



## “Many laughed at the thought of this illustrious young man reading books:” About Miklós Báthory’s Library and His Cicero-Codex

Dávid Molnár

*Eötvös Loránd University*

*mollnardavid@gmail.com*

This paper pursues an anecdote of Galeotto Marzio about the erudite Miklós Báthory, bishop of Vác, who read Cicero’s *Tusculan disputation* while he was waiting with other noblemen for the royal diet in Rákosmező, and the mocking attitude of the Hungarian political elite toward any intellectual endeavor. The traces lead to the National Széchényi Library in Budapest which has in its holdings a manuscript of Cicero under *Cod. lat. 150*. This book might have been in the hands of Báthory at Rákosmező. The purpose of this paper is to confirm the scarcely known plans of Miklós Báthory, bishop of Vác, to found a Platonic school on the basis of what little remains of his library and, mainly, the notes of his Cicero codex. This information perfectly harmonizes with his well-known aspirations to found a Platonic school in Buda and later his gymnasium in Vác, which seems to have been permeated with a kind of Platonist spirituality. After a summary of the life of Miklós Báthory, the paper offers an outline of the remains of his once rich library and then finally an examination of the history of the Cicero codex and its marginalia.

Keywords: Galeotto Marzio, Miklós Báthory’s library, Cicero codex, Platonic school

Only a few historical monuments have become a tangible reality, an anecdote transformed into object. The National Széchényi Library’s Cicero-codex under *Cod. lat. 150* is an embodiment of one such moment. Galeotto Marzio’s famous anecdote about Miklós Báthory and the prefiguration of Hungarian fallow land (“magyar ugar”) is frequently quoted from his book *On the excellent, wise, facetious sayings and deeds of King Matthias*:<sup>1</sup>

1 According to Marzio, Báthory was the one who encouraged him to write this book about King Matthias. Martius Narniensis, *De egregie* (cap. 31), 34: “Et, ut ad rem nostram revertamur, Budae cum cogeretur principum concilium et nondum ad regem aditus pateret, inter eos erat Nicholaus Bathur, genere nobilis, dignitate episcopus Vacienis. Est enim Vacia vigesimo a Buda miliario; sed Budam a Vacia secundo flumine devenitur. Hic igitur Nicholaus episcopus virtute et animi generositate dignitateque corporis cumulatus maxime erat: studiis namque humanitatis in Italia eruditus, cura et diligentia doctrinam adaugens, nihil laboris, nihil vigiliarum, nihil impedii subterfugiens quod ad doctrinam conveniret, brevi effecit ut doctissimis acutissimisque philosophis eius doctrina et et litteratura summa cum admiratione probaretur.

The Council of the Lords had gathered in Buda one time, but they could not yet go to the king. Among them was the Bishop of Vác, the nobleman Nicholas Báthory. Vác is twenty miles from Buda, but Buda can be reached from Vác on the river. This Bishop Nicholas was gifted with a most virtuous, generous, and honorable soul and body. He had been educated in Humanistic studies in Italy. Always increasing his knowledge with care and diligence, he did not avoid any labor, any vigilance, or impediment to acquire knowledge. Soon, his literary knowledge was esteemed with great admiration even by the most learned and clever philosophers. While the lords' congregation was gathering, he did not want to waste his time with otiosity or babblings, so there was a book with him—if I remember well—Cicero's work entitled *Tusculan disputations*. Many laughed at the thought of this illustrious young man reading books, which was unusual there, because for the Hungarians, it was a novelty to see a bishop reading in a place where they had been accustomed to discourse and conversation.

The purpose of this paper is to confirm the little-known plans of Miklós Báthory, bishop of Vác, to found a Platonic school on the basis of what little remains of his library and, mainly, the notes of his Cicero-codex (*Cod. lat. 150*). First, I summarize the life of Miklós Báthory. I then offer an outline of the remains of his once rich library. I then examine his Cicero-codex, which is now in the holdings of the National Széchényi Library.

### *The Life of Humanist Miklós Báthory*

Miklós Báthory was born into the high-ranking, noble and powerful Báthory family from the branch of Ecsed on April 10, 1445.<sup>2</sup> His father, István Báthory, became judge royal in 1435 and was killed in the Battle of Varna in 1444. Miklós's illiterate brother, the military commander István Báthory, later was also judge royal from 1471 until his death and voivode of Transylvania from 1479 to 1493.<sup>3</sup> According to Bonfini, the family might have been given its name after the ancient Pannonian king (or rather chieftain), Bato of the Breuci.<sup>4</sup> Although no document has been found to prove it, Nicholas is said to have studied under Galeotto

---

Qui, dum congregatio principum cogeretur, ne otio et garrulitati locum praeberet, habuit secum librum, si recte memini, Ciceronis cui Tusculanarum quaestionum est titulus. Irridentibus multis huius egregii iuvenis librorum lectionem, ibi inusitatam (novum quippe videbatur Hungaris episcopum lectitare, in eo praesertim loco ubi sermo et confabulatio esse consueverat)."

2 C. Tóth, "Ki kicsoda," 19.

3 Kubinyi, "Báthory Miklós," 13–15, 22.

4 Bonfinis, *Rerum* (dec. 1, lib. 1), 9, 30.

Marzio between 1464 and 1469 in Bologna and, later, under Marsilio Ficino, the father of the resurgent Platonism, in Florence.<sup>5</sup> Báthory was already receiving church benefices in 1465, and he was elected Bishop of Szerém/Srijemska/Sremska before the autumn of 1468. Miklós was the royal chancellor February 1471 and August 1471. He was elected Bishop of Vác in 1474, an office which he held until his death.<sup>6</sup> According to his contemporaries, he greatly appreciated philosophy, Humanist literary works and fine arts, and being highly educated in Latin and Greek.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Renaissance architectural monuments are attached to his name in the bishop's palace of Vác and Nógrád castle.<sup>8</sup> Sources also suggest that he often held musical symposiums in his palace.<sup>9</sup> Finally, he was honored as a patron of Humanism and a founder of schools. Surviving letters show that he attempted to found a sort of "Platonic school" and tried several times to tempt Marsilio Ficino (or one of his pupils) to teach in Buda in the 1480s, but his efforts failed.<sup>10</sup> Following the death of King Matthias, he sided with Vladislaus II against Matthias's son John Corvinus. In Vác, Báthory succeeded in establishing a school, a *gymnasium publicum*, which operated between 1497 and 1503. We know the name of its two Italian teachers: one of them was Francesco Pescennio Negro and the other was a certain Barnardino Utinense, who taught *in omni artium facultate* ("in every Arts faculty").<sup>11</sup> The last information on Báthory is from February 23, 1506. He probably died that year.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Remains of Báthory's Library*

Fortunately, although his Humanist writings and his library have been lost, some of Báthory's books can be positively identified. This is a very poor reconstruction of his once rich library, the librarian of which, according to a recent hypothesis, might have been Francesco Bandini, the Florentine ambassador to Buda.<sup>13</sup> In total, four or maybe five of his books can be identified:

5 Martius Narniensis, *De egregie* (cap. 31), 34.

6 Kubinyi, "Báthory Miklós," 18–19; C. Tóth, "Ki kicsoda," 19–21.

7 Ransanus, *Epithoma*, 81; Ritoókné Szalay, "Báthory Miklós," 160.

8 Mikó, "Báthory Miklós."

9 Ritoókné Szalay, "Báthory Miklós," 162–64; Pajorin, "Mátyás király," 604–5.

10 Ficinus, *Opera*, 782, 857, 884; Della Torre, *Storia dell'accademia*, 100–2; Huszti, *Platonista törekvések*; Klaniczay, "Platonista akadémia"; Klaniczay, "La corte di Mattia Corvino," 166–69.

