



Dénes Klem

**Vocal and music pedagogy in denominational teacher training
for Hungarian-language secondary elementary schools
in Hungary, 1828–1918**

Theses of the doctoral dissertation (PhD)

Supervisors:

Judit Gábos (Dr habil.), Professor

Irén Virág (Dr habil.), Associate Professor

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1 Background of the research

Music pedagogy as part of teacher training in Hungary is addressed merely tangentially, in its broader context, by the relevant monographs and textbooks about the history of Hungarian music or music pedagogy (Szabolcsi, 1979; Szabó, 1989; Dobszay, 1998; Halmos, 2020). In her work (of 1989), Helga Szabó presented the methodological tendencies and problems of vocal teaching in folk schools from the beginning of the Hungarian Reform Era to the 1980s; moreover, she analysed several songbooks and song collections. However, several publications on music pedagogy in the field teacher training were issued during the period of Dualism, as well as in the preceding decades, for instance, and none of these have been analysed so far. Thus, it is not clear in what way the curricula used for music education in denominational teacher training colleges reflect (or whether they reflect at all in the first place) Hungarian music associated with the period, which indirectly contributed to the cultural transfer taking place in folk schools. A focused description of the music education trends in the decades before Dualism and after 1868 has not yet been carried out, and neither has an investigation on the music education conditions and opportunities in the institutions of the various denominations; even though the music education that materialised in the teacher training during the Dualism can be regarded as a precursor of the reform of music education initiated by Zoltán Kodály and his students (including Lajos Bárdos, Jenő Ádám, Gyula Kertész, György Kerényi) from the mid-1920s, and it certainly influenced the cultural tastes of the masses.

Scholarly literature on the history of pedagogy in Hungary has barely touched upon the role of vocal and music pedagogy in institutionalised teacher training (Sebestyén, 1896; Szakál, 1934; Németh, 1990), and no summary work (to our knowledge) has yet been written on the professional work and values of denominational institutions during Dualism.¹

¹ Bollókné 1996, 64.

2 Research objectives

Our research objectives can be summarised as the answers to the following questions.

1. Through the methodological analysis of music textbooks and sheet music, we have investigated how musical phenomena, trends, and genres that appeared in Hungary from the first half of the eighteenth century to the 1910s were represented in teacher training in different periods.
2. However, the use of music publications by trainers may indicate the extent to which the trainer retained, if at all, his or her denominational character.
3. We also sought an answer as to what the musical or methodological aspects and possibilities of the Hungarian-language teacher training of the Reform Era and Absolutism were.
4. Following the enactment of the People's Education Act of 1868, the state – and later the denominations – sought to regulate teachers' training colleges by issuing curricula, which also influenced vocal and music teaching. Therefore, we also examined whether vocal and music teaching in the sampled training institutions complied with the curricula in force at the time (which were compulsory for the institution in question). Were there any differences or similarities in vocal and music teaching between the different denominations? Our investigation has attempted to cover the number, titles, contents, and weekly lessons of the subjects taught.
5. We also collected data on vocal and music teaching in the following aspects:
 - a. What exactly were music-related subjects in the colleges surveyed?
 - b. What instruments were the students taught to play at the institution?
 - c. Which textbooks and sheet music were used to teach music at the institution?
 - d. Did the institution have a choir, orchestra, or self-education group?
 - e. Was the existence of musical ear or instrumental ability, or a certain level of these, a prerequisite for admission or enrolment in the institution?

3 Research methods

Between 1828 and 1918, Hungarian as the language of instruction was of decisive importance in teacher training in Hungary. At the same time, the language of the ethnic groups living in given parts of the country or in given settlements in significant numbers was also used in teacher training colleges; and in many cases, that was the language of instruction together with Hungarian or another ethnic language; however, owing to the efforts of ‘Magyarization,’ Hungarian was becoming the exclusive language of instruction in increasingly more institutions.

