

In modo Transilvano? Aspects of Transylvanian Altarpiece Production

Abstract:

During the last two decades of the fifteenth century the local workshops producing altarpieces for various Transylvanian towns can be traced. In this period Sighișoara seems to have been the most important centre and it preserved its outstanding role also during the heyday of Transylvanian altar production, during the first quarter of the sixteenth century. The considerable number of preserved retables help us outline several workshops working at the same time in this little town, while obviously Sibiu, the ecclesiastic, administrative, economic centre of the Saxons also served as important location for the same craftsmen around 1500/1525. These workshops have produced retables and several pieces of furniture for entire Transylvania, most probably also for the Szekler territories. Although foreign artistic influence is continuously present, with time it has been absorbed by local circumstances, been adapted to the local necessities, which led to the development of a specific local style that makes a panel painting of the period recognizable as Transylvanian.

Keywords: altarpiece, workshops, local style, Sighișoara, Sibiu, Transylvania.