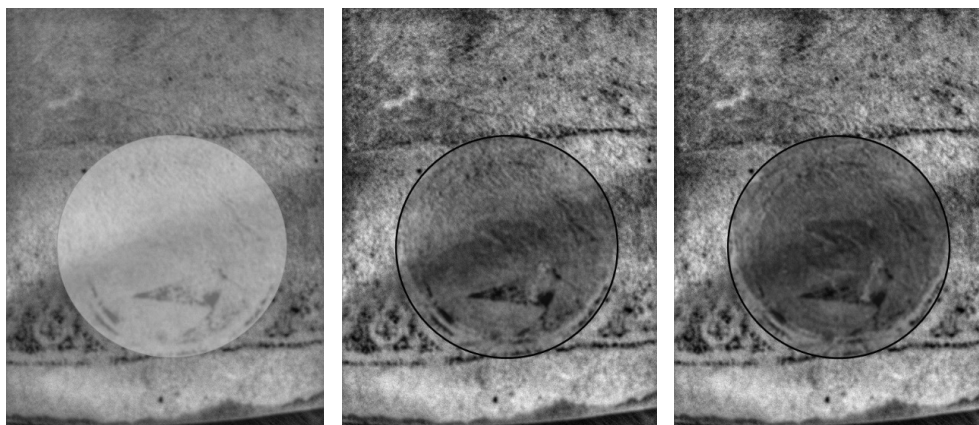
11 Mercati, "Francesco Pescennio Negro," 71–72; Kiss, "Franciscus Pescennius Niger," 272–73.

12 C. Tóth, "Ki kicsoda," 19.

13 Rozsondai, "Báthory Miklós," 131.

1. A codex of Cicero's *Tusculanae disputationes*. (See below in more detail).

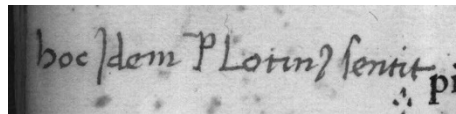
2. The Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna has in its holdings a manuscript (Cod. 872) which was produced in the third quarter of the fifteenth century and can be related to Miklós Báthory. It contains Hilary of Poitiers's (Hilarius Pictaviensis) work against the Arians with the title *De synodis contra omnes haereses* (On the synod against all heresies), but the title page of the manuscript has been torn out. In the 1920s, Edit Hoffmann had already noticed an almost imperceptible figure on the verso of the clean flyleaf. It is the inverted trace of the original coat-of-arms which was once painted on the title page. The outline of this is very vague, but one can discern the shape of an elongated triangle. Hoffmann was sure that this triangle is one of the three wolf's or dragon's teeth from Báthory's coat-of-arms. However, some decades later, Soltész did mention only György Szatmári, Bishop of Pécs, in relation to the manuscript, but not Miklós Báthory. And finally some years ago, Marianne Rozsondai, referring to Soltész's article, refuted the possibility that the Bishop of Vác had possessed the codex. In 1932, without any significant evidence in support of his contention, Julius Herrmann suggested that the first possessor of the manuscript was the poet Janus Pannonius, Bishop of Pécs. However, originally the manuscript of Hilarius was most likely in Báthory's library before it was put in the possession of Szatmári some time after the death of Báthory in 1506. According to the note on the inner side of the cover, Szatmári gave the codex to Johannes Gremper, a friend and secretary of Johannes Cuspinianus, in Kassa/Košice in 1518 ("Is liber datus est mihi a Georgio Quinqueecclesiensi episcopo in urbe sua Castoine



The reversed trace of the faded coat-of-arms refined in the Hilarius Pictaviensis-codex with HDR effect and layered by Báthory's coat-of-arms from his Cicero-codex

[sic! probably Cassovia?] anno 1518”). The next possessor was Cuspinianus after 1519, then Johannes Faber, Bishop of Vienna, after 1529 (both acquired several Corvinas from Buda).<sup>14</sup>

3. Báthory's next known book is an incunabulum which is kept now in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Ráth F 1493): Iamblichus's *De mysteriis Aegyptiorum cum aliis aliorum Neoplatonicorum tractatibus* (On the mysteries of Egyptians), which was published by Aldus Manutius in Venice in 1497. The book consists of another 13, mostly Platonist works translated or written by Marsilio Ficino and numerous notes in the margins: Ficino's *De voluptate*, an excerpt of Proclus's *Commentaria in Alcibiadem Platonis primum: De anima et daemone* and *De sacrificio et magia*, Alcinous's *De doctrina Platonis*, Speusippus's *De Platonis definitionibus*, Porphyry's *De occasionibus* and *De abstinentia*, Synesius's *De somniis*, Michael Psellos's *De daemonibus*, Priscian of Lydia's *Theophrastum de intellectu et phantasia*, Xenocrates's *De morte*, and Pythagoras's *Aurea verba* and *Symbola*. Rozsondai was the first to call attention to the fact that the notes in this book are identical with several notes found in the aforementioned Cicero-codex. One of the notes ([a5v]) is especially interesting because it may indicate another possible book from Báthory's library: “hoc idem Plotinus sentit” (“Plotinus thinks the same”). Under this note, there is the same image of a manicule as in the Cicero manuscript. Supposedly, they are from Báthory's hand. Furthermore, the note clearly refers to the beginning of Plotinus's *Enneads* (from 1.1.1 until 1.1.6).<sup>15</sup>



Referring to Plotinus in the Iamblichus volume

4. However, we know with all certainty of a fourth book from his library: Marsilio Ficino's *Commentaria in Platonem*, which was published in Florence in 1496. Now his copy is kept in Keble College, Oxford (Hatchett Jackson 85). This edition consists of Ficino's commentaries on Plato's works, but it omits his translation of the dialogues. There are no notes in this Oxford copy, but there are two telltale clues in the book. The first is the blind-stamped leather binding, which

