella Németh (szerk.): Adriai-dunai történelmi tanulmányok.
Klió. 20 (4), 8-10, 2011. ISSN: 1216-2965.
(Ismertetett mű : (szerk.) Adriano Papo, Gizella Németh : Studia Historica adriatica ad danubiana. Trieste : Duino Aurisia, 2010, 179 p.)





Hungarian conference proceeding(s) (1)

14. **Kádár A.J.**: Zenei rend(szer) Dante Isteni Színházában.
In: Pro Scientia Aranyérmesek X. Konferenciája. Szerk.: Szöllősi László, Pro Scientia Aranyérmesek Társasága, Budapest, 218-223, 2011.

Foreign language conference proceeding(s) (1)

15. **Kádár, A.J.**: Le parole di Dante interpretate da Franz Liszt.
In: 1. Convegno Internazionale di Linguistica e Glottodidattica Italiana "Rafforzare i legami: prospettive di ricerca e ricadute operative" 2016.05.25-27., Istanbul. [s.n.], [s.l.], 16, 2016.

List of other publications

Hungarian scientific article(s) in Hungarian journal(s) (1)

16. **Kádár A.J.**: "V.E.R.D.I." a Risorgimento (mítoszának) zeneszerzője.
Itali. Debreceniensis. 17, 103-109, 2010. ISSN: 1219-5391.

Non scientific journal article(s) (1)

17. **Kádár A.J.**: Bagossi Edit: Pietro Metastasio színpadi művei Magyarországon.
Debreceni Szle. 20 (3-4), 138-139, 2012. ISSN: 1218-022X.
(Ismertetett mű : Bagossi Edit : Pietro Metastasio színpadi művei Magyarországon.
Debrecen : Debreceni Egyetemi Kiadó, 2010, 299 p.)

The Candidate's publication data submitted to the iDEa Tudóstér have been validated by DEENK on the basis of Web of Science, Scopus and Journal Citation Report (Impact Factor) databases.

26 May, 2016