Our research sample included a total of 30 colleges, several of which functioned as models of education in the country or denomination during the period under study. Of these institutions, 26 were Hungarian, one Hungarian-Ruthenian, one German,² and two were German-language institutions until 1868, and then Hungarian-language institutions thereafter.

During the research, school bulletins (yearbooks) proved to be an indispensable category of sources, while in the case of several institutions (the Teacher Training College of the Archdiocese of Eger, the Catholic Teacher Training College of Szeged, the Reformed Teacher Training College of Nagykőrös) we supplemented our work with archival data, which in several cases confirmed or refuted the data acquired from school bulletins.

Several groups of data in the bulletins were valuable sources of information for our research; firstly, by providing detailed information on the curriculum of the institution; and secondly, by indicating the authors and titles of the textbooks and sheet music used in vocal and music teaching. The latter data provided us with arguably the most important information, since by exploring the publications listed in the bulletins, we were able to get closer to an assessment of the ‘musical atmosphere’ of the institution. Accordingly, the other major group of primary sources in our research were the music-related publications from different periods and for different purposes, which we examined from a musical or methodological point of view.

We also used as primary sources the state curricula regulating teacher training in Hungary from 1869 to 1912, as well as their adaptations published by denominations.

² The Felsőlöví Lutheran Teachers’ Training College was a model for other schools within its denomination, and it was the first Lutheran school in Hungary, which is why we focused on music education in that very institution.

4 Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation contains the following chapters to chart the educational and music-historical aspects of the topic.

- Organised framework of teacher training in Hungary (1777–1918)
- Musical environment in eighteenth–nineteenth-century Hungary
- The practice of vocal and music teaching in denominational teacher training
 - the Reform Era
 - the era of Absolutism
 - the era of Dualism

5 Results of the research

The aim of our dissertation was to present the vocal and music teaching practice of Hungarian-language denominational teachers' training institutions in the period from 1828 to 1918, and we have succeeded in obtaining several results, not yet available in Hungarian scholarly literature, concerning both the teaching organisation methods (including methodological routines) applied while teaching the subjects, and the analysis of the textbooks and sheet music used (including the musical content they served to communicate). By analysing bulletins, archival data, and curricula, we have also gained an insight into the position of vocal and music teaching in teacher training. For the period covered, we have also presented the valuable work of several music teachers who, by training cantor teachers and producing publications, sought to contribute to the development of music education not only in their own institutions but also in their denominations. The musical analysis of several textbooks and sheet music used in the institutions provided an insight into the kinds, as well as the quality, of music taught in those institutions. The presentation of the music education aspects of the increasingly professionalising teacher training in the nineteenth century, focusing on specific types of schools, has not been done so far, so our work is a novelty from this aspect.

The professional musical training of teachers in Hungary began with the establishment of the so-called 'norma schools,' whose educational requirements were laid down in the *Ratio Educationis* of 1777. In these schools, students were mainly taught to play the organ, but this training was not musically thorough and was insufficient to supply the entire network of folk schools with teachers. Teachers also served as cantors in the villages, so their skills in playing instruments were required in many parishes. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, cantorial services were generally provided on a fairly low musical standard, mainly due to a lack of musical ability (musical ear), a low level of skill in playing instruments, and the use of inadequate publications (cantor books). János László Pyrker, Bishop of Szepes, later Archbishop of Eger, tried to raise the quality of the service by opening the teacher training colleges in Szepeskáptalan and later in Eger. The latter was the first institution in the country, in 1828, to start training cantor teachers in Hungarian.

We have presented in detail the music education practice of the institution that set the example during the period, the Teacher Training College of the Archdiocese of Eger. At the admission procedure, it was an advantage if one was well-versed in music (however, lack of musical ability did not lead to disqualification), and the level of musical ability limited, as early as at the beginning of the course, the success of the students in their future work as cantors and teachers.