14 Hoffmann, *Régi magyar*, 109–10; Soltész, “Garázda Péter,” 122–23; Hermann, *Die Handschriften*, 24–25.

15 Rozsondai, “Báthory Miklós,” 136–37. Detailed analysis: Molnár, “Báthory Miklós.”

is from the same workshop of Buda as his aforementioned copy of Iamblichus. The second is a letter by Battista Guarino to the “Bishop of Vác Báthory” dated February 20, 1499 (which might mean February 1500), which is stuck in the inner side of the front cover. Thus, it was obviously in the possession of Miklós Báthory at some point.<sup>16</sup>

### *Possible Books of His Library*

Based on the aforementioned note referring to Plotinus, Báthory might have read the *Enneads*, which he may have read in the 1492 Florentine first edition translated by Ficino. He may have had or at least have read one of the earlier manuscripts of it. According to Ficino’s letter to King Matthias dated February 1489 (or according to the Florentine calendar, February 1490), the Platonist master sent his translation of Plotinus, including his half-finished commentaries, to Buda, supposedly to the Corvinian Library. It is more than probable that Báthory knew, copied, or acquired this manuscript after the death of the king. Whatever the case, this copy of Plotinus has been lost now.

What other books might Báthory have had? There is a manuscript of Leon Battista Alberti’s *De re aedificatoria* (On the art of building) in the Biblioteca Estense in Modena (Cod. Lat. 419) which was once part of the Corvinian collection in Buda. Although King Matthias’s coat-of-arms is painted on the first page, Báthory’s coat-of-arms also appears on f. 209v. However, the bishop’s mitre is again missing, so it had to be in Báthory’s possession before 1468, and eventually he gave it as a present to the king. This conclusion drawn in the secondary literature according to which this codex was prepared between 1485 and 1490.<sup>17</sup> This manuscript may have been in the possession of another, later Báthory.

It can be safely assumed that the works dedicated to Miklós Báthory were in his possession. The most important of these is Ficino’s short treatise, the title of which was originally *Secunda clavis Platonicae sapientiae* (Second Key of Platonic Wisdom). In the form of a letter, this work must have arrived in Hungary in the summer of 1479. Later, it was placed in Ficino’s book of letters, which was published in Venice in 1495. It is almost certain that Báthory bought this 1495 edition, because Ficino’s two other letters to Báthory are also included in

16 Rhodes, “Battista Guarini;” Rozsondai, “A Hungarian Renaissance.”

17 Zsupán, “Stílushűség és imitáció;” Pietro Lombardi, “Mátyás emblémái,” 168–69, 173.

the volume. In addition, this short work seems like a schoolbook which briefly summarizes the basic concepts of Platonic ontology.<sup>18</sup> Because Báthory had Ficino's commentaries on Plato, he also must have had the 1484 or 1491 edition of Plato's *Opera omnia*, translated by Ficino. Instead of going himself, Ficino wanted to send his cousin Sebastiano Salvini (the Florentine master called him his *alterego*) to teach Platonic philosophy in Buda. Salvini also dedicated his two works to the Bishop of Vác: *De sacramento* and *Rabbi Samuel Iudaeus contra Iudaeorum proterviam inanemque in dies spem*.<sup>19</sup> The poet Angelus Callimachus Siculus wrote a panegyric elegy to Báthory, who rewarded him with gold.<sup>20</sup> After all, he must have had biblical and liturgical works as well.

The following is a summary of the known and supposed works from Báthory's library:

	Work	Edition	Library
1	Cicero, <i>Tusculanae disputationes</i>	manuscript, Florence, ca. 1450–1468	Budapest, National Széchényi Library, Cod. Lat. 150
2	Hilarius Pictaviensis, <i>De synodis contra omnes haereses</i>	manuscript, Florence, ca. 1450–1475	Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 872
3	Marsilio Ficino, <i>Commentaria in Platonem</i>	Florence: Lorenzo di Alopa, 1496	Oxford, Keble College, Hatchett Jackson 85
4	Iamblichus, <i>De mysteriis Aegyptiorum: cum aliis aliorum Neoplatonicorum tractatibus</i> , tr. by Ficinus. a Ficino, <i>De voluptate</i> b Proclus, <i>Commentaria in Alcibiadem Platonis primum: De anima et daemone</i> (excerpt) c Proclus, <i>De sacrificio et magia</i> d Alcinoüs, <i>De doctrina Platonis</i> e Speusippus, <i>De Platonis definitionibus</i> f Porphyry, <i>De occasionibus</i> g Porphyry, <i>De abstinentia</i> h Synesius, <i>De somniis</i> i Michael Psellos, <i>De daemonibus</i> j Priscian of Lydia, <i>Theophrastum de intellectu et phantasia</i> k Xenocrates, <i>De morte</i> l Pythagoras, <i>Aurea verba</i> m Pythagoras, <i>Symbola</i>	Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1497	Budapest, Library of Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Ráth F 1493
(5)?	? Leon Battista Alberti, <i>De re aedificatoria</i>	manuscript, Florence (Buda?), 1485–1490	Modena, Biblioteca Estense, Cod. Lat. 419

18 Molnár, “Báthory Miklós,” 41–43.

19 *Analecta nova*, 442; Rozsondai, “Báthory Miklós,” 132.

20 Huszti, *Platonista törekvések*, 88; Ransanus, *Epithoma*, 81.

(6)	Sebastiano Salvini, <i>Rabbi Samuel Iudaeus Contra Iudaeorum proterviam inanemque in dies spem</i>	manuscript, after October 1477	?
(7)	Sebastiano Salvini, <i>De sacramento</i>	manuscript, October 1477	?
(8)	Angelus Callimachus Siculus's poem (inc. <i>Ordinar unde prius, claudent ubi carmina finem?</i> )	manuscript, ca. 1483	?
(9)	Plato, <i>opera omnia</i> , tr. by Ficinus	Florence: Lorenzo de Alopa or Laurentius Venetus, 1484–1485	?
(10)	Plotinus, <i>Opera</i> , tr. by Ficinus	Florence: Antonio di Bartolommeo Miscomini, 1492	?
(11)	<i>Epistole Marsilii Ficini Florentini</i>	Venice: Matteo Capcasa, 1495	?

### *The National Széchényi Library's Tusculan Disputations (Cod. Lat. 150)*

The most interesting volume is the aforementioned manuscript of Cicero, which is the most richly illuminated as well. Galeotto Marzio writes that “if he remembers well,” the codex was in Báthory’s hands while he was waiting with other noblemen for the royal diet in Rákosmező. By that time, he was already serving as Bishop of Vác, so this event must have taken place after April 1474. This famous reading could have been in April 1475, because the king had called together the diet on April 24.

