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The Divine and Demonic Beverage: Antonio Gazio's Medical Treatise on Wine and Beer

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In 1538, Simone Gazio dedicated a short treatise on beer and wine to Franciscus Thurzo, a work that survives in an Augsburg edition from 1546. According to Gazio, he discovered the manuscript among the papers of his late father, Antonio Gazio (1461-1528). The main text resembles a medical indictment, establishing health-related “facts” about wine and beer. It evokes a courtroom trial - or rather, a show trial - where witnesses are called one after another. It seems like a piece of medical propaganda. Wine is a divine elixir, whereas beer is the invention of an evil demon meant to sicken people. The utter misery of human life can be tasted in its flavor. Thus, wine was bestowed upon humanity by heaven, while beer originates from the depths of the underworld; one comes from heaven, the other from hell. This paper examines Gazio's work in detail, situating it within the context of ancient medical and ideological topoi related to beer and wine.

Position

Senior Research Fellow

Short Biography

Dávid Molnár defended (2015) his PhD thesis on the influence of Marsilio Ficino in Hungary. Subsequently, he worked as a Research Fellow at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, contributing to the compilation of a comprehensive companion on Hungarian humanism. Later, as Lead Researcher, he prepared a critical edition of Johannes Filiczki's complete works and also authored a monograph on him. In addition, he recently wrote and edited two books on late humanist poets: one on Franciscus Hunyadi and the other on Valerian Mader. He currently works as a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Tokaj (Hungary) and prepares a book about the Paduan physician Antonio Gazio.

Keywords

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