In 1831, a teacher training school was established in Pécs, where at the time of the Reform Era, students were expected to have some practice in church music; and in the royal Catholic colleges (in Szeged and Győr) opened in the 1840s, the training of future cantor teachers was based on the example of the institution in Eger. In the Greek Catholic training school (in Ungvár), which opened in the same period, only vocal training was conducted, for religious reasons, whereas the first Reformed training school in Nagykőrös hosted both vocal and music training. The first Lutheran teacher training college (in Felsőlövő) provided perhaps even more instrumental education than the Catholic institutions and was the first to recognise the violin's usefulness in folk schools and thus also taught playing that instrument.

The music curriculum of the teacher training colleges of the period consisted of the then-current hymn books and choir books, which, except for the ones used by Lutherans, were of a remarkably low standard compared to the tradition of previous centuries. In the Reformed churches, despite centuries of bans, the organ slowly began to be admitted into churches again in the Reform Era, while Reformed cantorial training was focused on singing.

In the context of the era of Absolutism, we thought it important to highlight the government's music-related legislation affecting teacher training colleges. Under Decree No. 21931 of 1854, admission to teacher training schools was open to those who could sing clearly and play the organ to a certain standard, but prospective students could be exempted from this requirement, so that cantor teachers could be trained even if they did not possess a minimal musical ability.

Ferenc and Endre Zasskovszky, a team of brothers who had been involved in vocal and music teaching at the Eger teachers' training college for decades, published prolifically in the fields of church music, choral music, and music pedagogy from 1853 onwards. In

our study, we have analysed their publications used (also) in Hungarian teacher training in terms of music and methodology. No analysis has yet been published on their *How to Play the Organ*. In the case of several of their publications, we have added new data to the assessment of their work, which we have tried to locate in the context of then-current Hungarian teacher training. Although scholarly literature on the history of music education in Hungary (Szabó, 1989; Dobszay, 1998; Halmos, 2020) touches upon the work of the Zsaskovszky brothers, the aspect we have focused on (that is, teacher training) has not been included in the relevant works. Most of the Zsaskovszkys' publications mentioned above were issued in an era when music pedagogical literature in Hungarian (containing Hungarian music) was almost completely absent, owing to the efforts of Germanization and the presence of native German-speaking teachers (not only in teacher training). We have also pointed out that the booklets *Kis lantos* and *Egri dalnok* were the first publications in Hungary through which the Hungarian dance and music genre 'verbunkos' was introduced, through its arrangement into folk songs, into Hungarian-language Catholic teacher training.

During the period of Absolutism (mainly from 1856), several new schools were opened in the country (including the first female teacher training college in the convent of the Congregation of Jesus in Pest), all of which were denominational. From the end of the 1850s onwards, increasingly more precise data on the functioning of these institutions, including music education, were recorded. We have presented the components of music education in Catholic, Reformed, and Lutheran schools of the period, mainly by synthesising the subjects taught and their weekly number of lessons, which has also not been reported in scholarly literature so far. The Catholic trainers treated vocal and music teaching with rather varied emphases: the number of lessons per year (in the colleges that provided data) ranged from three to eight, the most thorough and differentiated training was provided in Eger, and the Zsaskovskys could thus continue to serve as a model for other trainers with their up-to-date and gap-filling publications.

In addition to the one in Nagykőrös, independent teacher training colleges were established in that period, leaving the faculties of the Reformed colleges (Sárospatak, Nagyenyed, Debrecen). We have highlighted the importance of the music teacher of the Sárospatak teacher training college, Sámuel Ivánka, in music pedagogy, and presented

the innovations in his works, including several innovations in the use of visualization and terminology (his lining system, explanation of intervals, etc.), which have not been mentioned in the relevant literature, but which can be considered pioneering in the music education of his denomination. Ivánka criticised, among other things, the work of Károly Szotyori Nagy, who taught at the Reformed Teachers' Training College in Debrecen for decades (1865–1897), the book *On Singing Tones* (*Énekhangzatos könyv*), co-authored with József Zákány – and in our opinion, Ivánka was right to do so. Paradoxically, however, his works were not used in any other teacher training college in Hungary, unlike *On Singing Tones*. In the case of this latter publication, we have pointed out that the playful text in the book, designed for singing, to practise the major chromatic scale is, on the one hand, influenced by philanthropism, and on the other, it represents the first appearance of the so-called 'ladder method' (Szabó, 1989) in Hungarian music pedagogical literature.