According to Csaba Csapodi,<sup>21</sup> the codex was written in Florence in the second half of the fifteenth century, so it had to have been copied between 1450 and April of 1475. However, the period of Báthory’s acquisition can be further narrowed down to between 1464 and autumn of 1468 due to the time of his studies in Bologna and Florence and his appointment as bishop, when he might have easily acquired the manuscript in Italy. This assumption is strengthened by the first edition of the “Tusculan Disputations,” which was printed in Rome in April 1469 (GW 6888). Báthory might have encountered this work of Cicero in Italy, and as the known volumes of Báthory’s collection prove, he did not look down on printed books. He might have wanted to acquire the “Tusculan Disputations,” but he could not have known that it would be printed in 1469, so he might have bought the supposedly more expensive manuscript known today as *Cod. lat. 150* during his studies in Italy, before the autumn of 1468. This accuracy of this dating is also strengthened by the depiction of Báthory’s coat-

21 Csapodi, Csapodiné Gárdonyi, *Bibliotheca Hungarica*, 243.



of-arms in the manuscript: it does not contain his bishop's mitre. Sources give no indication of what might have happened to the book after Báthory's death. The next trace is an inscription at the beginning of the codex: *Patrum Trinitariorum Conventus B.[eatae] V.[irginis] M.[ariae] Cellensis Anno 1776*, or "the Blessed Virgin Mary's convent of the Trinitarian fathers in Kiscell in 1776." The convent was part of the Vienna Province. Perhaps the manuscript was kept in a Jesuit library, and after the suppression of the Jesuit Order in 1773, perhaps it was placed in the Trinitarian convent. In a rescript of March 17, 1783, Joseph II dissolved the convent of Kiscell and its library to establish a military barrack. By March 1784 at the latest, the codex was no longer in the order's house. Although a catalogue listing 800 books has survived, which was written by a committee of library liquidation, there is no trace of the Cicero manuscript on the list.<sup>22</sup> An interesting part of the story is that a certain "pater Sebastian" (also known as Mátyás Paule), an inhabitant of the convent who also served as household chaplain to the widow of the aristocrat Miklós Zichy, smuggled the most valuable manuscripts out of the convent's library. It is thus likely that the manuscript of Cicero was placed in the widow's home library. This can be confirmed by the fact that, according to her home bookkeeping, she had her manuscripts rebound between the end of 1783 and August 1784 (record of extraordinary expense between January 11 and August 1784: 22 forints, 72 kreutzers).<sup>23</sup> In January 1796, a lot of books were placed in the University Library of ELTE as part of the Zichy bequest, but this manuscript is not on the booklist.<sup>24</sup> The next trace is the possessor's seal of the historian and the head of the Museum Library, István Horvát. It seems that he somehow acquired this precious manuscript in spite of the fact that it was part of the Zichy family's bequest. After his death, the codex was placed in the National Library (today the National Széchényi Library) on April 29, 1852.<sup>25</sup>

The folios were mixed up from the verso of 30 supposedly during the process of rebinding or restoration (most likely before it was added to the National Library), when the folios were provided with printed folio numbers in

22 The catalogue is dated March 5, 1784 and kept today in the University Library of ELTE (Department of Manuscripts, J 100/3): *Catalogus librorum Bibliothecae PP. Trinitariorum aboliti Conventus Vetero Budensis*. The chairmans of the committee responsible for the census of the books were Imre Laczkovics, vicecomes of Pest County and Imre Majthényi, the prefect of the estate of the Chamber of Óbuda.

23 Pálvölgyi, "Főúri és klerikális összefogás," 353–55.

24 University Library of ELTE, Department of Manuscripts, J 47/1: *Catalogus librorum, quos excellentissima ac illustrissima Domina Comitissae Nicolai Zichy de Vasonkő vidua, nata Comitissa Berényi de Karáncs Berény Budae defuncta die 2 Januarii 1796. Regiae Scientiarum Universitati Hungaricae testamento legavit.*

25 Berlász, "Horvát István könyvtárának," 254–61.

the upper righthand corner. The correct order of the folio numbers is as follows: 30v (*Tusc. disp.* 1.94.12) + 41r–90v (*Tusc. disp.* 1.94.12–3.60) + 31r–40v (*Tusc. disp.* 3.60.5–4.8.6) + 91r–150v (*Tusc. disp.* 4.8.6–5.121.4). Here, the manuscript is interrupted and missing the last two sentences (until the *Tusc. disp.* 5.121.10) on the missing page.

1450–1468	The <i>Cod. lat. 150</i> was written in Florence
1464–1468	Báthory might have bought the codex
April 1475	Báthory was reading in Rákosmező
1776	Trinitarian convent in Kiscell (Óbuda)
1782–1784	The codex was no longer in the friary
April 29, 1852	National Library
July 1954	Restoration

### *Notes in the Cod. Lat. 150*

As far as I have been able to determine, the notes in the Cicero-codex come from four hands. One of them could be Báthory's. Unfortunately, we do not have any official charter or letter with Báthory's *manu propria*. But comparing the notes of the Iamblichus edition owned by Báthory to the Cicero codex, it can be safely stated that the marginal annotations from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were written by the same hand. The notes are all the more interesting because of their character: they resemble a compilation of the Stoic thoughts about fortune's spin and apathy, or school notes taken for a later composition.

Four kinds of notes can be discerned in the Cicero codex which were written in black and red ink:

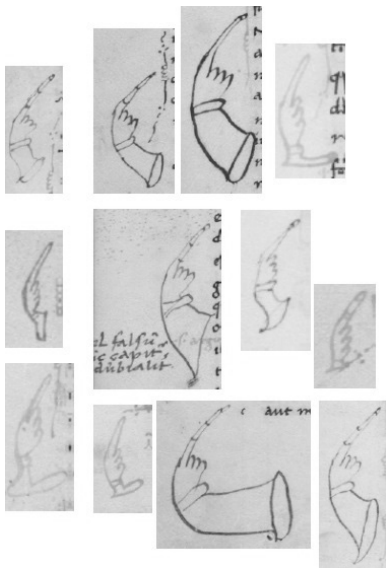
1) One type of *nota bene* entries: 14 black (ff. 28r, 31r, 33r, 52v, 53r, 81r, 82v, 83v, 99v, 100v, 119v, 125v, 127v, 128r), 6 red (ff. 31r, 35r, 94v, 134v, 139r, 146r).

2) Minimum three types of index fingers: 12 black (ff. 12r, 40r, 41r, 51v, 53v, 59v, 65v, 67r, 80v, 105v, 130v), 29 red (ff. 30r, 33v, 34v, 35r, 38r, 42v, 45v, 46r, 61v, 67r, 67v, 69v, 72v, 74v, 81r, 82v, 94v, 110r, 114r, 126v, 127r, 131v, 134v, 143v, 144v, 145r, 146r, 147v).

