

Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar

THESES

DÁVID MOLNÁR

**FUROR EST CUM CANTAT:
MARSILIO FICINO AND THE PLATONISTS 'IN LOVE' OF
HUNGARY AT THE ERA OF MATTHIAS CORVINUS**

Irodalomtudományi Doktori Iskola

A doktori iskola vezetője: Dr. Kállay Géza

A magyar és európai reneszánsz program

A program vezetője: Dr. Horváth Iván

A bizottság tagjai:

A bizottság elnöke: Dr. Boros Gábor Dsc, egyetemi tanár

Hivatalosan felkért bírálók:
Dr. Ács Pál DSc
Dr. Jankovits László PhD

A bizottság további tagjai:
Dr. Szegedi Eszter PhD, titkár
Dr. Falvay Dávid PhD
Dr. Csehy Zoltán PhD (póttag)
Dr. Orlovsky Géza CSc (póttag)

Témavezető: Dr. Horváth Iván DSc

Budapest, 2014

This doctoral dissertation is the result of a letter written by Ficino to Janus Pannonius on August 9th 1469 in which Janus is called *especially Platonist* (*apprime platonicus*) and *the most loving* (*amantissimus*). This letter was later attached to his *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love* came out in many editions. My dissertation is an attempt to uncover and analyse the 15th Century Hungarian traces of such renaissance Neo-Platonism. This Janus-faced study is of two distinct sections: a comprehensive philosophical part and an other of literary history.

Janus was called *amantissimus* by Ficino in the letter, hence my dissertation begins with a thorough analysis of Ficino's idea of love. Such specification was made difficult by the extremely complex semantic field of the platonic concept of *amor*. In case of Janus the expression 'being in love' was not meant in a psychological sense by Ficino, therefore the broader meanings had to be dealt with too, which in the end lead to the poetic *furor* that is also related to knowledge. The *most loving* Hungarian poet therefore, it seems, is not merely the most capable of recognising the immense and internal beauty of the world but also of structuring such beauty in the most adequate form of language.

A common feature of all concepts of love of Ficino's is that they can be defined as a certain force: a 'force of gravity' that always pulls towards the divine centre. My study starts with the concept of *amor circulus* and its three most common manifestations, describing the model of operation of love: cosmogonic, cosmologic and mystic love.

The cosmogonic concept of love is linked to the creation of the world and the concept of the *three created chaoses* of Ficino's that is why the description of the evolution of the concept of Chaos is also located here. The cosmological concept of love is a power that upholds the universe. In relation to that the ontological levels of the cosmos had to be described as well as the concept of matter, that is related to physical beauty, had to be studied in detail. Also the

concepts of *nature* and *quality* were analysed here. Ficino divides mystic love to three distinct parts of *amor circulus*: beauty, love and pleasure. In order to be able to define physical beauty it was necessary to outline the theory of the Preparation of Matter as well as the corresponding theories of proportionality and harmony that are closely related the ancient theory of music. Since this chapter focuses on beauty, the concepts of *gratia* and *nescio quid* of Ficino's are also discussed in detail. In the next part of circle when the soul discovers beauty in the world he falls in love with it. Discussing human love my analysis is centred on two pairs of concepts and their ancient and renaissance symbols: celestial and earthly as well as mutual and unrequited love. Poetic inspiration also involves *amor circulus*, therefore this chapter ends with a longer analysis of Platonist poetic theory. The analysis of Ficino's theory of *furor* unfolds the corresponding complex mythological and musical symbolisms which even concern the question of real knowledge through poetry and philosophy.

The second half of this dissertation concentrates on the 'Platonism' of the second half of 15th Century Hungarian literature. This era can be described as consisting of two major periods: the one of Janus Pannonius' and the other of Francesco Bandini's. The analysis is narrowed down here to the contemporaries of Ficino. The four most important authors are: Janus Pannonius, Nicholas Báthori, Peter Váradi (Petrus Pannonius) and Ioannes Pannonius. Apart from them Nicolaus de Mirabilibus and the much later court drama of *Constantinus and Victoria*, in which there are literal translation from Leone Ebreo, are also touched upon.

As a result of the availability of surviving texts it is the Platonism of Janus' that we may assume without much doubt. It is his poem *Ad Animam Suam* which is essential in this regard. The following poems have also been analysed in detail: *De Marsilio Ficino* and *De Monade et Dyade, Numeris*, as well as *De*

littera Pythagorae. Additionally, it is the concept of *furor* that has been examined by examples of Janus' poetry.

Unfortunately nothing has survived from neither Nicholas Báthori nor Peter Váradi, so the only pieces analysed here are the writings of Ficino's dedicated to these two Hungarian authors. The piece dedicated to Báthori is a brief summary of Neo-Platonic ontology. Apart from that also in a 1497 edition of Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum*, published in Venice, his notes survived. An astrological study was dedicated by Ficino to Váradi; through philological arguments it proved to be possible to paint a better and more detailed picture of the relationship between the two men. Undoubtedly, according to the surviving texts, the most interesting figure is a certain mysterious Ioannes Pannonius. It is only one single letter survived written by him and addressed to Ficino and we also do have Ficino's reply. Based on those the philosophical background of Ioannes Pannonius' has been given a thorough analysis.