The musical practice of Reformed colleges in this period is not as uniform as that of Catholic institutions. Participation in the collegiate choirs, especially in Debrecen and Sárospatak, meant for the students preparing to become teachers an encounter with the secular Hungarian music of the time, so these workshops can be considered the first in Hungarian teacher training to offer musical material other than liturgical music.

The number of Hungarian-language Lutheran teacher training colleges also increased during the period of Absolutism. In addition to Nyíregyháza, students also received regular music training in Sopron and Szarvas, of which the Nyíregyháza school was distinguished by its curriculum and the number of weekly vocal and music lessons (36). Regarding the latter location, it is particularly noteworthy that the most ideal situation for the instruction to play musical instruments was achieved in the school-year preceding the Austro-Hungarian Compromise (1866/67): one lesson per pupil, i.e., no group instruction was necessary, although group instruction was typical for cantor and teacher training in the entire period under study. The ecclesiastical vocal education of colleges differed from that of both Catholic and Reformed institutions in that they did not offer classroom vocal training until the end of Absolutism, preferring regular choir singing. The teaching of the violin appeared only in the Sopron training school,

following the example of the training school in Felsőlövő, which, prior to Dualism, was a unique phenomenon in the training of teachers in the Hungarian language.

After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, the 1868 law on public education provided, among other things, for the introduction of compulsory education and the role of the state in teacher training. Vocal teaching as a subject became compulsory in folk schools, and thus also played a central role in the regulation of teacher training. The law allowed denominations to set up teachers' training colleges, but the state wished to be involved in their supervision as well, which led to a period of tension between the state and the denominations (especially the Catholic Church), from 1868 to 1876, concluded by the adoption of Act XXVIII of 1876. The denominations were obliged to comply with the curricular regulations laid down by the state for teacher training (in 1869, 1877, 1882, 1903, 1911), but they could also provide training in their institutions based on adaptations for their own training activities.

In the course of our exploration of the documents of the institutions selected for our research (primarily the bulletins), we found that their vocal and music training differed slightly, even during the period of Dualism (in some periods, some institutions had an extremely high number of lessons, which has been discussed in the dissertation). At the same time, in the case of several institutions (such as most of the Catholic female teacher training colleges), we can observe that then-current state regulations were observed in an almost unchanged manner.

State regulations increased the length of study for Hungarian teacher training institutions to three years in 1868, and to four years from 1881/1882. In our paper, we have presented the regulations and changes in the state curricula for vocal and music teaching issued during the era of Dualism, which were clearly influenced by the decades of pre-Dualism teacher training in Hungary: in addition to singing, instrumental education was also included in men's curricula (piano, organ, violin, and, during the four-year course, harmonium), while the piano was added to women's curricula; and later, with the 1903 curriculum, violin was also added as an optional instrument, the use of which was preferred in folk schools. The provisions of the curricula of denominational schools concerning vocal and music teaching were reflected in the increasing number of lessons

of sacred singing and the increasingly strong instrumental requirements of teachers' training.

From the 1870s onwards, the literature on music education in Hungary was increasingly expanding, which also affected teacher training. István Bartalus was one of the most important music educators in contemporary Hungary, commissioned by Eötvös to write the first publications on music education (textbooks, or 'guide books,' for folk schools). Among Bartalus's writings on the professional work of teacher training, we have presented two of his books on playing the piano (his *Gyermek-dalhon*, "Homeland of Songs for Children," and his *Introduction to Playing the Piano and Organ*), the first of which has not yet been analysed from a musical point of view in scholarly literature: it was among the first books on instrumental teaching in Hungary to contain several examples of folksy art songs. We have also analysed, from a musical point of view, Bartalus's choral collection entitled *Négyes dalok zsebkönyve* ("Pocketbook of Four-Beat Songs") published in collaboration with István Gyertyánffy, which can also be considered one of the novae of our dissertation.