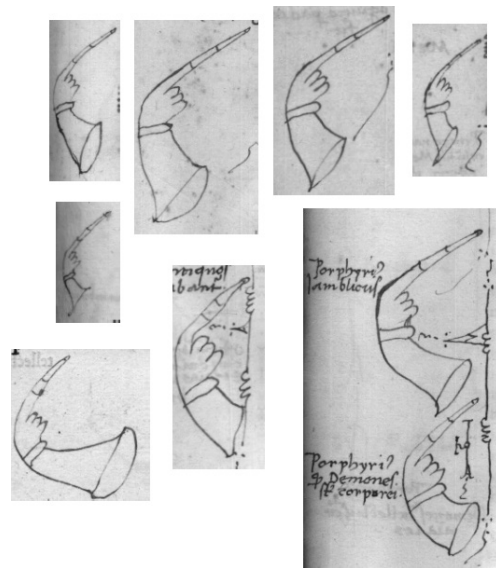
3) Minimum two types of simple *nota bene* entries: 11 black (30r, 30v, 50r, 51v, 53v, 54v, 59r, 68r, 81r, 91r, 121r), ca. 112 red.

4) Texts: a) the note only repeats the sentence or name(s) in the margin; b) the note details, improves, or adds something to the text.

Báthory's Iamblichus edition contains the same 50 *nota bene* entries, 72 drawn index fingers, and many of the third type of "simple *nota bene*." This means that the two volumes were in the same person's possession at some time. Báthory's coat-of-arms proves that the Cicero-codex was in his possession, and the fact that the Iamblichus edition contains the same notes suggests that this book was also in his library. This assumption is strengthened by the places and types of the notes which may refer to his Platonic school foundation plans. I return to this in the last part of the paper.



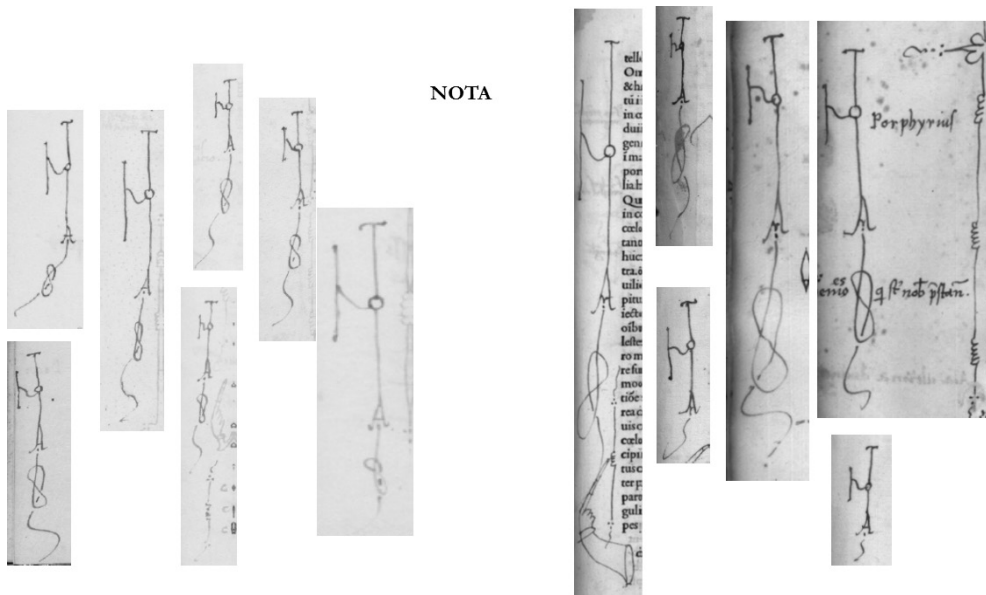
Index fingers in *Cod. Lat. 150*



Index fingers in *Ráth F 1493*

Each *nota bene* entry points to the topic of the Stoic's *apatheia* and capricious fortune in Cicero's text, according to which we must prepare ourselves for misfortunes in order to suffer them calmly.

28r (*Tusc. disp.* 1.86.15–1.87.2): The example of *fortuna Metelli*. Although everyone hopes to have Metellus's good fortune, in fact death liberates us all from pain and adversity.



Nota bene entries in *Cod. Lat. 150* and *Ráth F 1493*

52v–53r (*Tusc. disp.* 2.10.3–2.11.8): About the fear of dying and the metaphor of cultivated fields. Although there are too many false philosophers who lead disgraceful lives, true philosophy is a remedy which, by curing the soul, can drive away fears.

81r (*Tusc. disp.* 3.30.10–3.30.20): The *nota* draws attention to the interpretation of an example of Anaxagoras and a citation by a pseudo-Euripides: “Therefore, it does not admit of doubt that everything which is thought evil is more grievous if it comes unexpectedly. And so, though this is not the one cause of the greatest distress, yet as foresight and anticipation have considerable effect in lessening pain, a human being should ponder all the vicissitudes that fall to man’s lot. And do not doubt that here is found the ideal of that wisdom which excels and is divine, namely in the thorough study and comprehension of human vicissitudes, in being astonished at nothing when it happens, and in thinking, before the event is come, that there is nothing which may not come to pass.”<sup>26</sup>

26 Cicero, *Tusculan*, 263. “Ergo id quidem non dubium, quin omnia, quae mala putentur, sint improvisa graviora. Itaque quamquam non haec una res efficit maximam aegritudinem, tamen, quoniam multum potest provisio animi et praeparatio ad minuendum dolorem, sint semper omnia homini humana meditata. Et nimirum haec est illa praestans et divina sapientia et perceptas penitus et pertractatas res humanas habere, nihil admirari cum acciderit, nihil, ante quam evenerit, non evenire posse arbitrari.”

82v (*Tusc. disp.* 3.34.7–3.34.19): Same as above: everyone should be prepared for everything. “For the man who reflects upon nature, upon the diversity of life and the weakness of humanity, is not saddened by reflecting upon these things, but in doing so he fulfils most completely the function of wisdom. For he gains doubly, in that by considering the vicissitudes of human life he has the enjoyment of the peculiar duty of philosophy, and in adversity he finds a threefold relief to aid his restoration; first because he has long since reflected on the possibility of mishap, and this is far the best method of lessening and weakening all vexation; secondly because he understands that the lot of man must be endured in the spirit of man; lastly because he sees that there is no evil but guilt, but that there is no guilt when the issue is one against which a man can give no guarantee.”<sup>27</sup>

83v (*Tusc. disp.* 3.36.11–3.37.11): Reflections and critique of Epicurus's notion of “The Good” from the viewpoint of Pythagoras, Plato, and Socrates. Virtue is self-sufficient for happiness and living a good life.

31r (*Tusc. disp.* 3.60.6–3.62.4): Cicero refers to Chrysippus on the enduring of human destiny and the reduction of grief.

33r (*Tusc. disp.* 3.68.3–3.69.1): Cicero quotes Euripides and compares grief to wisdom. Although there is no evil worse than the lack of wisdom, “there is no adapting the belief that it is right and regular and a matter of duty to feel distressed at not being wise.”<sup>28</sup>

35r (*Tusc. disp.* 3.73.20–3.74.4): It is proper to Folly that it observes the faults of others and forgets its own. “Since it is agreed that distress is removed by long continuance, the chief proof is the fact that it is not the mere lapse of time that produces this effect, but continued reflection.”<sup>29</sup>

99v (*Tusc. disp.* 4.37.6–4.38.5): “Therefore the man, whoever he is, whose soul is tranquillized by restraint and consistency and who is at peace with

27 Cicero, *Tusculan*, 267–69. *Neque enim qui rerum naturam, qui vitae varietatem, qui imbecillitatem generis humani cogitat, maeret, cum haec cogitat, sed tum vel maxime sapientiae fungitur munere. Utrumque enim consequitur, ut et considerandis rebus humanis proprio philosophiae fruatur officio et adversis casibus triplici consolatione sanetur: primum quod posse accidere diu cogitavit, quae cogitatio una maxime molestias omnes extenuat et diluit; deinde quod humana humane ferenda intellegit; postremo quod videt malum nullum esse nisi culpam, culpam autem nullam esse, cum id, quod ab homine non potuerit praestari, evenerit.*

28 Cicero, *Tusculan*, 307. *Quid ita? quia huic generi malorum non adfingitur illa opinio, rectum esse et aequum et ad officium pertinere aegre ferre, quod sapiens non sis...*

29 Cicero, *Tusculan*, 313. *Sed nimirum hoc maximum est experimentum, cum constet aegritudinem vetustate tolli, hanc vim non esse in die positam, sed in cogitatione diuturna.*

himself, so that he neither pines away in distress, nor is broken down by fear, nor consumed with a thirst of longing in pursuit of some ambition, nor maudlin in the exuberance of meaningless eagerness - he is the wise man of whom we are in quest, he is the happy man who can think no human occurrence insupportable to the point of dispiriting him, or unduly delightful to the point of rousing him to ecstasy. For what can seem of moment in human occurrences to a man who keeps all eternity before his eyes and knows the vastness of the universe? Nay, what either in human ambitions or in the short span of our brief life can seem of moment to the wise man whose soul is ever on the watch to prevent the occurrence of anything unforeseen, anything unexpected, anything whatever that is strange? Further he also directs so searching a glance in all directions with the constant aim of finding an assured retreat for a life free from vexation and worry, that, whatever reverse fortune may inflict, he shoulders his burden tranquilly: and he who shall do this will not only be free from distress but from all other disorders as well.”<sup>30</sup>

119v (*Tusc. disp.* 5.15.14–5.16.10): One who is afraid of death, pain, poverty, ignominy, infamy, debility, blindness, and slavery is unhappy. And one who is inflamed and maddened by rabid desires and unsatisfiable yearnings is also utterly miserable.

125v (*Tusc. disp.* 5.36.2–5.36.14): Cicero quotes a part of Plato’s *Menexenus* as a sacred and august fountain about the happy life which entirely depends on virtue.

127v (*Tusc. disp.* 5.42.11–5.43.9): About contempt for death through the example of the Spartans. The wise man is always happy because he is untinged with the two perturbations of the soul: grief and fear from imagined evils and inordinate joy and passionate desire.

128r (*Tusc. disp.* 5.45.1–5.45.7): That man who has everything (health, strength, beauty, wealth, honor etc.) he can, but is dishonest, intemperate,

---

30 Cicero, *Tusculan*, 367–69. *Ergo, hic, quisquis est qui moderatione et constantia quietus animo est sibi ipse placatus, ut nec tabescat molestiis nec frangatur timore nec sitienter quid expetens ardeat desiderio nec alacritate futili gestiens deliquescat, is est sapiens quem quaerimus, is est beatus, cui nihil humanarum rerum aut intolerabile ad demittendum animum aut nimis laetabile ad eferendum videri potest. Quid enim videatur ei magnum in rebus humanis, cui aeternitas omnis totiusque mundi nota sit magnitudo? Nam quid aut in studiis humanis aut in tam exigua brevitate vitae magnum sapienti videri potest, qui semper animo sic excubat, ut ei nihil inprovisum accidere possit, nihil inopinatum, nihil omnino novum? Atque idem ita acrem in omnis partis aciem intendit, ut semper videat sedem sibi ac locum sine molestia atque angore vivendi, ut, quemcumque casum fortuna invexerit, hunc apte et quiete ferat. Quod qui faciet, non aegritudine solum vacabit, sed etiam perturbationibus reliquis omnibus.*

cowardly, and dull can be called miserable, too. What good are these things if their owner can be the most miserable man?

139r (*Tusc. disp.* 5.81.3–5.82.1): The wise man does nothing against his own will, nothing of which he can repent.

146r (*Tusc. disp.* 5.105.7–5.105.14): As the final word of the owner of the notes: “What vexation therefore they escape who have no dealings with whatever with the people! For what is more delightful than leisure devoted to literature? That literature I mean which gives us the knowledge of the infinite greatness of nature and, in this actual world of ours, of the sky, the lands, the seas.”<sup>31</sup>

### *Text Entries in the Cod. Lat. 150*

Most of the text entries only put stress on the given text location which was important to the reader for some reasons. The following are some examples:

On f. 24r (*Tusc. disp.* 1.74.8), an interlinear note above the part of the text where Cicero mentions Cato and Socrates, who joyfully passed from the dark life into the light in their deaths: *corporis quod est carcer animi*. There is another interpretative note in the margin: *Tota philosophia est commentatio mortis* (philosophy is a preparation for death).

On f. 25v (*Tusc. disp.* 1.79.5), referring to the Stoic-Platonic Panaetius and the text according to which Plato is Homer of the philosophers (“Plato Homerus philosophorum” is written in the margin with red ink), the note shows the possessor’s interest in the flaming Averroist disputes over the immortality of the souls at the turn of fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The note “Opponitur contra immortalitatem animae” draws attention to Panaetius’s arguments against the immortality of the soul. It is important to note that the reader, supposedly the same reader (probably Báthory himself), also pointed out this philosophical problem in the margin in Alcinoüs’s work in the Iamblichus edition ([S8v]): “Demonstratio de immortalitate animi.”