Catholic teacher training of the period was characterized by the fact that the number of lessons in vocal and music teaching became equal, as each form taught music in four or five lessons a week, so the leading role of Eger in this respect disappeared by the 1880s (the decade of the Zsasskovszky brothers' demise).

We have found that the number of lessons were stationary in the Reformed colleges too, with the only exception of the Nagyenyed college where they were increasing. We have highlighted the outstanding activity of Zoltán P. Nagy, the teacher of the Reformed teacher training college in Debrecen, in the field of differentiated instrumental teaching. We have noticed the highest frequency of lessons of the entire Hungarian-language denominational teacher training of the Dualism period in the Lutheran college of Eperjes (7–9 per week).

Sources show that almost all the teacher training colleges of the time had a choir or a singing group or an orchestra. Teacher training colleges were dominated by instrumental chamber music, while some institutions had only a choir specifically for liturgical repertoire (in Szeged, and in the Budapest-based Ranolder Institute).

Our research has highlighted that the lack of musical ability of prospective teachers (and cantors) might have been a barrier to a successful completion of the training, but not all institutions carried out a disqualifying assessment of the candidates' abilities. We have described the circumstances of the renewal of cantorial training in the 1880s. The cantorial training course, which started in Kalocsa, was open to teachers with a diploma, and was followed by other schools in the country.

In our dissertation, we have focused on the musical and, where appropriate, methodological analysis of music pedagogical publications used in teacher training colleges. It can be concluded that in the Dualism period, the tendency of using publications for beginners – elementary schoolchildren – continued (with Ferenc and Endre Zasskovszky's *Egri ének-káté*; István Bartalus's *Éneklő ABC*; Béla Sztankó's *Daloskönyv*); and this tendency, in view of the preceding decades, can be considered natural. We have analysed Károly Oláh's *Gyakorló-könyv* (1885), which we found to be the second Hungarian publication, after Bartalus's *Éneklő ABC*, to combine the so-called 'ladder method' of musical literacy with a gradual increase in the number of lines. By means of the textbook, this method spread to Protestant colleges (Szarvas, Nagyenyed, Nagykőrös) in the 1880s.

At the same time, as teacher training started encompassing four years, the musical literature of teacher training colleges continued to expand, with an increasing number of publications (Berecz, 1883; Harrach, n.d.; 1908; Erdődi, 1910; Győry and Sztojanovits, 1904; 1907; 1910), which were also approved for use by teacher training colleges, and in which arrangements of folk songs – along with masterpieces – gained increasingly more space. The use of these publications in denominational teachers' training colleges became widespread in the 1900s, according to the bulletins.

The nature of the musical material of teacher training colleges was naturally determined by liturgical music – the literature of which was expanding in all three major denominations –, but also by different forms of secular music. In some of the Catholic institutions (Eger, Pécs, Győr), sources show the appearance of Ferenc and Endre Zsaskovszky's *Egri dalnok* as early as the 1870s. In Esztergom, too, the appearance of secular art songs can be traced back to the same period, whereas in Szeged, a male choir was already in operation by the middle of the decade. In Protestant institutions,

collections for male choirs were more widespread (Bartalus and Gyertyánffy, 1887; Varga, 1888; Révfy, 1911), which allowed Hungarian art songs to have a much greater influence than in Catholic institutions. In the case of Debrecen, the role of the choir remained important at the end of the period under study, while other musical lessons were limited to liturgical music.