On f. 46v (*Tusc. disp.* 1.110–111), a citation from Juvenile’s tenth satire (10.97: *sed quae praeclara et prospera tanti, ut rebus laetis par sit mensura malorum?*) on the example of Diagoras of Rhodes, for which the text offers the following explanation: “Indeed he will even be ready to die in the midst of prosperity; for

31 Cicero, *Tusculan*, 531. *Quantis igitur molestiis vacant qui nihil omnino cum populo contrahunt! Quid est enim dulcius otio litterato? iis dico litteris, quibus infinitatem rerum atque naturae et in hoc ipso mundo caelum, terras, maria cognoscimus.*

no accumulation of successes can afford so much delight as their diminution will cause annoyance.”

On f. 63v (*Tusc. disp.* 2.45.7), the “Et tu cautus Cicero noluisti terminare quousque honestum pro amico transgredi liceret” sentence can be found in the margin, which ironically comments on Cicero’s critical reflection on Epicurus’s thoughts about any intense pains which can be borne for the sake of honesty.

On f. 111r (*Tusc. disp.* 4.71), a citation from Ovid’s *Ars amatoria* (1.281–282: *Parcior in nobis nec tam furiosa libido: legitimum finem flamma virilis habet* [The desire in us is more moderate and not so furious: the virile flame has its legal limits]) on Cicero’s words about homosexuality: “Again, not to speak of the love of women, to which nature has granted wider tolerance, who has either any doubt of the meaning of the poets in the tale of the rape of Ganymede, or fails to understand the purport of Laius language and his desire in Euripides’ play?”<sup>32</sup>

On f. 146r (5.104), another quotation from Juvenile’s tenth satire (10.5–6), which is written in the margin by the part of the text about the condemnation of the tastes of the masses: *Quid tam dextro pede concipis ut te conatus non paeniteat votique peracti?*



Letter shapes

32 Cicero, *Tusculan*, 409. *Atque, ut muliebris amores omittam, quibus maiorem licentiam natura concessit, quis aut de Ganymedi raptu dubitat, quid poetae velint aut non intelligit, quid apud Euripidem et loquatur et cupiat Laius?*



*Word Definitions and Greek Notes in the Cod. Lat. 150*

On f. 4r (*Tusc. disp.* 1.10):

Above the question “traiectio Acherontis?” the word “traiectio” is rewritten as “transuectio” and explained in the margin on the righthand side of the page: “transuectio si esset referetur ad caron: transmissio autem et transitio semper refert ad fluuium et traiectio ut hic patere reperitur.” The next question is a citation of a verse from an unidentified tragedy: “mento summam aquam attingens enectus siti Tantalus?” The word *enectus* is defined at the bottom of 4r: “Eneco enecas enecatum cum in supino inde enecatus semper illum significat vt inquit priscianus cesariensis qui maiori violencia vt puta ferro aut fune fuerit interfectus enectum uero dicimus aut siti aut veneno aut frigore confectum. et sic apud bene loquentes obseruatur.”

The Greek notes were written by at least two hands. The original, most likely Italian scribe did not know the Greek alphabet and omitted spaces for the Greek words. Later, some of the readers tried to correct this deficiency and added the Greek words in some places in the text. Generally speaking, these not very skilled hands sometimes transcribed the Latin letter “Y” with the Greek “υ” and sometimes with the Greek “ι.” In most cases, the readers only specified the Latin words with their Greek definitions or meanings. For example, on f. 93v–95v (*Tusc. disp.* 4.16–26), some Stoic concepts were defined with their original Greek version in the margin (*pigrítia* as ὄκνοος [sic!], *terror* as ἔκπληξι[sic!], *molestia* as ἀνύα [sic!]). There are no Greek notes in the Iamblichus edition at all.

*Conclusions*

To sum up, Miklós Báthory was a highly educated humanist and cultural patron who tried to found an academy-like school in Buda which would have been very progressive for its time and which would have channeled the Platonist movement to Hungary through the central figures of the Florentine intellectual circle. His efforts were unsuccessful, but later, he founded a so-called “gymnasium” in Vác. Unfortunately, we know almost nothing about either of them. Now, the only palpable proof of his intellectual efforts is his surviving books listed above and Galeotto Marzio’s anecdote about the suspicious and mocking attitude of the Hungarian political elite toward any intellectual endeavor.

Based on the same notes in the Iamblichus edition and the Cicero codex, we can conclude that the two books were owned by the same man for a while

time in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Because Báthory's coat-of-arms is painted on the f. 1r of *Cod. Lat. 150*, it can safely be assumed that at least some of the notes may have come from Báthory's hand.

Although there are no Greek notes in the Iamblichus volume, the Latin notes originate from one person. Therefore, the *nota bene* entries and drawn index fingers also were written by this hand, which also wrote at least some of the *nota bene* entries in the Cicero codex.

What little remains of Báthory's library perfectly harmonizes with his aspirations to found a Platonic school in Buda and later his gymnasium in Vác, which might also have been infiltrated by a kind of Platonist spirituality. Because of the scarcity of information, this remains a bold hypothesis. Nevertheless, why would he have given up his plans for a Platonist school after the death of King Matthias? Maybe it is just a coincidence, but at least three of the four books which we know were part of his library and his surviving notes offer support for this theory, and they suggest a noticeable pattern. Ficino might have intended his Iamblichus edition to be a schoolbook which included his twelve translations or rather excerpts of lesser known Platonist and some short Pythagorean works: for example Speusippus's *De Platonis definitionibus* or Proclus's commentary on Plato's *Alcibiades* or the short Pythagorean work entitled *Symbola*. Most of the notes are in Alcinoüs's Middle Platonist schoolbook on the basic Platonist concepts: *De doctrina Platonis* (Plato's doctrine). Báthory's 1496 *Commentaria in Platonem* by Ficino speaks for itself, because it is a commentary on Plato's complete works. Perhaps the odd one out is the second manuscript, that is Hilary's theological work against the Arian heresy. However, Hilary is not just an exception but also a borderline case. He was a Neoplatonist thinker who left his philosophical tradition for Christianity. Consequently, in this sense, he, as an ex-Platonist, may have been interesting to Báthory. Finally, the notes in the Cicero codex also suggest the owner's intention to collect a practical Stoic-Platonic florilegium which might have been used as a philosophical schoolbook.

### *Bibliography*

- Analecta nova ad historiam renescentium in Hungaria litterarum spectantia* Edited by Jenő Ábel, and István Hegedüs. Budapest: Hornyánszky, 1903.
- Berlász Jenő. "Horvát István könyvtárának megszerzése a Nemzeti Könyvtár számára" [Acquisition of István Horvát's library for the National Library]. *Az Országos Széchényi Könyvtár évkönyve*, 7 (1963–1964): 251–64.

- Bonfinis, Antonius de. *Rerum Ungaricarum decades*. Edited by József Főgel, Béla Iványi, and László Juhász. Leipzig: Teubner, 1936–1976.
- Cicero. *Tusculan disputations*. Translated by J. E. King. London: Heinemann, 1966.
- C. Tóth Norbert. “Ki kicsoda az ecsedi Bátori családban? A Bátori család ecsedi ágának tagjai (1377–1541)” [Who’s who in the Bátori family of Ecsed? The members of the Bátori family of Ecsed (1377–1541)]. *Szabolcs-Szatmár-Beregi Szemle* 44 (2009): 5–47.
- Csapodi Csaba, and Klára Csapodiné Gárdonyi. *Bibliotheca Hungarica: kódexek és nyomtatott könyvek Magyarországon 1526 előtt*. Vol. 1. Budapest: MTAK, 1988.
- Della Torre, Arnaldo. *Storia dell'accademia platonica di Firenze*. Florence: G. Carnesecchi e figli, 1902.
- Ficinus, Marsilius. *Opera omnia*. Basel: Ex officina Henric Petrina, 1576.
- Hermann, Julius Hermann. *Die Handschriften und Inkunabeln der italienischen Renaissance*. Vol. 3, *Mittelitalien: Toskana, Umbrien, Rom*. Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1932.
- Hoffmann Edit. *Régi magyar bibliofilek* [Old Hungarian bibliophiles]. Reprinted by Tünde Wehli. Budapest: MTA Művtört. Kut. Int., 1992.
- Husztai József. *Platonista törekvések Mátyás király udvarában*. Pécs: Dunántúl, 1925.
- Kiss Farkas Gábor. “Franciscus Pescennius Niger Báthory Miklós váci püspök udvarában és a Scholasticum Orosianae iuventutis dramma” [Franciscus Pescennius Niger in the court of M. B. and his Scholasticum Orosianae Iuventutis Drama]. *Magyar Könyvszemle* 129 (2013): 265–81.
- Klaniczay Tibor. “Platonista akadémia Budán?” [A Platonic academy in Buda?]. In Tibor Klaniczay, *A magyarországi akadémiai mozgalom előtörténete*, 43–49. Budapest: Balassi, 1993.
- Klaniczay Tibor. “La corte di Mattia Corvino e il pensiero academico.” In *Mathias Corvinus and the Humanism in Central Europe*, edited by József Jankovics, and Tibor Klaniczay, 165–74. Budapest: Balassi, 1994.
- Kubinyi András. “Báthory Miklós és családja politikai szereplése” [The political role of Miklós Báthory and his family]. In *Báthory Miklós váci püspök (1474–1506) emlékezete*, edited by Alice Horváth, 13–30. Vác: Váci Egyházmegyei Gyűjtemény, 2007.
- Martius Narniensis, Galeottus. *De egregie, sapienter, iocose dictis ac factis regis Mathiae: ad duces Iohannem eius filium liber*, edited by László Juhász. Leipzig: Teubner, 1934.
- Mercati, Giovanni. “Francesco Pescennio Negro Veneto protonotario Apostolico.” In Giovanni Mercati. *Ultimi contributi alla storia degli umanisti*. Vol. 2, 24–128. Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1939.
- Mikó Árpád. “Báthory Miklós püspök és a reneszánsz művészet emlékei Vácott” [The bishop M. B. and the remnants of Renaissance art in Vác]. In *Báthory Miklós*

- váci püspök (1474–1506) emlékezete*, edited by Alice Horváth, 117–30. Vác: Váci Egyházmegyei Gyűjtemény, 2007.
- Molnár Dávid. “Báthory Miklós váci püspök filozófiai műveltségének lehetséges nyomai egy Ficino fordításában megjelent 1497-es Iamblikhosz-kiadásban” [Possible traces of the philosophical literacy of bishop Miklós Báthory in a copy of an Iamblichus edition from 1497]. In *Stephanus noster: Tanulmányok Bartók István 60. születésnapjára*, edited by József Jankovics et al., 41–55. Budapest: Reciti, 2015.
- Pajorin Klára. “Mátyás király és Marsilio Ficino magyar hívei az 1472. évi összeesküvés után” [Followers of King Mathias, and Marsilio Ficino after the conspiracy in 1472]. In *Arcana tabularii: Tanulmányok Solymosi László tiszteletére*, edited by Attila Bárány, Gábor Dreska, Kornél Szovák, 593–606. Budapest, Debrecen: Debreceni Egyetem, 2014.
- Pálvölgyi Endre. “Főúri és klerikális összefogás II. József könyvtári intézkedései ellen: Zichy Miklósné könyvhagyatéka és a kiscelli trinitárius kolostor könyvtára” [Aristocratic and clerical cooperation against Joseph II’s provisions of the libraries: The book bequest of the wife of Miklós Zichy and the library of the Trinitarian convent in Kiscell]. *Tanulmányok Budapest múltjából* 14 (1961): 343–62.
- Pietro Lombardi, Paola di. “Mátyás emblémái” [Matthias’s emblems]. In *A holló jegyében: Fejezetek a corvinák történetéből*. Edited by István Monok, 157–76. Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, OSZK, 2004.
- Ransanus, Petrus. *Epithoma rerum hungararum: Id est annalium omnium temporum liber primus et sexagesimus*. Edited by Péter Kulcsár. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977.
- Rhodes, Dennis E. “Battista Guarini and a book at Oxford.” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 37 (1974): 349–53.
- Ritoókné Szalay Ágnes. “Báthory Miklós váci püspök (1474–1506) epitáfiuma” [The bishop of Vác (1474–1506), Miklós Báthory’s epitaph]. In *Báthory Miklós váci püspök (1474–1506) emlékezete*, edited by Alice Horváth, 157–67. Vác: Váci Egyházmegyei Gyűjtemény, 2007.
- Rozsondai Marianne. “A Hungarian Renaissance binding in Oxford and its counterpart in Budapest.” *The Book Collector* 40 (1991): 371–81.
- Rozsondai Marianne. “Báthory Miklós váci püspök könyvtárának feltételezhető darabjai” [Presumable copies of Miklós Báthory’s library]. In *Báthory Miklós váci püspök (1474–1506) emlékezete*, edited by Alice Horváth, 131–45. Vác: Váci Egyházmegyei Gyűjtemény, 2007.
- Soltész Zoltánné. “Garázda Péter, Nagylucsei Orbán és Szatmári György ismeretlen könyvei” [Péter Garázda’s, Orbán Nagylucsei’s and György Szatmári’s unknown books]. *Művészettörténeti Értesítő* 7 (1958): 120–23.

Zsupán Edina. "A corvina könyvtár 'első címerfestője': stílushűség és imitáció. A Philostratus- és a Ransanus-corvina provenienciájához" [The "first emblazoner" of the corvina library: stylistic authenticity and imitation. New approach to the provenance of the Philostratus corvina and the Ransanus corvina]. *Művészettörténeti Értesítő* 66 (2017): 273–302.