In the 1890s, the literature on music education in teacher training continued to expand. Antal Menich translated and revised a piano course and József Bloch a violin course, making them available (Beyer and Menich, n.d.; Hohmann and Bloch, n.d.). These course books became the most widely used instrumental books in teacher training. In this dissertation, both works have been presented in detail from a musical and methodological point of view – Bloch’s publication has not yet been the subject of a similar type and scope of analysis. These works were the most widespread instrumental courses among the teachers we studied in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Among Béla Sztankó’s works, his volume for folk schools (*Daloskönyv*) and his volumes for teacher trainer colleges represented a more modern approach to music education than that of his predecessors, both in terms of content and methodology. The application of relative solmisation was not only found in Sztankó’s work, but also in that of Hodossy and Sarudy (1903; 1904; 1911); moreover, the three-volume exercise book by Sándor, Horváth, and Bátori (1890; 1898) already used relative solmisation. We have uncovered – shedding new light to the spread of relative solmization in Hungary – that Béla Hodossy’s earlier studies conducted in Csurgó had stimulated the conscious application of the method.

Except for the Teacher Training College of the Archdiocese of Eger and the Reformed Teacher Training College of Debrecen, denominational colleges used one of the above listed works – which used relative solmization – in 1915 at the latest. Their method was also reflected in the approach of the newly published methodological aids (Köveskúti, 1906, 1907; Sztankó, 1909).

The evaluation of the musical material in Mátyás Zoltai’s *Hungarian Folk Songs for Violin* – which was the first instrumental teaching publication for teachers’ training in Hungary to include real (i.e., not folksy or composed) Hungarian children’s songs – is also a novelty in our work. His *Piano Course* (1909) already contained an excerpt from

a joint publication by Kodály and Bartók (*Hungarian Folk Songs*, 1906), along with several folk songs. The use of the works mentioned in the Csíksomlyó college (from 1903 and 1913) is the first evidence of the indirect adaptation of the verbunk in this teacher training college, at the very time when Hungarian folk song was beginning to take its rightful place in Hungarian music history.

We have also revealed evidence that the Csíksomlyó Catholic Teacher Training College was the only Hungarian-language, denominational cantor and teacher training school in Hungary in the period under study, which was able to preserve the religious character of its training until 1913. Here, folksy music was present in instrumental teaching, but in the context of real folk music.

The most important result of our dissertation was the examination of a segment of Hungarian-language secondary teacher education – from the foundation of the first Hungarian-language teacher training college to the disintegration of historical Hungary –; in fact, an important, even indispensable segment from the very beginning. The problems that hindered the success of cantor teacher training (the lack of publications during the Reform Era and the period of Absolutism, the lack of musical ability of prospective teachers, the problem of instrumental supply) were alleviated and solved during the Dualism (except for the generalisation of the ability test). The Hungarian music of the nineteenth century, the influence of verbunk (in Debrecen) and student songs (in Sárospatak) appeared in the repertoire of the choirs of Reformed colleges and continued to exist in the decades preceding Dualism, while the first ‘Hungarian’ pieces appeared in the Catholic and Protestant schools only in the 1870s, mainly owing to the publications of the Zsasskovszkys. Music textbooks and sheet music for state colleges were also used by the denominations; in fact, as time went on, increasingly more widely. Thus, it was during the era of Dualism that denominational teacher training began to become truly secular in its music, an influence from which only one Transylvanian Catholic teacher training college, the one in Csíksomlyó, was exempt until the 1910s.

6 Further research opportunities

The research topic of our dissertation and its results call attention to further research opportunities in several directions.

In connection with the Dualism period, music education in state-run teacher training colleges – similarly to our topic – has not been dealt with thoroughly in scholarly literature, and the methods of our research are partly suitable for further research in that direction too.

The question is: what qualifications were required for vocal and music teaching in the teacher training institutions during the period that we have been discussing? This would also help us to understand, for instance, whether music teachers with certain qualifications had a different attitude to the use of certain publications.

Furthermore, it seems reasonable to further extend the period of our dissertation, since the influence of Hungarian folk music (or the new Hungarian music), which was just emerging in teacher training colleges, might have manifested itself differently from institution to institution, while at the same time the reforms in music education began to take shape in practice from the 1940s, in which Zoltán Kodály and his students played a remarkable role.

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